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UNDERSTANDING ACCORDING TO BERNARD J. F. LONERGAN, S.J.

PART I

SINCE the publication of *Insight*[1] there has been a gradually increasing awareness of the significance of Father Lonergan's thought. Yet, those who attempt to study Lonergan's works encounter serious obstacles. Many of his basic ideas are developed in a theological context which the philosopher finds unfamiliar; his most recent books are written in Latin. *Insight* by-passes these theological and linguistic barriers. Yet, the non-scientist may find *Insight's* extensive development of scientific understanding an even more formidable obstacle to his own understanding. Finally, the sheer bulk of his book, the novelty of its methodology, and the complexity of its development makes personal assimilation a difficult task. A guided tour of Lonergan's thought may be of some assistance

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[1] Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S. J., *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956).

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in skirting these road-blocks. We hope to do this by concentrating on a theme which is central to Lonergan's thought, the importance of understanding what understanding is. Except for incidental remarks, criticism will be reserved to a third article.

Here, a precautionary note is in order. The present study is not intended to be an introduction to Lonergan's thought, for adequate introductions have already been written.[2] Rather, it pre-supposes a familiarity with Lonergan's basic positions and attempts a synthetic view of his integral development. This, unfortunately, implies that some points which cry out for clarification are relegated to a sentence or a qualifying phrase. Only by sacrificing such amplification could we present an orderly over-all view of the variety of elements fused in his synthesis.

One of the most distinctive features of *Insight,* the "moving point of view," is motivated by the realization that understanding develops gradually. In the same spirit it may be well to start by sketching the development of Lonergan's own understanding. As a part of his training as a Jesuit, Father Lonergan studied philosophy at Heythrop College in England. While there he also studied mathematics at the University of London. Two books which influenced his ideas on the nature of knowledge at this critical period were Newman's *Grammar of Assent* and Joseph's *Introduction to Logic.*[3] During his course of theology he worked in collaboration with another Jesuit who had studied philosophy under Marechal. Thus, he was influenced by the Louvain school in an indirect way.[4] After obtaining a

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[2] See Frederick E. Crowe, S. J., "The Origin and Scope of Bernard Lonergan's *Insight," Sciences Ecclesiastiques,* IX, (1957), 263-95; Andrew J. Reck, "Insight and the Eros of the Mind," *Review of Metaphysics,* XII (1958), 97-107; Joseph de Finance, S. J., "Une Etude sur l'intelligence humaine," *Gregorianum,* XXXIX (1958), 130-36; Bernard Lonergan, S. J., "Insight: Preface to a Discussion," *Proceedings of the Amer. Cath. Phil. Assoc.,* XXXII (1958), 71-81; and the reviews written at the time of publication.

[8] Horace W. Joseph, *An Introduction to Logic* (2nd ed. rev.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916).

• The similarity between Lonergan's development of philosophy and Marechal's doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University in Rome, he concentrated on a protracted critical study of St. Thomas. It was a problem-centered approach, tracing, in a detailed way, the development of key questions in Thomas' predecessors, remote as well as immediate, and the growth of Thomas' own understanding. From these studies, and others, came the six works which supply the principal basis for the present study.

1. *The "Gratia" Series.*[5] These articles do not treat Lonergan's theory of knowledge directly. However, the detailed causal analysis of mental and volitional operations given there supplied a foundation for his later development.

The "Verbum" Series.[6] This study was motivated by a peculiar theological difficulty. St. Thomas attempted to give some understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity by extending and developing the psychological analogy which St. Augustine had used. Many consider this Thomas' finest individual theological achievement. Yet, Lonergan felt, none of the standard text books gave an adequate-or even an accurate-account of the true theory of St. Thomas. Basic to Thomas' explanation was the analogy between the procession of interior words and of love in the human mind and the processions of the Son and Holy Spirit in the Trinity. To apply this analogy as St. Thomas intended it one must first have an adequate understanding of the human operations used as an explanatory analogate. This Lonergan endeavored to supply through his protracted, massively-documented study of Thomas' own theory of mental operations.

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has been emphasized by Cornelius Ryan Fay, "Fr. Lonergan and the Participation School," *The New Scholasticism,* XXXIV (1960), 461-87, and by James Collins in his review of *Insight (Thought,* XXXII [1957-8], 445-46).

[5] Bernard Lonergan, S. J., " St. Thomas' Thought on *Gratia Operans," Theological Studies,* II (1941), 289-324; III (1942), 69-88; "St. Thomas' Theory of Operations," *Ibid.,* III (1942), 375-403; " St. Thomas' *Thought on Gratia Operans," Ibid.* III (1942), 532-78. Hereafter these will be referred to as " *Gratia-!,"* etc.

[6] Bernard Lonergan, S. J., "The Concept of *Verbum* in the Writings of St. Thomas," *Theol. Studies,* VII (1946), 349-93; VIII (1947), 35-80; VIII (1947), 404-45; X (1949), 3-40; 359-93. Hereafter these will be referred to as " *Verbum-!,"* etc.

At the end of the first article in this series Lonergan gave an interesting insight into what seems to have been a turning point in his own methodology. "I have begun, not from the metaphysical frame-work, but from the psychological content of Thomist theory of intellect: logic might favor the opposite procedure but, after attempting it in a variety of ways, I found it unmanageable." [7]

3. *Insight.* Since this is the principal source of the present study, we shall postpone a discussion of it until a proper background has been established.

4. *Divinarum Personarum.*[8] In many respects this Latin text complements the *Verbum* series by summarizing the pertinent Thomist psychology and applying it to the doctrine of the Trinity. Written for theological students rather than for professional theologians, it is simpler and much less polemical than the *Verbum* series.

5. *De Constitutione Christi.*[9] This is a study of the hypostatic union and of Christ's knowledge. In addition to the treatment of consciousness which is of direct concern in our present study, this work has an indirect but important bearing on any evaluation of Lonergan's theory of knowledge. One of the sharpest criticisms brought against *Insight* was that Lonergan's method of developing metaphysics on the basis of a theory of knowledge was closer to Kantianism than to Thomism. The present work, written since *Insight,* explains the constitution of being in traditional metaphysical terms. Lonergan's clear-cut definitions give a good basis for comparing his metaphysics with other interpretations of Thomism.

6. *De Deo Trino: Pars Analytica.*[10] This work supplements *Divinarum Personarum* by outlining the positive theology

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[7] *Verbum-!,* 392. Here and elsewhere Lonergan uses " Thomist" to refer to the Saint and "Thomistic" to refer to the school, a usage which we shall follow.

[8] Bernard Lonergan, S. J., *Divinarum Personarum Conceptio Analogica* (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1957).

[9] Bernard Lonergan, S. J., *De Constitutione Christi Ontologica et Psychologica,* (2nd. ed.; Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1958).

[10] Bernard Lonergan, S. J., *De Deo Trino: Pars Analytica* (Rome: Gregorian Univ. Press, 1961).

concerning the Trinity. In explaining the revelation of this doctrine and the historical growth of human understanding concerning it, Lonergan employs some of the methods of understanding explained in *Insight.* Such concrete and carefully elaborated examples serve to clarify the more formal explanations of methods of understanding and illustrate their significance.

We divide this study into three general sections. First, relying chiefly on the *Verbum* series and *Divinarum Personarum* we present a brief outline of Lonergan's explanation of St. Thomas' cognitional analysis. Lonergan did not intend, in these works, to present a complete theory of knowledge. He wished, rather, to explain some pertinent ideas and terms used by St. Thomas in his explanation of knowledge. This necessitated an extensive use of technical Latin terms. Since this summary is intended to be an aid to the study of Lonergan-but not a substitute-we shall employ the same vocabulary and concentrate on those aspects of the *Verbum* series that complement *Insight.*[11] Such selectivity, unfortunately, entails a somewhat disjointed collection of elements whose significance will, we hope, be seen after the more orderly survey in the second section.

The second and principal section, based chiefly on *Insight,* summarizes Lonergan's cognitional analysis, his explanation of the various methods of understanding, and the way in which he develops a metaphysics. Finally, in the third article we shall offer a tentative criticism of a few selected points.

I. THOMIST THEORY OF UNDERSTANDING

Logically, one seeks to understand what it means to understand by first examining acts of understanding and then analyzing the processes involved. This, in fact, is the general order Lonergan follows. Since our purpose, however, is to present rather than prove his conclusions, it will be clearer to begin with the general doctrine and then supply the details.

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[11] In the *Verbum* series he is presenting St. Thomas' position, while *Insight* and *Divinarum Personarum* represent his own views. It seems clear that he considers the two views to be essentially the same. For example, in *Divinarum Personarum,* p. 57, he says that intelligible emanation has been considerd historically in the T'*erbum* series, philosophically in *Insight,* and that he now wishes to present the same matter in a theological and speculative way.

The mind has two basic operations: seeking to know *what* something is (" *quid sit* ") and to know *whether* something is *("an sit")* . The first mental operation, seeking to know what a thing is, begins with sense perception and the consequent formation of a phantasm in the imagination, an operation guided by the cogitative power. The active intellect illumines this phantasm making the *species* which was potentially intelligible, actually intelligible, a process which may be called *objective* abstraction. [12] This *species,* as impressed on the possible intellect, is called the *"species qua."* When the possible intellect receives this it is said to be in the *first act* of *apprehensive abstraction.* [13] From the possible intellect in first act proceeds an act of understanding, a *second act.* The manner in which this second act proceeds from the first act is analogous to the manner in which an action proceeds from a principle of action, or to the relation of the act of existence to the form. What is understood by this second act is called the *"species quae,"* the pre-conceptual object of understanding. To put this a bit more simply, objective abstraction, illumination of the phantasm, constitutes the imagined object as something to be understood with regard to its specific nature. Apprehensive abstraction, insight into phantasm, is the actual understanding of that which objective abstraction presents to be understood. What is understood, the *"species intelligibilis quae,"* is identical with the quiddity of the material object known. Thus, through insight into phantasm, or through a preconceptual act of understanding, the intellect knows its proper and connatural object, the quiddity of a material object.

Such an act of understanding cannot serve as the predicate of a judgment; it is incomplete as a form of knowledge. The intellect must express what it has understood, must produce a

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[12] *Verbum-IV,* 37.

[18] *Ibid.,*

"verbum," i.e., a concept or *"intentio intellecta."* [14] This production is not an automatic or quasi-mechanical process. Rather, it is produced in rational consciousness because of a rational awareness of understanding. The significance of such a process, which Lonergan calls "intelligible emanation," [15] may be seen by contrasting it with other types of processes or causal productions. A natural effect, such as rainfall, is produced by a cause, atmospheric conditions and the pull of gravity, and is intelligible precisely as caused. The intelligibility in question is not due to any intelligence on the part of the proximate cause. Rather, there is a passive and potential intelligibility in the process due ultimately to the fact that it conforms to the divine mind and can be known by the human mind.

Intelligible emanation, the production of an inner word expressing what is understood, is called intelligible not because of its passive conformity to an extraneous mind, nor because it has a potential intelligibility which some law might express. It possesses, rather, an actual and active intelligibility because it is the activity of intelligence in act. The intellect, understanding a quiddity in a phantasm, pivots on itself to produce another object of thought, an inner word. This is not only caused by understanding but is *because* of understanding. It is an expression of what is understood precisely because and to the extent that it is understood. Thus, intelligible emanation is rational, or intelligible, not only because of the metaphysical dependence of an effect on its cause-something proper to any natural process-but especially because the inner word is produced in and through conscious awareness as the expression of what is understood.

A simple example may clarify this rather abstract summary. Man, confronted with a wheel, has as a phantasm simply a wheel, an imaginative representation of sensible data. This

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"The necessity of the inner word is explained in *Verbum-1,* 349-60; IV, 15; V, 368· and in *Divinarum Personarum,* pp. 80-84,

,; This is explained in *Verbum-!,* 380-91 and in *Divinarum Personarum,* pp. esp. pp.

phantasm, illuminated by the agent intellect, supplies the matter for understanding. Yet, what is understood is something that is not in the data, as sensible data. Through an insight the intellect can grasp the distinctive quality of circularity as due to a formal cause. This is grasped by penetration of the phantasm making its potential intelligibility actual. Then the intellect can express what it has understood through a concept, " circle," or a definition: " a circle is the locus of points equidistant from a point within called the center." Such a concept or definition is not an automatic process of sensation. It is an inner word expressing what the intellect understands and can be produced only if and when the intellect has grasped an intelligibility potentially present in the data. The act of understanding, the *"intelligere,"* considered as the ground for the production of the *verbum* is called a" *dicere."* This procession of the word from the act of understanding is used, when properly purified, as the created analogue of the procession of the Son from the Father in the Trinity.

The second mental operation is concerned not with what a thing is, but with whether it is. The result of this operation is a judgment, a statement of the form: A is; A is not; A is B; A is not B. Before outlining the process leading to such a judgment, it would be well to explain how this differs from the concept or definition resulting from the first mental operation.

The product of the first mental operation is a definition of the quiddity which insight into the phantasm uncovers. This definition may be apodictic or hypothetical, may simply express the quiddity as perceived or as known through causes. In each of these cases the definition or concept is an "incomplex word." It is not a judgment concerning an object but a conceptualization of what is known through direct understanding. Accordingly, it is neither true nor false, though it may be more or less adequate.

A judgment, "this is a table," is not simply a synthesis of the object perceived by the senses and the nature grasped by the mind and expressed in a concept; it is the *affirmation* of a synthesis. For this reason it is called a "complex word" or a composition (of quiddity and existence).[16] To posit such a synthesis the mind must know the conformity of its judgment with reality. To establish such a conformity it is necessary to have a standard to which both are compared. Such a standard can only be found in an examination of the inner principles by which the intellect operates.

The first mental operation leads not only to insight, but also to a coalescence of insights integrated in a hypothetical synthesis. Before the positing of a judgment, this hypothetical synthesis has no formal truth value. It provokes a question for investigation rather than establishes a thesis. To answer the question implicit in any hypothesis and assent to the answer as true, the intellect must grasp the necessary connection between the sources of its knowledge and the hypothetical synthesis, for the intellect cannot know the proportion of its act to an exterior thing unless it knows, in some way, the proportion of its active principle to exterior things. This requires a *reflective* act of understanding. Following a clear statement of St. Thomas,[17] Lonergan insists that this is not simply the reflective character found in any act of judgment. Rather, it is a self-penetration which enables a person to know his own essence and innate capacity to know truth. This does not mean a metaphysician's knowledge of the soul's essence, which is a conceptualization and refinement of this awareness. Rather, the intellect is itself intelligible in act and this intrinsic intelligibility is realized through its exercise.[18] By a reflective awareness of this a person realizes that the universal nature understood and expressed in a concept is the nature of the singular known in the phantasm.[19] This reflective knowledge supplies the sufficient evidence required for positing the judgment,

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[16] This is developed in *Verbum-H.* The terms "complex " and "incomplex" are explained in *Divinarum Personarum,* p. 14.

[17] *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate,* q. 1, a. 9, c.

[18] *Verbum-V,* 368-9.

[19] The evolution of St. Thomas' own understanding of this point is explained in *Verbum-IV,* 28-35.

"This is a table." "This" denotes the observed singular; "table" is a concept expressing the quiddity, or universal nature, which insight, or apprehensive abstraction, grasped in the phantasm of the singular existent. "Is" does not merely link this abstract universal to the concrete singular. It *affirms* that this universal is the nature of the this singular existent.

If we compare this second mental operation with the first, we notice a distinct structural similarity. Both involve two basic steps, an act of understanding and an intelligible emanation issuing from that act of understanding. Regarding the second operation Lonergan wrote: ". . . in the present article the contention will be that the *intelligere* from which the judgment proceeds is a reflective and critical act of understanding not unlike the act of Newman's illative sense."[20] From this second *"intelligere"* considered as a *"dicere"* proceeds the judgment, the *"verbum"* proper to the second mental operation.

So far we have been concerned with a functional description of intellectual operations. Lonergan's metaphysical explanation of these operations was elaborated in the context of two theological problems. To explain Thomas' treatment of the interaction of grace and free will, Lonergan first analyzed Thomas' idea of causality.[21] He applied this analysis to the problem of the freedom of the will under grace.[22] The second problem was to explain Trinitarian processions as intelligible emanations from a principle which is not a cause. The complexity of these problems required a subtle and quite detailed analysis. Here we shall outline only those aspects of the analysis which are pertinent to the present study.

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[20] *Verbum-!,* 38. In a similar way Lonergan's stress on the direct understanding of insight as something prior to conceptualization and his ceaseless campaign against" conceptualism" would seem to be not unlike Newman's distinction between notional and real assent.

[21] *Gmtia-ITI.* The key idea is that efficient causality is a formal content in the cause and a real relation of dependence in the effect.

[22] *Gratia-IV.* By a careful distinction between the general problem of subordinated activity and the problem of action in time he tried to show that God's pre-knowledge, which is atemporal, does not have the type of necessity proper to absolute knowledge of a future act, nor does His will impose a necessity that destroys contingence since His will is in accord with this knowledge.

The term, *"potentia activa,"* acquired two slightly different meanings in the course of Thomas' intellectual development.[23] Lonergan dubs the first meaning, derived from Avicenna, " active potency " while the corresponding *"potentia passiva"* is translated "passive potency." Aquinas used this set, chiefly in his early works and in his lectures for his students at Paris to speak of the principle of an *operation,* which may, but need not, produce an effect. In intellection, the passive potency is the possible intellect while the corresponding active potency is the *species qua* informing the possible intellect. In this sense reception and actuation are compatible and, in fact, the act of understanding requires the prior reception of a form.

From this active potency there are two processions. The first, the pre-conceptual grasp of the intelligibility in the illuminated phantasm or the grasp of evidence sufficient to motivate a judgment is called a *"processio operationis."* That is, the procession of this act follows from the operation itself in a conscious but quasi-automatic way. The second procession, the emergence of an inner word, i.e., a concept or judgment, is something unique since it is the procession of an act from an act rather than an act-potency relation. It is called a *"processio operati"* (rather than" *operationis* ") to indicate that it does not follow automatically from the operation itself, but depends on a grasp of the content.

To explain this Thomas had to expand Aristotle's dichotomy between *efficient cause,* a principle of motion or change in something else or in the same thing as other (my hand moves my foot), and *nature,* a principle of motion proper to the moving body itself.[24] What St. Thomas called a *"processio operati"* includes the idea of procession (which "nature" does not include) but excludes the idea of "from another" (which "efficient cause" includes). In us, the emanation of an inner word is a *processio operati* which has an intelligible as well as a productive aspect. It is intelligible because it proceeds from an act of understanding precisely because of a rational awareness of understanding. The analogous explanation of the procession of the Word in the Trinity involves an intelligible emanation, but not the productive aspect found in the created analogue.

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[23] *Verbum-III* is chiefly concerned with explaining the principles mentioned here.

[24] This is developed in *Verbum-V,* 371-76.

The second sense of "*potentia activa*" is derived from Aristotle and is primary in Thomas' later works. While it does not exclude the Avicennist sense it is different enough to cause confusion if the differences are not explicitly noted. Lonergan translates "*potentia activa,*" when used in the Aristotelian sense, as "efficient potency" and "*potentia passiva*" as "receptive potency." Aristotle's standard example of the heater and the heated illustrates the meaning. In this sense, the efficient cause of the act of understanding is, not the *species,* but the object which causes the species. This follows from the general principle that any efficient cause produces not merely the form of the effect, but also the action consequent upon this form. In fact, Lonergan insists, this principle applies not only to the acts of sensing and knowing but even to acts of willing in the sense that the final cause as object moves the will.[25]

This schematic outline of Lonergan's metaphysical analysis may be used to explain his teaching on the relation of knowledge to reality. He distinguishes five separate objects of knowledge.[26]

1. *The Moving Object of Direct Unde1·standing.*

This is the. actuated intelligibility of what is presented by the imagination. In objective abstraction the illumination of the phantasm constitutes the imagined object as something whose specific nature is to be understood. Apprehensive abstraction, insight into phantasm, actually understands what objective abstraction presents to be understood. On this basis

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[25] *Verbum-III,* 433-37. This was developed more fully in Gratia-IV.

[26] *Verbum-IV,* 4; Divinarum Personarum, p. 80.

Lonergan can explain an apparent contradiction in Thomas' teaching. What is presented to be understood is the phantasm. Hence, Aquinas repeatedly affirmed that in this life the proper object of the human intellect is the phantasm. However, what is intelligible in the phantasm is the quiddity of the material object. Accordingly, it was no less natural for Aquinas to affirm that the proper object of the human intellect in this life is the quiddity of a material object.[27]

Here, the distinction between the Avicennist and Aristotelian sense of " *potentia activa* " is significant. The phantasm, illuminated by the agent intellect, instrumentally produces the *"species qua"* and materially exhibits the *"species quae,"* that which is understood. As understood, it moves the mind. In less technical language, the object known is a moving object precisely because it is an object of thought; it is not first a mover and then an object. The efficient causality of this moving is due to the efficient potency.

2. *Terminal Object of Direct Understanding.*

This is the essence expressed in a definition, concept, hypothesis, or "incomplex word." This object does not proceed from direct understanding through some automatic causal mechanism; much less does it precede it-as Scotism and Conceptualism would have it.[28] It is the intelligible emanation of an act from an act, a process proper only to an intellectual being.

3. *Moving Object of Reflective Understanding.*

This is the aggregate of evidence on an issue, i.e., on an incomplex word presented as an hypothesis or problem. This object is "moving" only inasmuch as the evidence is seen to be sufficient to settle the issue. This involves a reflection on the whole process of knowing, and its grounds in the ability of the mind to evaluate correctly. Ultimately, this basis is the virtue of wisdom which deals at once with reality and with the first principles of demonstration, "We know by what we are; we know we know by knowing what we are; and since even the knowing in 'knowing what we are' is by what we are, rational reflection on ourselves is a duplication of ourselves."[29]

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[27] In *Verbum-IV* Lonergan cites instances of the second affirmation (in note 113) and 16 of the first (note 114).

[28] In *Verbum*-I, note IU (p. 373) Lonergan explains Scotus' view and indicates its historical significance. He feels that the general acceptance of the Scotist position (often under the guise of pure Thomism) reduced the problem of understanding to a question of metaphysical mechanics and that this degenerate position had a dominant influence even outside Scholastic circles until Kant realized its inadequacy.

4. *Terminal Object of Reflective Understanding.*

This object is the true expressed in the form of a judgment. It is in and through a judgment, something produced by the mind, that formal knowledge of a real being is had. Only when such a judgment is posited can there be formal truth or error.

5. The Transcendental Object: Reality.

Through the intellectual light by which it knows, the mind is potentially all being. In the reflective act of understanding, which grounds judgment, the proportion of understanding to the whole universe is grasped.[30] Accordingly, the proper object of the mind is being which is known imperfectly in prior acts, but perfectly only in judgment. However, the concept of being must include a conception of the total reality of the universe, i.e., of whatever can be known. This is the transcendental object corresponding to the innate thrust of the intellect.

We have been concentrating on the factors involved in an individual act of knowledge. The same approach explains the growth in intelligibility represented by synthesis. Many insights bring a knowledge of many quiddities. These coalesce, not through a change in the quiddities, but through a new insight, a grasp of a new intelligibility unifying these concepts. Reasoning, in its essence, is simply the development of insight, a motion towards deeper and more extensive understanding. Lonergan expressed this succinctly in a later work, " Moreover St. Thomas was fully aware of the significance of explanatory syllogism: he conceived reasoning as simply understanding in process, as moving from principles to conclusions in order to grasp both principles and conclusions in a single view." [31] In the concrete, reasoning involves a dialectical interplay of sense, memory, insight, definition, critical reflection, and judgment. But the characteristic note of true development is unification, a movement in the direction of understanding more things through fewer acts. [32]

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[29] *Verbum-II,* 78.

[30] *Verbum-V,* 868.

At the end of the *Verbum* series Lonergan summarized the purpose of this protracted study, "My purpose has been the Leonine purpose, *vetera novis augere et perficere,* though with the modality that I believe the basic task still to be the determination of what the *vetera* really were. More specifically, my purpose has been to understand what Aquinas meant by the intelligible procession of an inner word." [83] To understand what Aquinas meant, Lonergan insists, means understanding as Aquinas understood. The problem of the *vetera* is fundamentally a problem of understanding, "A method tinged with positivism would not undertake, a method affected by conceptualist illusion could not conceive, the task of developing one's own understanding so as to understand Aquinas' comprehension of understanding, and of its intelligibly proceeding inner word." [34]

So much for the *vetera,* what of the *nova?* Can it be simply grafted on to the *vetera?* Is it true that Thomists can solve current problems simply by making explicit what was implicit in the works of St. Thomas? Lonergan thinks not: ". . . one may distinguish two developments of understanding. There is the development that aims at grasping what Pope Leo's *vetera* really were; there is the development that aims at effecting his vetera *novis augere et perficere.* To fail to distinguish between these two aims even materially, as in the inclusion of both within the covers of the same book, results not in economy

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[81] Bernard Lonergan, S. J., "Theology and Understanding," *Gregoranium,* XXXV (1954), 633. See also *Verbum-1,* 380-385.

[82] *Verbum-IT,* 45-6.

[83] *Verbum-V,* 388-89.

•• *Verbum-V,* 390.

but in confusion."[35] Stripped, by his own accord, of the proof by citation, so familiar to scholastic philosophers, how could a modern truly Christian philosopher operate? Lonergan's answer to this question is really a post-fact reflection on what he had attempted to do in *Insight.* "So I am led to suggest that the issue, which goes by the name of a Christian philosophy, is basically a question on the deepest level of methodology, the one that investigates the operative intellectual ideals not only of scientists and :philosophers but also, since Catholic truth is involved, the theologians. It is, I fear, in Vico's phrase a *scienza nuova."*[36]

II. INSIGHT AND UNDERSTANDING

The subtitle of Lonergan's book, "A Study of Human Understanding" precisely indicates its purpose. What he is presenting is not a theory of knowledge, much less a synthesis of the contents of knowledge. It is an attempt to help the reader realize what it means to understand, a realization which he can only achieve by reflecting on his own successful acts of understanding and probing their significance. Having understood the nature of understanding, a man is in a uniquely favorable position to evaluate the contents of his acts of understanding. All this is summed up in a sentence which, in quotation, may read like jargon, but which is intended to summarize the positive content of *Insight:* "Thoroughly understand what it is to understand, and not only will you understand the broad lines of all there is to be understood, but also you will possess a fixed base, an invariant pattern, opening upon all further developments of understanding."[37]

An immediate implication of this slogan is that Lonergan himself must understand what it is to understand before he can serve as an intellectual midwife for his readers. This he felt he had accomplished by the long and laborious process through which he came to understand as Thomas Aquinas understood. Though Lonergan's own understanding, as he clearly realized, lacked the depth, the unity, and the comprehensiveness that distinguished St. Thomas from all others, nevertheless, he understands in the same way and with a conscious realization of how he understood. Two insights into the nature of understanding seem to have been especially operative in determining the structure of *Insight. First, understanding preceeds conceptualization.* Accordingly, one attempting to understand what it is to understand must begin, not with the understood, a catalog of the contents of knowledge, but with the recurrent structure of the knowing activity itself. To grasp the nature of this act one should begin with simple examples where the click of insight is more easily and precisely isolated and gradually move towards more complex cases. This seems to explain the ordering of the first part of his work, "Insight as Activity," which moves from mathematics through physics to common sense:

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[35] *Verbum-V,* 893.

[36] Bernard Lonergan, S. J., Review of *Existe-t-il une Philosophie Chretienne?,* by Maurice Nedoncelle, *Gregorianum,* XL (1959), 183.

[37] *Insight,* p. xxviii.

> " Thus, the precise nature of the act of understanding is to be seen most clearly in mathematical examples. The dynamic context in which understanding occurs can be studied to best advantage in an investigation of scientific methods. The disturbance of that dynamic context by alien concerns is thrust upon one's attention by the manner in which various measures of common nonsense blend with common sense." [38]

Secondly, *formal truth is only in the judgment.* A judgment, as we have seen is not just a linking of two concepts. It is the affirmation of a synthesis. As such, it presupposes the elements to be fused in the synthesis, the knowing activities by which these elements are organized, and the reflective understanding that penetrates the significance both of elements and activities. Such a reflection grounds the judgment of self-affirmation implicit in all other judgments-we know by what we are, beings with an intellect which is intelligible in act. H Lonergan's development reversed the natural order of knowing and presented the complete doctrine before explaining the steps that lead up to it (as we have done for expository purposes), he would be frustrating rather than encouraging the natural dynamism operative in the minds of his readers, the dynamism which he wishes to bring to the focus of their reflective awareness. Accordingly, the book develops from a "moving" point of view. It begins with a minimal aspect and a minimal context. Exploitation of this minimum raises further questions. The attempt to answer these enlarges the viewpoint and leads to further questions. The reader is expected to cooperate with this process in an active intellectual way. He should not simply assimilate the higher viewpoints presented in growing succession but reflect on the recurring dynamism, operative within his own mental processes, a dynamism which leads him to accept, to reject, or to work out alternatives to the higher viewpoints developed by Lonergan. *Insight* is intended as an invitation to perform a private and peculiar mental experiment, an experiment which repeats Lonergan's own personal experience. Here we shall present the main lines of this unique (or almost unique[39]) "thought experiment" concentrating on the aspects which might present difficulties for the general reader.

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[38] *Ibid.,* p. x.

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[30] It is striking to note the parallelism between this work and Michael Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958). Where Lonergan reacts against conceptualism and stresses understanding, Polanyi reacts against the ideal of objective impersonal knowledge and tries to show the personal participation involved in all acts of understanding. Part I of *Insight* is " Insight as Activity "; Part I of *Personal Knowledge* is " The Art of Knowing." Lonergan insists that understanding precedes conceptualization; Polanyi that the tacit component of knowledge precedes the articulate. Where Lonergan teaches that judgment is the positing of a synthesis Polanyi stresses affirmation as an act of self-commitment.

There are also some notable differences, especially in the second halves where each tries to build a philosophy from his theory of knowledge. Polanyi is not a philosopher by training and, in our opinion, is unable to effect an adequate development of the implications of his insights. Though he treats theology, in no sense is he a theologian. Lonergan lacks Polanyi's extensive knowledge of science and personal participation in scientific activity. Yet the basic similarity remains. Two outstanding polymaths spent years in an intensive effort to grasp the nature of their own mental processes. Their totally independent studies yielded basically the same dynamic structure of mental activities.

SCIENTIFIC UNDERSTANDING

The purpose of *Inmght* is to give an insight into insight, that is, an understanding of what human understanding is and what it implies. But what is an insight? In answering this Lonergan begins with a classical example. Archimedes, according to the old legend, ran from the baths shouting "Eureka," when he discovered the law that bears his name. The sudden insight, which so affected him, may serve as a basis for an insight into insight. First, Archimedes had a particular problem, to determine whether King Hiero's crown was pure gold or an alloy. This particular difficulty induced a certain type or mental tension, a seeking after an answer whose general form he anticipated, that is, a precise means of relating weight and volume. Archimedes' observation,, that a body in a bath displaces water, was hardly a novel experience. What was new was his grasp of the significance of this observation in the light of the problem that plagued him. The result of the combination was a sudden click of insight. In this simple example, which doesn't pretend to be precise history, Lonergan uncovers some of the distinctive features of an insight. First, it is a release to the tension of inquiry. That is, insights do not simply happen in a random way. One has to approach experience with definite questions in mind. An insight is recognized as meaningful only because it meets such a felt need or, in Lonergan's terminology, a heuristic anticipation. Secondly, an insight comes suddenly and often unexpectedly. Thirdly, it is primarily a function of inner conditions rather than external circumstances. In this it is sharply distinguished from sensation. Fourthly, an insight pivots between the concrete and the abstract. One obtains an insight by grasping the significance of a particular experience-the displacement of water-and yet realizes that the insight has a validity which extends far beyond the particular experience. Finally, an insight passes into the habitual texture of the mind. For the individual and the community to which it is transmitted a particular insight becomes a part of the growing body of knowledge and a means of obtaining further, more refined insights.[40]

Through other simple examples Lonergan shows how an insight must occur to link a newly acquired concept with the images that strain to meet it. The importance of insight as a starting point of knowledge may be seen in the realization that any deductive process must begin with primitive terms whose correct application presupposes an insight into meaning.

This explanation of insight leads to three closely related notions: *higher viewpoints,* in which many lower view-points are integrated through the grasp of a more general intelligibility; *inverse insights,* the realization that there is nothing to be grasped, that a circle and its radius, for example, are not commensurable; and the *empirical residue,* positive data which lack intelligibility in themselves but are connected with some inner higher intelligibility. Particular times and places, for example, are unintelligible in themselves but are related to frames of reference which are intelligible.

By extending this analysis, Lonergan develops what he designates "The Heuristic Structure of Empirical Method."[41] To see what this means for mathematics we can consider another simple example. It should be noted, however, that the purpose of this analysis is to determine, not the nature of mathematics, but the type of cognitional activity characteristic of mathematical thinking.

Let x be the unknown-is the way simple algebra proceeds. What does this procedure imply? First, that the answer has been anticipated in a general way; it must be a number. Secondly, this intelligent anticipation generates the method by which the answer may be found. The relations which the unknown number, x, must fulfill are used as a means of determining what x is. Finally, the answer can be recognized as such only because its determined anticipations have been fulfilled. In more general terms, the key to mathematical thinking is a *heuristic structure* which anticipates the answer in a general way, generates the particular questions and procedures which lead to this answer, and render the answer meaningful once discovered.

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[40] *Insight,* pp. S-6. Since the rest of this article will follow the general order of *Insight* it will not be necessary to give repeated references. We shall simply indicate different chapters, when we summarize parts of them and points which have a bearing on our evaluation of Lonergan's doctrine.

[41] Treated in chap. ii.

Once this basic process is recognized it can easily be generalized. From initial images, such as the imaginative constructions of geometry, one obtains insights. These yield definitions and postulates. Definitions and postulates guide symbolic operations, and symbolic operations provide a more general image in which the insights of a higher viewpoint are emergent. These images and symbolic operations give the imagination a distinctive role in mathematical thinking.[42]

When one turns from mathematical to physical reasoning, there are similarities and differences. The basic similarity comes from the thinking process which starts with insight into experience and works towards a further understanding through systematic inquiry. Here there is an obvious difficulty. The end determines the means. Yet the end, the discovery of a physical law or the solution of a physical problem, is unknown. How can the means, intelligent and systematic inquiry, be determined. The answer, once again, is found in a heuristic structure. One anticipates the unknown in a general way and uses this very anticipation to determine the solution.

For example, to determine an unknown electrostatic field one begins by assuming that the nature of the field is such that it satisfies Laplace's equation. From this heuristic assumption, plus suitable boundary values, one can determine the result, a knowledge of what a particular field is. Here, as always, Lonergan is primarily concerned with the nature of the reasoning process rather than with the laws of physics. This simple sketch of such a process leads to two general questions concerning the relations of these intellectual processes to

[42] For a further explanation of Lonergan's views on the nature of geometrical reasoning see his article, "A Note on Geometrical Possibility," *The Modem Schoolman,* XXVII (1950), 124-38.

the matter understood and the significance of the general laws used in the heuristic process.

Let us begin with the first point, the matter of physics, and consider a simple case, a falling body. The body has a certain color, shape, size, perhaps an odor; it can be pleasing, ugly, desirable, and so forth. These are the qualities which are significant in relating the body to us. In the course of time the scientist has learned to prescind from such relations and concentrate on the relation of the falling body to a set of clocks and meter sticks. In this simple instance we can see the feature which, Lonergan feels, distinguishes scientific from non-scientific reasoning: its focus on the relation of things to other things rather than the relation of things to us. We can also see the general nature of scientific insights, an abstraction of such relations from the empirical residue which is left behind as unintelligible.

The result of this procedure is a set of points, for example, the time intervals in which different bodies fall a fixed distance in a vacuum. The discrete nature of physical data distinguishes it sharply from mathematics which works with a continuum of data supplied by imagination. The observed points have a distribution about a mean value. In the first stage of scientific inquiry one concentrates on the mean value and ignores the distribution as insignificant, as due to experimental error. This leads to what Lonergan designates as *classical heuristic structure.* Its basic assumption is that similars are to be similarly understood. For example, bodies which fall the same distance in the same time are similar in this respect and must be similarly understood; that is, they must obey the same law. More generally similar relationships between different types of bodies are understood through similar laws. Gravitational and electrostatic fields, sound, light, and heat all obey an inverse square law, for they exhibit similar relationships between field points and source points.

The second question concerning the heuristic structure o£ physical reasoning is the nature of the general laws which this heuristic structure employs. The historical process through which these laws have been developed has led to certain insights which are significant here. First among these is the invariance of physical laws. This, in Lonergan's explanation, is due to the fact that particular times and places pertain to the empirical residue and not to the intelligibility which scientific insight abstracts. For example, the chemical law that two hydrogen molecules plus one oxygen molecule yield two water molecules totally prescinds from questions of time and place. When one applies this invariance requirement to the laws of mathematical physics an immediate difficulty arises from the fact that these laws require a coordinate system, that is, a space-time framework. The solution of this difficulty is had in transformation rules, directions for transforming laws from one space-time framework to another.

Lonergan explains this procedure in terms of insights and inverse insights. To see the use he makes of this may give us an insight into his idea of science. Thus he writes:

> So a direct insight into the significance of measurement yields the anticipations of General Relativity; an inverse insight into the insignificance of constant velocity yields the anticipations of Special Relativity; and a restriction of this inverse insight to the context of Newtonian dynamics yields the anticipations that sometimes are named Newtonian relativity.[34]

This and similar statements have provoked rather strong criticism on the grounds that the physical theories involved were not and can not be deduced in this simple way. In fairness, it should be pointed out that Lonergan is not attempting to deduce the theory of relativity from his theory of knowledge. He is simply trying to indicate, in a generic way, the mode of understanding implied by the formation of such a theory and to situate this within his general development.

The next step in Father Lonergan's scientific development is statistical physics, or, in his terminology, statistical heuristic structure.[44] All science begins by selecting from the data of experience certain significant facts. For the physicist, these facts are summarized in a discrete set of numbers, the results of experiments. The classical physicist, as we have explained him, concentrates on the mean about which these numbers converge. However, one can study the distribution itself as well as the mean about which the distribution converges. To do this systematically one must anticipate in a general way the type of laws which would govern such a distribution and utilize this heuristic structure-or intelligent anticipation-as a tool in furthering understanding. This procedure is the method of *statistical heuristic structure.* Its basis is the inverse insight which denies intelligibility to random differences.

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[34] *Insight,* p. 45.

The structure of scientific thinking generates its own rules, which are called the " Canons of Empirical Method." These canons are not intended as an imposition from without, like the decrees of the French Academy concerning the proper use of language, but are, rather, a grasp of the laws intrinsic to scientific thinking, much as the British semanticists try to uncover the laws actually operative in the use of language. Of the six canons listed: selection, operations, relevance, parsimony, complete explanation, and statistical residues, we shall consider only the implications of the canon of relevance.[45] The scientist obtains pertinent insights because he approaches reality with appropriate questions. These questions are appropriate which aim at the intelligibility immanent in the data of sense, the special type of intelligibility which has been found to advance science. Questions concerning final, material, instrumental, and efficient causes lead the scientists away from the data of sense. Questions concerning the relation of this data to us lead to a different, non-scientific understanding. The special intelligibility, immanent in the data of sense, which the scientist seeks, resides in the relation of things to one another, the relation of mechanical to thermal energy, of force to acceleration, etc. This is really a species of formal causality.

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[44] *Ibid.,* pp. 53-69 and chap. iv.

[45] *Ibid.,* pp. 76-78.

Now that we have seen some of the details in Lonergan's explanation of science it is possible to take a more general view of the type of intellectual activity involved in scientific thinking.[46] There are four basic steps. First is the observation of data. This distinguishes empirical science from mathematics. Secondly, insight into data. The same data may ground many different insights. The class of insights which has been found basic in science is insight into the possibility of a general law relating the aspects which insight grasps as pertinent. A famous example is Newton's insight into the possibility of a universal law of gravitation. This realized possibility generates the next step, the elaboration of the insight or set of insights in an hypothesis or heuristic law, for example, in a differential equation. With these three steps a scientist still does not know reality scientifically, for he does not know whether the insight is valid, whether the hypothesis is true. Accordingly, a final step is required, verification.

What scientific investigation verifies is not really an insight-which has no formal truth value-but the scientific formulation grounded by an insight or set of insights. As we have seen, Lonergan divides such formulations into two general classes, classical and statistical. From this division two things follow. First, there must be a relation of *complementarity* between the two considered as cognitional activities.[47] That is, the relations between data must be either systematic or non-systematic, to the degree they are systematic, classical heuristic structure is the correct basis for investigation and development; to the degree they are non-systematic, statistical anticipations must be correct.

Secondly, though the two types of cognitional activities are complementary, nevertheless their results can be integrated into a coherent world-view. Lonergan attempts such an integration through his notion of *emergent probability,* the successive realization of a conditioned series of schemes of recurrence with their respective probabilities of emergence and survival.[48]

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[46] *Ibid.,* chap. iii.

[47] *Ibid.,* pp. 108-15.

[48] *Ibid.,* pp. 118-89.

This principle is not intended, at this stage of the development, as an explanation of the dynamic structure operative in the universe. It is, rather, an explanatory idea, a heuristic framework to be filled by the patient scientific activity of specialists. As such, it could replace earlier frameworks which have proved unsuccessful such as the Aristotelian universe of ordered spheres, the mechanistic systems of the early modern scientists, or the Darwinian idea of a conditioned series of species of things. We shall return to this idea in another context.

Common Sense Understanding

We have, perhaps, given enough of Lonergan's scientific development to indicate his characteristic method of procedure. Scientific knowledge, as it has been explained here, begins with things as known by us, but attempts to understand those things by grasping their relations to other things. Or, to employ Lonergan's terminology, the scientist aims at explanatory rather than descriptive conjugates. Complementary to this is a study of things inasmuch as they are related to us. This he designates as *common sense knowledge.*[49] Unlike science, this knowledge is essentially practical, a knowledge of the significance of concrete situations and rules of conduct appropriate to the situation, a knowledge of how to get by, to get things done, etc. The set of common sense insights revealed, for example, in a proverb is necessarily incomplete and must be supplemented by an insight into a concrete situation to be significant. Since common sense, like science, is simply intelligence in action, the same general pattern of experience, insight, inquiry, higher insights, hypotheses, etc. may be uncovered, though it generally is far less elaborate. We shall consider only the distinctive features of this type of understanding and its relation to scientific understanding.

The distinguishing characteristic of common sense understanding is the fact that it is based on the relation of things to us rather than to each other. Accordingly, Lonergan begins by considering the pattern of experiences proper to the subject, i.e., the more or less controlled stream of consciousness that constitutes the life of the individual and his attempt to realize himself. The inner drive to know which stems from man's very nature is operative, even in subconscious processes, in arranging the data of experience in such a way that valid insights may emerge. However, the practical orientation of common sense directing man towards making and doing presents the possibility of rejecting undesirable insights or even of frustrating the ordered accumulation of related insights which constitutes normal and desirable growth. The systematic rejection of the insights to which the mind is naturallly drawn is dubbed a "scotosis." The tension resulting from this rejection can lead to psychoneurotic disorders.

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[49] *Ibid.,* chap. vi.

Since common sense relates objects to a subject in a practical rather than a speculative way, it is determined to a great degree by the significance which the objects of common sense knowledge have in the particular culture to which the individual happens to belong. Accordingly, an understanding of common sense understanding must include an appraisal of the common understanding of groups and cultures.[50] The supreme importance of such common sense understanding in unifying and vitalizing a civilization is usually overlooked because common sense, with its practical orientation, tends to be unreflecting. Here historical, sociological, and anthropological studies are important in bringing to conscious awareness the influence of, for example, the rise of technology; the spread of capitalism; and changes in political structures, in our habitual patterns of thought and activity. Since collective as well as individual common sense tends to be unreflecting, one who wishes to understand common sense knowledge must consider and evaluate the biases which can impede the proper development of this type of knowledge. On an individual level there are: the bias resulting from the drive to satisfy neural demands which can well up from the depths of the subconscious and inhibit the proper development of intelligence; and the bias of "egoism," the tension between spontaneity with its concern for the present, the immediate, for intersubjective relations, and detached intelligence motivated by the pure desire to know. On a collective level there is "group bias," the tendency of any group to preserve its own proper goals and values even when they lose their relevance for the general development of civilization. Finally, there is "general bias," the tendency to make the practical goals of common sense understanding dominate all others. While the first three biases generally produce their own correctives by way of reaction, the general bias does not, for it represents the highest integration which common sense understanding achieves. Accordingly, Lonergan concludes, general common sense must ultimately be guided by a higher normative science. It must submit to the detached intelligence which seeks out the inner direction of historical development, which alone is capable of uncovering the intelligibility immanent in the concrete data of science, of history, or of culture.

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[50] *Ibid.,* chap. vii.

How is common sense understanding related to scientific understanding? [51] Common sense knowledge is primarily concerned with descriptive conjugates, a knowledge based on the relation of things to us. Though this is not the type of knowledge that characterizes scientific thinking, nevertheless the scientist must employ this type of knowledge whenever he attempts to verify a law. An experiment, through which laws are verified, relates objects to the experimenter as a knowing being. It is primarily a *"quoad nos"* knowledge rather than the *"quoad se"* knowledge characteristic of science. What is needed, therefore, is a higher point of view in which these two particular types of knowledge can be integrated. The key to this higher point of view is the critical notion of a *thing.* It is a notion grounded in an insight which grasps, not the relations between data, nor the relation of objects to us, but a unity, identity, whole in data. A thing is something with a concrete unity. It is extended in space, perdures through time; yet is subject to change. The *notion* of thing is a notion which depends in a critical way on the process of questions, insights, hypotheses, and reasoning. To this critical notion of thing, Lonergan contrasts the acritical notion of *"body"* the" already out there now real." It is something which a man can know through simple sense experience and direct knowledge without any insights, questions, hypotheses, or investigations. It is acritical whenever one makes the assumption, usually implicitly, that the notion of body corresponds to the object as it exists. By using this distinction, Father Lonergan is able to explain many of the difficulties and apparent paradoxes of science, such as the ultimate failure of all atomic models. These failures, he feels, are due to the illegitimate transfer of descriptive conjugates to the realm of science. Implicitly, such a transferal is grounded in the naive notion of body rather than the critical notion of thing.

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[51] *Ibid.,* chap. viii.

We have summarized the first eight chapters of *Insight* and their largely phenomenological treatment of the steps and processes involved in mathematical, physical, and common-sense knowledge. Attention was focused on understanding what it is to understand and on the progressive development of understanding through higher insights, hypotheses, heuristic structures and abstract systems. This irresistibly suggests the more basic question: how does one know whether or not his understanding is correct? Does a particular hypothesis explain reality or is it merely an airy scheme?

Before one attempts to answer such questions, he must decide how to go about answering them. A traditional Thomist, for example, might answer that understanding is correct when it conforms to reality; a logical positivist that understanding is correct if it is verifiable at least in principle; a tough-minded pragmatist might equate correctness with workability; a sceptic might reply that there is no ultimate answer to questions of correctness. These solutions and the many others that could be listed all have one feature in common. They presuppose some norm for judging the correctness of the products of understanding which they then apply.

Lonergan's methodology, which is strictly adhered to, precludes the assumption of any pre-established criterion of correctness. His treatment of insight begins by recognizing the fact that we do have insights and proceeds, according to his "moving point of view" to analyze the cognitional activities involved and to reveal certain structures immanent and operative in such activity. In much the same way, he investigates the question of the correctness of insights by recognizing the fact that we do make judgments that some insights are correct. Accordingly, Lonergan begins on a descriptive level by listing qualities characteristic of judgments and then proceeds to analyze the implications of the fact of judgment. Further questions such as the function of different cognitive faculties, the agent and possible intellect, etc., or the relation of judgment to existence, are not treated in this section of *Insight.* This does not imply that Lonergan denies the validity or significance of such questions. It is rather that he considers problems only in the order generated by his moving point of view. Whoever wishes to understand what Lonergan is attempting to do must accept this method of development, at least as a working hypothesis.

Judgment and Reflective Understanding

An examination of the judgments men make reveals three characteristic properties.[52] First, a judgment, as expressed in a proposition, is the content of an affirming or denying, an agreeing or disagreeing. Secondly, a judgment is basically an answer of "Yes " or " No " to a question for reflection, i.e., a question of whether or not some proposition is true. Finally, a judgment involves a personal commitment; it is a self-determination of the man who makes the judgment. These conclusions follow from a simple analysis of judgment as a fact of daily occurrence and they invite a deeper analysis relating judgment to the other elements of knowing.

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[52] *Ibid.,* chap. ix.

If we consider the case of simple, direct knowledge of a perceived object it is possible to distinguish three levels in. the process of knowing. First, there is the level of *presentations,* the perceptual image, the touch, the sound. For an animal this suffices; for a man it inevitably engenders questions: What is it? why does it have these properties?; etc. These questions lead to the second level, that of *intelligence.* From the previous analysis we may distinguish two different aspects proper to this level. First, there is an insight, a grasp of the intelligibility latent in the data. From this insight flows, as a function of intelligence, a concept, definition or hypothesis. For example, a man looking at distant scenery grasps the fact that some parts of his panorama cohere into a distinct. unity. This grasp of a unity engenders a hypothetical formulation. "Are these the ruins of an ancient castle?' This hypothesis is not at all an automatic product of sensation but is rather the natural manifestation of the dynamic drive of the mind to understand the data of experience. An attempt to answer this question with a "Yes " or "No " leads to a third level of cognition, the level of *reflection.*

In analyzing this level, Lonergan begins, as always, with the clearest aspect and proceeds towards the more obscure. What is clear is that the level of reflection normally terminates in a judgment, an answer of "Yes" or " No " to the question intelligence asks. "Am I writing?" "Yes." "Do I stand on my head when I write?" "No." Ridiculous as these examples may be, they underline the fact that we do form judgments in a spontaneous way and that we can be certain of the validity of at least some of them. What we wish to do is to analyze the way in which these judgments are formed. What induces a man to place a particular judgment? If the judgment is reasonable there must be something which intelligence grasps to motivate the judgment. It can not be the original direct insight, for this begets the question which judgment attempts to answer. It must be a new and distinctive sort of insight, an act of *reflective understanding* which grasps the sufficient evidence motivating the judgment.[53] Yet, when is evidence sufficient?

Since Lonergan's answer to this question is an important link in his development, it is worthwhile to reflect on the significance the question has in the context. He is not trying to justify any *a priori* rules distinguishing sufficient from insufficient evidence, nor does he even attempt at this stage to probe the ultimate reason for sufficiency. He is simply trying to determine what it is that a person who judges grasps that allows him to judge rationally. Lonergan's answer is, "To grasp evidence as sufficient for a judgment is to grasp the prospective judgment as virtually unconditioned."[54] This reply requires some explanation.

Every *act* of judging, as a rational act, requires a motive which, in a sense, conditions the act. With respect to what is affirmed, however, a judgment may be either conditioned or unconditioned. Lonergan divides the latter into formally and virtually unconditioned. What is formally unconditioned has no conditions at all; what is virtually unconditioned has conditions which are fulfilled. It is reflective understanding which transforms the conditioned, the hypothesis formed on the level of intelligence, into a virtually unconditioned, affirmed or denied on the level of reflections.

A simple example may add flesh to these dry bones. A man returns from work to find his house in ruins and judges, reasonably and moderately, "Something happened." On the level of presentations he has two sets of data: the memory of his home as it was and the chaos that confronts him. By a simple direct insight he refers both sets of data to the same thing, his home. This leads to a new and different sort of insight, the knowledge of change engendered by the realization that the same thing exhibits different individual data at different times. From this flows the hypothesis, the conditioned; " Something happened." When this is affirmed, " Yes, something *did* happen," this particular process of knowing is complete. But it is complete only because the nouveau-refugee grasped the sufficient evidence, the fact of change, in an act of reflective understanding.

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[53] *Ibid.,* chap. x.

[54] *Ibid.,* p. 280.

By burrowing a bit deeper Lonergan attempts to uncover the features immanent and operative in cognitional processes which enable one to distinguish between mere bright ideas and insights known to be correct. Prior to the *conceptual* distinction between correct and incorrect insights there is, as introspective analysis shows, an *operational* distinction between vulnerable and invulnerable insights. An insight is invulnerable when there are no further questions to be asked on the same issue. "Am I really sitting here?" "Yes," leaves no further questions to be asked. "Why?" or "How am I sure?" lead me into different issues. This simple analysis supplies the basic element required to explain the virtually unconditioned judgment. The conditioned is: a given hypothesis or prospective judgment is correct. The condition is: it is correct if and only if there are no further pertinent questions. These conditions are fulfilled for a given individual when he has an invulnerable insight. In this case the individual is led by the dynamism operative in his congitional processes to place a virtually unconditioned judgment.

Here an obvious difficulty arises. It may be that there are further pertinent questions which simply do not occur to me. This inadequacy is to be met by increased intellectual development and by a more critical investigation of the given problem. It can not be met by any solution which seeks to transcend the limitations of the human mind and compare the insight with reality, the "already out there now real." The judgment of the mind is based on the evidence known by the mind. If the evidence seems sufficient to me, if I know of no further pertinent questions, the natural dynamism operative in my mind leads me to make a judgment and allows me to feel secure in the judgment once made.

When one turns from simple direct judgments to an analysis of the judgments that occur in common-sense knowing, science, and introspection, he may discover essentially the same steps: the conditioned, or prospective judgment; a link between the conditioned and its conditions; and the fulfillment of the conditions transforming the conditioned into a virtually unconditioned. The added complexity arises either from the nature of the link or the difficulty in fulfilling the conditions.

Common-sense, for example, is a name given to a large and floating population of elementary judgments which everyone makes, everyone relies on, and few analyze. Couched in the imprecise language of description, it does not admit exact generalization. Its pragmatic orientation determines the nature of its fulfilling conditions. Basically, the type of question reflective understanding seeks to answer is: "Is the proposed judgment adequate to the situation?" The proposed judgment is shaped by one's habitual understanding and personal adaption to his particular environment. The new situation is known by an informal learning process. A "Yes " fulfills the conditions and renders the proposed judgment virtually unconditioned.

Scientific judgments exhibit a peculiar difficulty. Every established position serves as a point of departure for deeper questioning and further investigation. From the very dynamism of scientific development there are always further pertinent questions on any given issue. It follows that the. scientist can never reach the virtually unconditioned, that there is always a gap between the conditions immanent in the thrust of scientific intelligence and their fulfillment through the procedures proper to science. Accordingly, scientific judgment is never more than probable.

These conclusions may be put in a more general way by distinguishing between: an analytic *proposition,* such as, " every *A* is *B*," which may have a nominal meaning through the definition of the terms "A" and "B," but has no existential significance; and an analytic *principle,* such as "all men are mortal," whose terms do have an existential significance. Physics, according to Lonergan, is based on *provisionally* analytic principles. That is, the terms (or more precisely, "partial terms ") occur in probable empirical generalizations. They are susceptible to indefinite revision due to the advance of science. Mathematics is based on *serially* analytic principles. That is, mathematics originally considered empirical reality and sought to develop a systematic explanation through its own enriching insight. The drive of inquiring intelligence led to other, formally distinct, systems of the same generic form. The ultimate goal of mathematics is to establish the totality of systems in which enriching abstraction can confer intelligibility upon any matter, real or imagined.

To complete this part of the survey we must say something about Lonergan's explanation of introspective knowledge.[55] The previous analysis of the way we know revealed three essentially distinct steps in direct knowledge: experience, understanding, and judgment. From a subjective point of view all three have one feature in common; they are all conscious acts. I am conscious of myself as seeing and feeling, desiring and wondering, thinking and judging. This is not a special intuition of myself nor is it a perception of myself as object. It is simply an experience, the first level in the process of introspective knowledge. As such, it can occasion questions for intelligence and reflection. Thus, introspective knowledge, like direct knowledge, has three levels: experience, understanding, and reflection. Each can be considered in more detail.

The lowest level, experience, includes all acts of direct knowing and willing, of questioning and desiring. Man is not conscious of himself except through his acts. Yet, it is himself that he is conscious of, not of his acts as detached realities. Intelligence, confronted with such experience, obtains an insight into the significance and immanent intelligibility of the subjective experience. In the most basic case, for example, this would simply be a grasp of what it means to be conscious. This grasp is a pre-conceptual act of understanding which is had, to some degree, by any intelligent being. This understanding, like any act of understanding, can lead to questions, hypotheses, and tentative definitions concerning the nature of

[55] *Ibid.,* chap. xi.

consciousness, intelligence, etc. Reflection on the evidence supporting a given hypothesis (for example, the hypothesis Lonergan develops elsewhere that consciousness is simply the mode of a being which has attained a certain grade of perfection) leads to a judgment on its validity. Thus, analysis reveals essentially the same structure in introspective knowing as in the forms of knowing previously considered.

A failure to realize the points considered above has led to many misunderiltandings. If knowing is thought of as essentially analogous to looking, then any act of knowing must have a subject-object duality. In this case one must explain how the mind perceives or intuits itself, a search which leads to the pseudo-profundity of irrational obscurity. Such unfortunate opinions arise from a failure to recognize the distinctive basis of introspective knowledge, the conscious experience of oneself through one's acts, and from failing to distinguish simple subjective experience from understanding. One experiences himself *as subject,* not as object. This experience suggests questions which can be given objective answers. In this sense man can think of himself as an object of thought.[56]

In a subsequent article we intend to show the relation between Lonergan's study of St. Thomas and the cognitional analysis given in *Insight* and to treat further aspects of the problem of understanding as explained by Lonergan.

(To be continued)

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[56] This problem is treated in more detail in *De Constitutione Christi,* pars V. Here consciousness is defined as internal experience, in the strict sense of the word "experience," of oneself and one's actions. This conscious awarness psychologically constitutes the "Ego" as experienced. However, the "Ego" as *conceived* is known under the formality of intelligible. On this level a man can have an objective understanding of himself. Similarly, the "Ego" is affirmed under the formalities of true and of being. Only with judgment is there complete knowledge, a knowledge whose structure is not essentially different from Qther complete acts of knowledge. Only a proper realization of these distinctions makes it possible to treat the subject as object without misrepresenting the distinctive basis of introspective

THE PROPHET AND THE WORD OF GOD

WHENEVER the prophet spoke, his voice flared " like fire " and struck "like a hammer shattering rock" (Jer. 23: 29) . He whipped "a whirling storm that bursts upon the heads of the wicked" (Jer. 23: 19). His words came " from the mouth of the Lord," for the prophet "has stood in the council of the Lord, . . . has heeded His word, so as to announce it" (Jer. 23: 16, 18) .

God's word, heard through the voice of the prophets, not only shattered rocks of stubbornness and prejudice, but it also pulled down mountains of pride, and turned the rugged terrain of persecution into the broad valley of peace. God's word laid towards the revelation of "the glory of the Lord" *(of.* Is. 40: 3-5).

Biblical religion, established by the vigorous power of God's word, surrounded its worshippers with peace and security. Never, however, did the true prophets confuse peace with sleep! Though thanking God for the " comfort " and the " delight " of his word, the psalmist still prayed:

> . that I might be firm,
> . let me not stray .
> . I cling to your decrees .
> . I was prompt and did not hesitate (Ps. 118) .[1]

For many Israelites of Jeremia's day, as for many Jews and Christians today, God's word erects a wall of false security around a hunchbacked, snub-nosed religion. A lazy, sentimental people think to rest safely within the wall of God's promise, and they say to one another, "Peace shall be yours!" "No evil shall overtake you!" (Jer. 23: 17). Jeremia thunders, "There is no peace!" (Jer. 6: 14).

The hammer of God's word had shattered their mind, and they had stopped thinking. The prophet crying out the word of God prepared a super-highway so straight and so well paved that even believers raced down it lulled by the monotony of the way, many of them dozing off and crashing! Because of a superstitious trust in the security of the Word of God, the chosen people of Old Testament times provoked Jeremia's scornful indictment:

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[1] This text is from Ps. 118 (119), which was composed under a strong prophetic influence.

> They grow powerful and rich,
> fat and sleek,
> They go their wicked way (5: f).

Nothing so quickly deforms and destroys the message of the prophets than to accept it passively, with a yawn. Regretfully, God confessed to Isaia, that his word can "make the heart of this people sluggish, to dull their ears and close their eyes" (Is. 6: 10).

Many persons today accept the phrase, "The prophets, God's voice," with a shrug of the shoulders. "Oh, yes!" comes the soft drone of their reply, "What God speaks, the prophet repeats. The Bible, consequently, is the word of God."

Is the word of God, we ask, just an eternal truth, whispered into the prophet's ear and then solemnly mouthed with human sound? How can such a word crash down like a hammer shattering and pulverizing? How can it lift valleys and pull down mountains and heroically change men's lives? God's word, in fact, does more than change men's lives; it even asks the sacrifice of life. God's word comes forth" a sharp two-edged sword" (Apoc. 1: 16), cutting deeply, through the demands which it makes, and if it encounters resistance, then, as God declared through the prophet Osee, "I slew them by the words of my mouth" (Os. 6: 5).

There must, however, be more to God's word than idea and sound. The apostle St. John declared that God's word was such that it could not only be heard but it would also be "seen with our eyes" and "felt with our hands" (1 John 1: 1).

God called his word "spring rain that waters the earth" (Os. 6: 3), "a mist covering the earth" (Sir. 3), a river running over like the Euphrates with understanding and like the Nile sparkling with knowledge (Sir. 24:24 £.). The word has the" miraculous" power of water. No sooner does water touch the dry earth of semi-tropical Palestine than a lush carpet of green spreads across the land. No sooner does the word fall upon a heart of good will than the fruit of faith and charity appear.

Behind all this symbolism of hammer and sword, spring rain, mist and river there abides a *reality.* This article investigates the extraordinary reality contained beneath the phrase, " The prophet speaks the Word of God!"

I. *The Word of God in Ancient Near Eastern Culture*

The answer to questions about the word of God must come from the land which bred and reared the Israelite prophets. This homeland, however, is vaster than the six thousand square miles of Palestine. The prophet Ezechiel, alive with cosmopolitan ideas, could apply to himself and to his fellow prophets what he addressed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: "By origin and birth you are of the land of Chanaan; your father was an Amorrite and your mother a Hethite" (Ez. 16:1-3). In an ancient Israelite creed, the worshipper made this honest confession, "My father was a wandering Aramean who went down to Egypt with a small household ..." (Deut. 26:5). These references to Chanaan, Amorrite, Hethite, Aramean and Egyptian indicate that the prophetic style, like the people themselves, had deep roots in the Ancient Near East.

From studying the early literature of Egypt and Mesopotamia, we can conclude that the inhabitants of these countries did not consider "the word" a product exclusively of the intellect. The Ancient Near Easterns, and here we classify the Israelites, never distingiushed between intellect and will; nor, for that matter, did their thinking separate body and soul. The Hebrew language possessed various words ordinarily translated intellect and will, body and soul; but never did these words denote our highly abstract notions. The modern word "body," for instance, presumes a philosophical mentality which can reason about man's material element which is distinct from the soul, its source of life, but which is not to be identified with a corpse, lying soul-less in a coffin. The Israelites never rose to such abstract speculation.

The Hebrew word *biisiir,* ordinarily translated *body,* changes its meaning like the colors of a chameleon. Its precise signification varies with the hues and tints of local circumstances. In general, *biisiir* indicates a man who seems " all flesh! " We today describe such a person as sickly or sensuous or unreliable. In the Bible *biisiir* does not so much represent a part or a characteristic of a person but the *person himself* physically weak (Is. 31: 3) or afflicted with sickness (Lev. 13: :'l-43); *biisiir* is the person morally depraved (Gen. 6: *:'l; :'l* Paral. 3:'l: 8). What is excellently translated "your lustful neighbors" [2] reads in the hebrew "your neighbors of great flesh *(biisiir)"* (Ez. 16: :'l6); *biisiir* can even mean anybody and everybody, corresponding to our phrase "a seething mass of people" (Gen. 6: 1:'l; Is. 40: 5), yet the word can reach even still farther beyond our concept so as to include animals (Gen. 6: 17; Num. 18: 15). Finally, *biisiir* denotes a dead man (Gen. 40: 19).

Attention can be directed to other Hebrew words like spirit *(ru'alp),* soul *(nepes),* man *('enos),* and body *(gewiyya).* In each case, however, the word does not designate a quality separated from the person possessing it, but the person himself, absorbed by one or other dominant trait.

According to this ancient "psychology," each man acted as a totality, a single, living unit. [3] All of his faculties moved at once, in concert unity. It is true our faculties do act in this way, thoroughly dependent upon one another, constantly influencing one another, but whereas we neatly distinguish a cold objective concept of the intellect from the warm, subjective impulse of the will, the Hebrews understood the reaction as " totality thinking." An impulse of love vibrated in their understanding of the act of knowing; a steady control of knowledge directed the elan of the will. Man, with vigorous spirit *(ru'af;,)* reacted against man with weak flesh *(basar);* man, rich in wisdom, opposed man, impoverished with foolishness. It was always man struggling with man in the arena of reality. This arena could be confined to the reality of *one* man, so that the person gradually evolved into the equality or disposition most dominant in him. As he became flesh or spirit, the full reality of this person lived within that weakness or strength.

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[2] In the translation sponsored by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine.

[3] *Cf.,* B. J. LaFrois, ' Semitic Totality Thinking," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 17 (1955) J. Pedersen, *Israel* I-II (London: Oxford University Press, 99-131.

Johannes Pedersen,[4] Thorlief Boman,[5] and Claude Tresmontant[6] among many others[7] have investigated the ancient Near Eastern psychology. Their investigations release the full strength-perhaps, it would be more accurate to say, the full blast-----of the *divine word.* The word, like the idea, vibrated with the speaker's varied tones of character. The very concept of *word* in the ancient Near East possessed resonances of far wider extent than it had in ancient Greece. The Hebrew expression for " word," *dabar* signified: " to push " or " to drive forward" according to Edmond Jacob[8] and Thorlief Boman;[9] "to go away with" in Gensenius' Hebrew lexicon.[10] The etymology of *logos* or *lego,* on the contrary, expressed the idea: to collect, to order, to arrange.

In the earliest biblical traditions *dabar,* used as a noun, frequently designates an action or series of events. Abimelech asked Abraham: "What had you in mind in doing *this thing?"*

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[4] *Op. cit.*

[5] Thorlief Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with the Greek.* London: SCM Press, 1960.

[6] Claude Tresmontant, *A Study of Hebrew Thought.* New York: Desclee, 1960.

[7] Of special value is *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man.* University of Chicago Press, 1946.

[8] Edmond Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York: Harper, 1958) 128.

[9] *Op. cit., 65.*

[10] There is a minority opinion, which would divide *diibiir* into two different words, though spelt and sounded alike; one means "to follow behind" or "to push back"; the other, "to speak." *cf.,* L. Koehler- Walter Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1951) 199; James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (New York: Oxford, 1961) the chapter " Etymologies and related arguments."

(haddabar hazzeh) (Gen. 20:10; *cf.* Gen. 22:1; 24:66; 3 Kgs. 11:41). Because its meaning differs so much from our modern notion of "word," it will often be difficult to recognize the Hebrew *dabar* in the English translation of the Bible. Good translators, as St. Jerome advised, "render sense for sense and not word for word" *(Letter* LVII, 5). This advice is especially imperative when the word is *dabar!*

In very early Greek tradition *logos* "had nothing to do with the function of speaking."[11] Homer, for instance, ordinarily uses another word, *muthos.* "The deepest level of meaning in the term *logos* did not denote action, not even the articulation of a thought, but concerned itself with the well-ordered, reasonable content.[12] When the Greeks later accepted *logos* as the term for *word,* they seized upon the deepest or the most speculative one possible. The Hebrews, on the other hand, chose a term on the surface of life, involved in daily activity. Speaking, therefore, implied more than a communication of well-arranged thoughts; it achieved an active influence of one living person upon another.

When a prophet announced : "Hear the word of God," he was more than a teacher arranging his thoughts in logical sequence, so as to elucidate a doctrine or truth; he was a herald of divine presence. God was *there* in those words, irresistibly "pushing" or "driving forward" the action which his words uttered. The simultaneous "thrust" of speaking-acting is told by Deutero-Isaia:

> Things of the past I foretold long ago,
> they went forth from my mouth, I let you hear of them;
> then suddenly I took action and they came to be (Is. 48:3).

In this single verse Deutero-Isaia baffles our modern mind by the ease with which he swivels from past to future to present. Knowledge is communicated in the "long ago" yet no sooner does it go forth from the mouth of God, then suddenly, by surprise, the action has been done.

God's word *is* God himself acting upon the listener. God does not act in blind, uncontrollable movements but in a carefully determined way. There is a consistency about God; He is trustworthy. Knowledge is imparted by His actions, but the knowledge itself acts upon man. When the Jerusalem priests mock the words of Isaia as gibberish, and with drunken revelry roar out the refrain: "rule on rule, here a little, there a little" (Is. 10), Isaia shouts that God's word will fall upon them in the measured steps of dread and terror:

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[11] Boman, *op. cit.,* 67.

[12] *Cf. ibid.*

> Rule on Rule, rule on rule,
>   here a little, there a little!
> So that when they walk, they stumble backward,
>   broken, ensnared, and captured (Is. 13).

Each faint sound of the shortest syllable will act with fierce revenge.

The Israelites shared the Ancient Near Eastern idea of the *word* as an active, dynamic presence of the one speaking. If the one speaking is God, then the word touched the earth with the omnipotent, creative presence of God. Both in Egypt and in Mesopotamia worshippers celebrated the mighty power of the word of their god.

There exists, for instance, the *Hymn to Sin*, the Moon god, a bilingual text belonging to the reign of Assurbanipal (668- B. C.) but composed in the archaic languages of the Sumerians and the Akkadians of the third millenium. The hymn proclaims the vitality of the god's sovereign word. The opening word of each line identifies the divine word with the deity:

> You! your word settles down on the earth and green vegetation
>   is produced.
> You! your word makes stout the sheepfold and the stall;
>   it makes living creatures widespread....
> You! your word who can comprehend it, who can equal it? [13]

Many other quotations could be advanced from the Ancient Near East, witnessing to a belief that the word contained within

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[18] Adapted from the translation of Ferris J. Stephens in James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* ed. (Princeton University Press: 1955) 386; hereafter, *ANET*.

its syllables the presence of the gods. Egyptian documents, in fact, proclaim the *creative* power of the sacred word. One of these announces that the Memphite god Ptah was the original creator-god. The extant text dates only to the eighth century, but linguistic evidence traces it back over another two thousand years. The god Ptah is " heart" conceiving what is to be made; he is "tongue" speaking and thereby creating.[14] Still another Egyptian text of the 19th dynasty expresses an idea very similar to Deuteronomy 8:3, "Not by bread alone does man live, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of the Lord." The Egyptian document thus addresses the god Ptah, "... you in whose mouth is the creative word." Commenting on this document, Hellmut Brunner notes that the creative power of the word is not exhausted by the first work of creation but extends energetically into each present moment.[15]

With the ancients, the creative acts of the gods must continue into the contemporary life of the worshipper. Otherwise, the world would crack apart and collapse into chaos. The wondrous, divine act of stretching a firmament (or sky) into the heavens to hold back the roaring of its depths or, as we find in Egyptian texts, lifting the earth like mud out of the fertile waters of the Nile, must continue in a cyclic rhythm of life-birth, puberty, marriage and death.

The earth, the rain, the stars, the sun, these and all the other "wondrous" elements of the universe became gods, offspring of the creator-god and themselves continuing the divine work of creation year by year according to the seasons. Each spring the moment of creation burst freshly upon the earth; during the dry season of July-August when vegetation withered and died, the people mourned the death of the gods. In Egypt the cycles vary from those in Mesopotamia, but in both places the people's reaction was basically the same. Death would have been final, if the divine word of creation could not be spoken again. The rainy season in Mesopotamia, or in Egypt the inundation of the Nile, was assured by the power of the sacred liturgical word.

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[14] *Of.,* James A. Wilson, "Egyptian Myths," *ANET, 5.*

[15] *Cf.,* H. Brunner, "Was aus dem Munde Gottes geht," *Vetus Testamentum* 8 (1958) 429.

In this " mythopoetic conception of time,"[16] life does not continue on this earth as a straight line so that a point once passed cannot be retrieved. Time proceeds in the divine-human rhythm of ever recurring acts. The word which created the world is spoken repeatedly-re-enacted liturgically at the sanctuaries of the gods. In Egypt, the great shrines of Memphis, Thebes and Hermonthis were named "the divine emerging primeval island." Each could claim to be the spot where the primeval mud emerged from the waters of the Nile to begin life. Through faith that the liturgical rites and sacred words reenacted and *thereby* renewed the first act of creation, they recognized a divine power within the sacred, liturgical word.

This discussion has crisscrossed the ancient Near East from Mesopotamia across the west into Syria and down into Egypt; it has led us into the mysterious chambers of the ancient sanctuaries. We have become involved in the recital and the re-enactment of the sacred myths. What these myths were and how they reflected the experiential, psychosomatic character of ancient men are questions which we cannot pursue here. We have investigated the intellectual and religious habits of the Ancient Near East, so that we will understand the biblical faith in the word of God. This word must not be fossilized into a mere concept or idea, but rather be clothed with all the qualities of the one speaking. The word *is* the active presence of the speaker.

Left to themselves the Israelites would have been no different from their Amorrite, Aramean and Chanaanite neighbors. The blood of these people flowed in the veins and nourished the minds of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David and the other great leaders of Israel. History evidences the close ties between Israel and her neighbors. In language and architecture, in social practices and civil laws, even in the rubrics of divine worship, Israel copied freely. When the children of

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[16] H. and H. A. Frankfort, "Myth and Reality," *The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man,* 2S.

Abraham, however, seem to melt into the multitude of Ancient Near Eastern peoples, they emerge from the crowd, separate and unique. This religious difference is made clear from the archaeological discoveries of Palestine.[11] History reveals the Israelites, copying from their neighbors' architecture and agriculture, even from their language and worship, and yet history also points out the uniqueness of Israelite morality and concept of the deity. Why is Israel culturally very much the same, religiously very different? History raises this question, but only theology can answer it by claiming the intervention of God. For us at this moment the problem narrows down to this: like her neighbors Israel proclaims the power of the divine word, but unlike her neighbors Israel recognized within this word the personal love and kindly interest of her God.

> For *love* of your fathers he *chose* their descendants and *personally* led *you* out of Egypt by his great power.... This is why you must now know, and fix in your heart, the *Lord is God* in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is *no other* (Deut 4: 37-39).

Clearly this similarity of Israel to her neighbors was hazardous. The Hebrews were constantly in danger of absorbing not only the cultural habits of pagan peoples but also their religious beliefs and practices. In that eventuality the surrounding nations would have peacefully destroyed Israel's identity as a separate nation. Israel's greatness did not depend on what she was but rather on who God was. The word of God in Israel was different from the divine word in Mesopotamia or in Egypt because of Him who spoke.

II. *The Word of God, Bearer of Faith in a Personal God*

When the cultic patterns of the Ancient Near East were in danger of suppressing the word of a *personal, loving* God, rolling it out flat and indistinguishable from the word of any other god, then it was that the prophets arose and spoke. Their

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[17] *Cj.,* W. F. Albright, *The Archaeology of Palestine.* Pelican Book, 1951; *id., Prom the Stone Age to Chmtianity,* ed. !l, Doubleday Anchor Book, 1957.

voice was God's, calling the nation back to the faith of Abraham. God had entered sacred history by speaking a word, and through that word he pointed history in the direction of world salvation. When Israel began to swerve into the way of other nations, the prophets once again spoke the word of faith. To understand the prophetic message, therefore, we must know clearly the faith established in Abraham's soul by the word of God.

When the word of God first came to Abraham, it called to him:

> Leave your country, your kinsfolk and your fathers' house,
> for the land which I will show you;
> I will make a great nation of you.
> I will bless you and make your name great,
> so that you shall be a blessing....
> In you shall all the nations of the earth be blessed
> (Gen. 12: 1-3).

The divine word transmitted a message about land, posterity and blessing, but it was weighted with a mysterious element, which remained unspoken, and which turned out to be far more important than what the words actually said. God did not explain at first the situation of the land and to the very end Abraham remained a *ger*, an immigrant without citizenship. Abraham had to *wait* upon God trustfuly and would eventually be canonized not as a man of great possession, but rather as a man of heroic faith. " Abraham believed God, who accredited the act to him as justice" (Gen. 15: 6). Faith, which comes from hearing the word of God (cf., Rom. 10: 17), relies upon something not explicitly presented in the word. It is " the evidence of things that are not seen" (Reb. 11: 1).

God's word to Abraham held a mysterious power, sweeping the soul of the patriarch towards God and transforming him into "the friend of God" (James 2: 23). The dynamic power within the word was, of course, none other than God Himself, speaking the word and thereby revealing the secret of His divine life. The word pulsed with the personal love and the tender concern of Almighty God.

The word emerged from God's deepest life. It was not something created outside of Him, like the universe, but a sercet thought, a mystery, at the very heart of His being. So deep in God lies this mystery that it can be called God Himself.

Abraham's response to God's word was *faith,* an unconditional, total surrender of *himself* to God. As with God, so with Abraham, the interchange involved nothing primarily material, but rather something deeply personal-his very self.

The word of Scripture presents many examples of Abraham's new life of personal faith. For instance, he will listen in on divine soliloquies; he will hear God reasoning within Himself: " Can I keep from Abraham what I am about to do? ... " (Gen. 18: 17). "The friend of God *"-El Khalit* according to the Arabic form-will not be surprised at any demand from God. Love reacts that way.

Abraham quickly submits when he understands that God wants the sacrifice of the child of promise, Isaac. The biblical words manifest the poignant rending of someone closer to him than his own life: "Take, I pray you, your son, your only one, the one whom you love, Isaac" (Gen. 22: 2). Cornelius a Lapide commented, " *Quot hie verba, tot sunt stimuli, tot tentationes."* [18] Each word not only tempted Abraham but coming from God it also contained the power of God's presence so that God and Abraham were more closely pledged to one another.

God will reward the heroic faith of Abraham. When Moses later asked the name of the one speaking to him from the burning bush, the first answer declared: " I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham." This reply reflects as delicate a charity as though a man today would suppress his own name and for his son's sake call himself" the father of Jimmy Smith."

God was the father of Abraham, because by His word He had begotten new life within the Patriarch. Life, it surely was, for God's word had vitalized that area of Abraham's person where Abraham was truly himself and no one else, where

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[11] Cornelius a Lapide, *Commentarium in Genesim,* xxii.

Abraham thought, loved, judged, put to death and brought back to life.

The faith of Abraham became the life-blood of his many descendants. This life would be transmitted as it was originally bestowed, through the *word* spoken by God to Moses and through Moses to all the people.

God, it is true, performed great wonders as he brought his people out of Egypt; the plagues, the miracle of the Red Sea, the manna and the water. God acted stupendously in the sight of all. "Yet with most of them," wrote St. Paul, "God was not well pleased" (1 Cor. 10:5). Unless God spoke his word within the soul and unless the Israelite responded with faith as did Abraham, the murmur of unbelief would continue.

God's great redemptive acts would continue to save and redeem through the sacred word recited at the sanctuary. The day of Moses endured in the word which was vibrant with life.

> Hear, 0 Israel, the statutes and decrees which I proclaim in your hearing this day .... The Lord, *our* God, made a covenant *with us* at Horeb [=Sinai], not with our fathers did he make this covenant, but with *us, all of us* who are *alive here this day* (Deut *5:* 1-2).

Each generation responded with faith, yet even this answer of faith was breathed into them by the utterance of God's word. *"Hear,* 0 Israel!" Each listened, as God repeated what He once spoke to Moses:

> I have witnessed the affliction of my people Israel in Egypt and I have heard their cry of complaint.... Therefore, I have come down to rescue them (Ex. 3:7 f.) .

This life, begotten by the word within the soul of the people, was the same as Abraham's, a personal bond, attaching God and his people to one another. No word, of course, contained so fully the life of God as the sacred name, Yahweh. What this name really means is still controverted by scholars. Some question whether God in revealing this name added any new idea to the heritage of biblical faith.[19] The name, according to these scholars, succinctly expressed what had been the faith given to Abraham. It pledged God's continuous presence, and by responding with faith to this presence Israel came to know God better and better. In this case, the sacred name Yahweh confesses: *He who is always there with you.*

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[19] This explanation finds its strongest support in Ex. 88:18-!l8. *Cf.,* M. M.

This "new" name, as the late Albert Gelin beautifully declared/0 becomes a prayer when spoken by man and a promise when uttered by God. By it man asks of God: " Come, be with me"; and by it God replies to man: "I am with you." For man to hear this word, he must believe. As he hears it with faith, his life becomes a waiting upon God. During each moment of man's life, God reveals Himself by love and care, and as man experiences this " word " of protection, he comes to know the mystery of God. It is a knowledge which is life, for it extends God's personal concern to every segment of man's being.

The Mosaic tradition provides a second example of the creative power of the word of God. This instance is drawn from one of the earliest law codes of Israel, Exodus German scholars have given it the name *Bundesbuch, Book of the Covenant.*

Most of the laws are expressed conditionally; i.e., if such and such happens, then this is what shall be done.[21] These laws are called casuistic or case laws, because they represent a

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Bourke, "Yahweh, the Divine Name," *The Bridge* ***III*** (New York: Pantheon, 1958) where various explanations and a rather full bibliography can be found.

[20] A. Gelin, "Messianisme," *Dictionnaire de la Bible Supplement 5* (Paris: Letouzey et Ane, 1957)

[21] *I. e.,* " When a man borrows an animal from his neighbor, if it is maimed or dies while the owner is not present, [then] the man must make restitution. But if the owner is present, he need not make restitution. If it was hired, this was covered by the price of its hire" (Ex. 18-14) . Albrecht Alt, " Die Upspriinge des israelitischen Rechts," *Kleine Schriften zur Geschichte des Volk•es Israel* I (Munchen: 1958) is greatly responsible for clarifying our idea of this particular type *(Gattung)* of legislation. Some of its effects upon covenant theology is classically presented by George Mendenhall, "Ancient Oriental and Biblical Law," *Biblical Archaeologist* 17 (May 1954) ff. and "Covenant Form in Israelite Tradition," *id.* 17 (Sept. 1954) *50* fl'. These two articles are also available from The Biblical Colloquium, 781 Ridge Ave., Pittsburgh, Pa.

decision handed down by a judge on a particular case or problem. Almost all ancient legal codes consisted of these casuistic laws.[22] Hammurapi's code listed nearly three hundred such cases. These enactments were not properly laws; like decisions of the United States Supreme Court, they established a norm or precedent for the future. Each new case would judged not only according to this traditional "norm" but also on its own merits.

As we watch the Israelites share the jurisprudence of their neighbors, we must admit that the children of Abraham seem to fade into the common horizon of the Ancient Near East. In many ways, moreover, the Hebrews were definitely inferior to others, "because the biblical laws are scattered and disorganized in sharp contrast to the orderly and comprehensive legislation of Hammurapi." [23] Just when the distinct genius of Israel seems absorbed by the higher culture of other countries, the Israelites step forward to stand alone. Their juridical system is God's word.

Yet, so was Hammurapi's code the word of Shamash, but the difference between Yahweh and Shamash, the sun god, separated Israel from Babylon with a chasm deeper than *el ghar* of the Jordan! Despite the highly personalized religion of the Ancient Near East, Shamash remained a "power" subservient to Babylonian ritual, while Yahweh was truly a "person" who called Israel " my special possession, dearer to me than all other people" (Ex. 19: 5). Israel's law expressed God's personal wish for this beloved people; they must respond with loving faith.

Faith in God's personal care-an element unspoken, merely implied-such was Israel's obedience to God's law. The biblical law code did not lay out a blue print, determining in advance exactly what must be done inch by inch along the way. Casuistic laws provided only a "norm." The Chosen People must wait obediently, as God through priest or judge defines each new case. For guidance the priest or judge has the precedent of great leaders of old and their " casuistic laws." By studying their forefathers' humble obedience to God and by sharing God's kindly solicitude for his people, the judge will be able to hand down an equitable decision. Just as the judge may not approach a case with conceit or prejudice if his judgment is to be God's word, the people too must react with humble acceptance if they are to hear divine accents in human speech. With faith alive, the chosen people like Abraham will be led by the power of the word. He who called himself " The God of Abraham " will then discharge the promise of his name Yahweh, *he who is always there with you.*

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[22] *Of., ANET,* Part II "Legal Texts," pages 157-223.

[23] Cyrus H. Gordon, *Hammurapi's Code* (New York: Rinehart, 1957) 2.

Ill. *The Word of God, Smothered by Material Hopes*

God's word, like water, had fallen upon the land of Palestine and immediately a rich carpet of green spread across the countryside. The word was charged with such vitality and produced such abundance, that men began to confuse the abundance with the life, the effect of the word with the word itself. Instead of listening to *God* as he spoke, Israel forgot all about God and concentrated upon his *promises.* The worshipper confused God and his gifts.

This change came so easily that few persons noticed what was happening. Blind trust in the power of God's word transformed that word into nothing more than an impersonal power at the service of man. Religion slumped into superstitution. Israel's keen, generous faith had been so dulled by material interests and fleshly concerns, that the chosen people were incapable of Abraham's heroic obedience and Moses' humble meekness before God's word. They were too dull to sense the mystery contained within the divine communication. "They grow powerful and rich, fat and sleek. They go their wicked way" (Jer. 5: 27-28) .

The prophets alone detected this insidious state of affairs. They saw clearly that Israel's religion, founded upon the word of God, was being corrupted from within by a superstitious trust in the divine word. Amos, the first of the "classical prophets," [24] was well trained to spot this cancerous condition. Years of pasturing sheep in the wilderness of Juda, not only sharpened his vision to spot a lizard silently slithering across the sand, but it also made him sensitively aware of deep-seated human reactions. He was not fooled by the external grandeur, the elaborate ritual and the pompous behaviour of Israel. He detected beneath the polished veneer the frustration, the bitterness, the infidelity of the people.

Standing before the crowd of worshippers at Bethel sanctuary, he caught their attention by condemning one after another of their enemies: Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, and the rest. While the devotees were still clapping and shouting approval, the desert-trained prophet fiercely turned on them:

For three crimes of *Israel,* and for four,
I will not revoke my word (Am. fl: 6) .

God's patience was exhausted; the number of offenses was complete. "The time is ripe to have done with my people" (Amos 8:2).

They sell the just man for silver,
and the poor man for a pair of sandals (Am. fl: 6).

The wealthy would assure themselves that the poor acted justly. The law required that a man pay his debts. Lest this law be violated, the poor were sold into slavery to defray their expenses. What they owed, however, was the price of a pair of sandals! These poor people must be sinners, so went the thinking of the times, because God's word had promised wealth and plenty to good religious folk.

Son and father go to the same prostitute,
profaning my holy name (Am. fl: 7).

God had promised to Abraham " descendants as the stars of the heaven" (Gen. 22:17); and so in God's holy name the Israelites perform the fertility cult to consecrate their sex and their family to God. Amos labeled this religion "profanity" and its attraction lustful gratification. He would not even employ the technical word for temple prostitute (*qedesa)*; he called the girl a *na'iira,* a young female with sexual appeal.

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[24] This term is sometimes used to distinguish the "writing prophets" from the earlier prophets *(Nebi'im)* like Elias and Eliseus, who belonged to prophetic bands and relied upon charismatic gifts.

> The wine of those who have been fined
> they drink in the house of their god (Am. 2:8).

Strict justice inflicted fines upon transgressors, but the judges used the proceeds to get drunk at sacred banquets! They held both the fines and the sacrificial banquets to be God's will, clearly legislated for in the Torah! God must have been well pleased! In fact, he must have dozed off into sweet slumber after receiving the gift of many flocks of sheep and large casks of wine. In the popular mind, God had been turned into an image of themselves, with animal lusts and moral indifference. Externals were enough; wealth was the sign of blessing. Little wonder Amos shouted "Woe!" at "those who yearn for the day of the Lord" (Am. 5:18).

God's word, evidently, no longer summoned worshippers to faith. It was nothing but a magic formula to insure success. Once the sacred phrases were repeated in the temple liturgy, the full effect of bounteous wealth *must* come. Man's response was reduced to a superstitious trust in externals: the externals of the liturgy and the externals of wealth. Lost was the interior spirit of faith, whereby man could listen to the mystery of God's love hidden within the word and make an unconditional commitment of himself to the *person* of God.

The change crept so slowly and so surreptiously over the faith of Israel that we almost question the fierce, uncompromising stand taken by the prophets. In defense of the prophets we must admit that their holiness had bestowed on them a sharpness of vision far more intense than their fellow countrymen to pierce to the heart of the matter. What they saw of Israel's hard arrogance turned them against God's people. They witnessed the rejection of God's call. Israel was flaunting God's love by abusing the gifts of his love.[25]

God's goodness, it can be seen, was the occasion of this disastrous change. Was he too indulgent, too generous? No! but Israel like a spoilt child used God's gifts to turn against him. Ezechiel presents the entire history of Israel in terms of such shameless ingratitude (ch. 16).

God was continuously warning his people against this obsession with comfort and wealth, not only by the moral demands of the decalog but also by the punishment of evil.[26] God even disciplined Moses, Aaron and Miriam.[27] The Israelites, as the theological introduction[28] to the book of Judges explained "were quick to stray from the way their fathers had taken and did not follow their example of obedience. . . . They would relapse and do worse" (Judges 2:17, 19).

The Deuteronomic ensemble of Josue-Judges-Samuel-Kings stressed repeatedly the evil effects of disobedience and infidelity. Lurking behind each word of this history, however, is the material attitude of a people too crass and too dull for this sublime teaching. The stories of Samuel, of Elias and Eliseus, of David and Solomon, all pulse with excitement over material gifts and marvelous deeds. Religion was following the quick, smooth road of the miraculous; the silent way of faith leading deep into the heart of God, was too steep and forbidding and completely hidden by the bursts of splendor, of wealth and prestige.

What could be done, when apostasy was being justified by the name of religion? To David God had promised: "Your house and your kingdom shall be confirmed before me forever" (2 Sam. 7:16). In dedicating the temple, Solomon declared that this tabernacle was the dwelling of God on earth, and therefore every prayer directed towards this place must be heard (*cf.,* 3 Kings 8: 27-30). Later, when Jeremia flayed the people for their sins, they feel no need to reform their morals. They simply chant monotonously, "This is the temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord!" (Jer. 7: 4). Possessing the temple, the Israelites say:

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[25] *Cf.*, Ex. 16:17, "You took the splendid gold and silver ornaments which I had given you and made for yourself male images, with which also you played the harlot."

[26] *Cf.*, Ex. 20:1-17; Num. 11:31-35; Deut. 8:6-20.

[27] *Cf.*, Num. 12; 20.

[28] Judg. 2:6-3:6.

> No evil shall befall us,
>   neither sword nor famine shall we see.
> The prophets have become wind (Jer. 5: 12-13).

What was God to do, when faith in *divine things* was destroying faith in God? Was He to work more miracles and distribute more wondrous delights? Such action would only thicken the material spirit of their hearts. Yet, how could a people so dull, so "sleek and fat," be made aware of their apostasy from God?

God's answer to this seemingly hopeless situation was to raise up a series of religious leaders, the like of whom has seldom been equalled in any world religion, the prophets. The prophets, on their part, would simply speak *the word of God* and then wait for its full effects to be felt. Commissioning the prophets, God said:

> I place *my words* in your mouth! ...
> To root up and to tear down,
>   to destroy and to demolish,
>   to build and to plant (Jer. 1:9-10).

Before God's word would be able "to build and to plant," it must first go forth " to root up and to tear down." That is precisely what it had done to Abraham and Moses. It had *uprooted* the Patriarch from his native land that he might follow God's word into a strange land (Gen. 12: 1-3); it had *torn down* Moses' palace of Egyptian glory and *demolished* his pride through desert austerity, that he might lead the people to a covenant between themselves and God.

IV. *The Prophets, Men of the Word* [29]

Unlike priest or king, the prophet did not receive his office automatically through membership in the sacred tribe of Levi or in the royal house of David. The prophet relied upon some credential other than noble blood. Neither did any public ceremony ratify and validate the divine choice.

The sacred oil which consecrated the prophet was different from the oil which anointed the high priest and the king. Something far more sacred than olive oil was poured upon the prophet. The "oil" of God's word flowed upon the heart of the man chosen to be a prophet. Listen again to God's ordaining words to Jeremia:

> Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
> before you were born, I consecrated you,
> a prophet to the nations I appointed you (Jer. 1:5).

"I consecrated you," or, in Hebrew *hiqdO-Stikii.* This same Hebrew word is used when the high priest Aaron was ordained with consecrating oil: "He [Moses] also poured some of the anointing oil on Aaron's head, thus *consecrating* him *(leqaddes6)*" (Lev. 8: .

Both priest and prophet were consecrated, but the "oil" which set the prophet aside, for his special mission was the *word of God.* This all-powerful word, as Jeremia confessed, became "like fire burning in my heart, ... I cannot endure it" (Jer. 9). It had grasped the will of Jeremia and set his life upon a divine mission. No matter how poignantly he longed "that I had in the desert a travelers' lodge that I might leave my people and depart from them" (Jer. 9: 1), still, he could not free himself from the strong grasp of God's word. On the day of his ordination, Jeremia received the anointing of this divine order:

> Behold I place my words in your mouth!
> This day I set you
> over nations and over kingdoms (Jer. 1: 9).

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[29] They are sometimes called the "writing prophets." This designation can give the false impression that their primary occupation was to compose the divine

The prophetic consecration by the word of God was solemnized secretly and mysteriously in Jeremia's soul.

If a prophet like Jeremia did belong to a priestly family, he disassociated himself from the privileged class. When he stood before the people, he did not attract attention with the solemn announcement: "Hear me, because I am a priest! " He said very simply: "Hear the word of the Lord" (Jer. 7: 2). Isaia may have taken advantage of his position at the royal court to speak freely before the king; he certainly put to use his excellent education as state advisor. Never, however, did he draw the power of his message from any of these class benefits, but rather from the interior conviction that " I have heard from the Lord, the God of hosts, the destruction decreed for all the earth" (Is. 28: 22) . If, after the destruction is complete, "the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces," this too happens "because the Lord *has spoken"* (Is. 25: 8) . The source of prophetic strength was the presence of God's word within the soul and upon the lips of the prophet.

The " classical prophets " even cut contact with the company of "professional prophets."[30] Prophets like Amos, Osee and Isaia never joined the association of *Nebi'im* nor did they follow a separate community life. They do not seem to have assembled even periodically with these groups, although saintly men like Samuel (1 Sam. 9: 20) and Elias (4 Kings 2: 3) lived at least intermittently among them.

The *Nebi'im* at first were fired with fervor and for a long time sustained the loyalty of God's people. In later times, unfortunately, these professional prophets were absorbed with selfish interests and used their reputation as a source of income. Michea said contemptuously:

> . . . regarding the prophets
> who lead my people astray;

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message on paper. The "classical prophets" were missionaries or evangelists of the spoken word.

[80] Professional prophets or *nem'im* deliberately chose this vocation, wore special dress (4 Kings 1: 8), and in the fulfillment of their office relied heavily upon the marvelous (1 Sam. 10:5-8; 19:fH-22).

> Who, when their teeth have something to bite
> announce peace
> But when one fails to put something in their mouth,
> proclaim war against him (Mich. 3:5).

In the face of such a shameful reputation, it is little surprise that Amos snapped back at Amasia, the high priest of Bethel, when this gentleman ordered Amos to "flee to the land of Juda! There earn your bread by prophesying!" (Am. 7: Amos resented the " accusation" of being one of the *Nebi'-im.* With a contemptuous twist of his mouth, he replied:

> I am no prophet,
> nor have I ever belonged
> to a company of prophets (Am. 7:14).

Amasia's slur to" earn your bread by prophesying" portrays the professional prophet as an ecclesiastic using his spiritual office simply for material gain. In the case of the *nebi'-im* prophesy merely provided an opportunity to predict (and thus achieve) victory and prosperity for their royal masters.[31] In return, the prince provided his loyal seers with wealth and prestige.

Not even supernatural visions, granted personally to some of the " classical " prophets, were ever invoked as divine proof for the word of God. Amos (7:1 ff.) and Isaia (6:1 ff.) beheld a mysterious vision at the same time as God spoke his " consecrating" word. These inaugural visions, whenever they occurred, profoundly affected the prophets' character and deeply colored their thought. Isaia, ever after, reverently spoke of the "Holy One of God"[32] and Amos preached with stern finality.[33] In every instance, however, the prophet commanded a hearing from the people, not because he had seen a vision from God but rather because he could say: "Hear the Word of God!"

For too long a time now the word of God was being silenced by the loud blasts of marvelous happenings. External wonders were distracting men away from God; bells and trumpets accompanying the magnificent ceremonies of worship substituted for good moral living. The people seemed almost to think that majestic ritual could blind God to the sight of their immorality and faithlessness. These people did not need more visions and more miracles, a fact very' clear to the prophets. The land groaned under the scourge of a famine, but it was "not a famine of bread, or a thirst for water," declared Amos, but a famine" for hearing the word of the Lord" (Am. 8: 11).

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[31] *Of.,* 3 Kings fl'.; 6-37; Jer. 26:7-24; 29:8,

[32] In this inaugural vision God was praised by the seraphim with "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts " (Is. 6:3).

[33] Many scholars hold that Am. 7:1-9; 8:1-3 contain Amos' inaugural vision. The third and fourth vision say with finality: "I will forgive them no longer."

The classical prophets, we must admit, worked miracles. As a " sign " to King Ezechia, Isaia commanded " the shadow cast by the sun on the stairway . . . go back the ten steps it has advanced" (Is. 38: 8) . Earlier Isaia had told Ezechia's father, King Achaz, to " ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the sky" (Is. 7: 11). These marvelous occurrences, however, were rare, and even when these wonders were offered, the prophet still insisted more emphatically upon *interior faith.* Isaia, in fact, had just finished saying to King Achaz:

Unless your faith is firm,
  you shall not be firm (Is. 7: 9).[34]

When Ezechia exhibited the wealth of his kingdom before the impressionable Babylonians, Isaia rebuked him for boasting of human greatness instead of trusting in divine strength. Faith was to be Israel's source of salvation.

Before investigating, how the word of God developed a spirit of faith within the soul of Israel, we will look into the soul of the prophet for the effects there of the divine word.

For Amos, dedication to the divine word was blunt obedience. A man of strong will, able to muster full strength to the duty at hand, Amos quickly marched north to Bethel at God's command: "Go, prophesy to my people Israel" (Am. 7: 16). Amos spoke without sympathy, coldly enunciating the devastating Word of God. This word, which had transformed the shepherd into a prophet almost against his will, remained just as powerful in the announcement to sinful Israel: " I will crush you into the ground" (Am. 2: 13) .

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[34] Isaia's *word* has a power here even because of his heavy diapason sound. In Hebrew it runs thus: *ki lii' te'iimenu, 'im lo' ta'iimenu.*

What was military obedience in Amos' disciplined soul was agonizing acceptance in Osee's sensitive spirit. Osee endured humiliation lower than the dirt on the street, as he retrieved " yet again " a wife who had become the " beloved of a paramour" (Os. 3: 1) . Only thus will he be prepared to speak of God's infinite, forgiving love. God had been betrayed again and again, so that were a man in God's place, human anger would flatly declare: "So much, no more!" Osee, however, was thus to pour out the anguish of God's answer:

> I am God and not man,
> the Holy One present among you;
> I will not let the flames consume you (Os. 11: 9).

At the same time God's word, spoken by Osee, was deadly:

> . . . I smote them through the prophets,
> I slew them by the word of my mouth (Os. 6: 5).

God however destroys only what is evil and harmful, so that he can declare in the concluding message of Osee:

> I will heal their defection
> I will love them freely....
> I shall be like the dew for Israel:
> he shall blossom like the lily....
> I have humbled him, but I will prosper him
> (Os. 14:5-6, 9).

No prophet, not even Osee, so laid bare the profound emotions of interior struggle as the one whose words are repeated by the liturgy of Passion and Holy Week. From the start, Jeremia begged God to send someone else because" I know not how to speak; I am too young" (Jer. 1: 6). The prophet's own weakness would reveal the source of his iron strength; his slowness in speech would prove God's statement: "I place my words in your mouth!" (Jer. 1: 9). Only if they came from

God could the words of such a diffident, fearful man become in later Israel the most popular of all prophetic scrolls and could men say of Jesus that he is Jeremia come back alive *(cf.,* Matt. 16: 14).

God's words sunk so deeply into the soul of Jeremia, penetrated so thoroughly every pore of his mind and heart, and colored so profoundly every thought and reaction of the man, that it is often impossible to distinguish God's word from Jeremia's. This complete compenetration was achieved through years of interior struggle. Jeremia's first hesitation in accepting God's word was only the first of a series of tense arguments. Jeremia finally poured out words almost blasphemous in fury:

> You have indeed become for me a treacherous brook,
> whose waters do not abide! (Jer. 15: 18).

Divine obedience had led the prophet down a river bed whose waters vanish into desert dryness and he is abandoned to the deadly wastes. Only by struggling in the depth of his heart and by surrendering his whole self unconditionally could Jeremia and his future disciples deserve to hear from God: " I will place my law *within them* and write it upon their *hearts;* I will be their God and they shall be my people" (Jer. 31: 33).

God's word then inscribed on the hearts of the prophets, was more than a truth to be believed; faith, we have already seen, was more than a response of the intellect! God's word, in the case of Amos, called for blind obedience. It ruthlessly cut into the heart and mind of Osee and Jeremia and slew whatever it could not conquer or did not want. It was ruthless, and yet, somehow or other, the all-powerful God felt "my heart ... overwhelmed, my pity stirred" (Os. 11: 8). Even though Israel was "like a woman faithless to her lover," God begged her repeatedly: "Return, rebellious children" (Jer. 3: 14) . God's word then came from God's deepest life and evoked the prophet's most intense emotion. God's word given and received was an interchange of life's love, hope and entire self.

To have promised wealth and to have worked miracles would have distracted the prophet and his listeners from God's loving spmt. This distraction is actually the worst of infidelities, because it uses God's gifts to purchase sinful pleasure. The prophets received the law of God's word on their heart, making them out as God's very own. God chose them for this special mission, in order that they might share with all Israel this personal friendship with God. The prophets would perform their mission, exactly as God acted towards them, by announcing the Word of God.

V. *The Prophetic Word to Israel*

The prophets, we have seen, continued the mission of Abraham and Moses; they sustained Israel's strong faith in a personal God. But many centuries had passed since God had first called Abraham and had directed Moses to the establishment of the Israelite religion. The nomadic, patriarchal existence of Abraham and the austere, desert wandering of Moses were gone forever, and yet the *spirit* of these extraordinary men must reappear in their descendants. One of the prophets exhorted the people:

> Look to the rock from which you were hewn,
> and to the pit from which you were quarried;
> Look to Abraham, your father,
> and to Sara, who gave you birth (Is. 51: 1-2).

In summoning a return to these heroes of the past, the prophets disregarded many details of Abraham's and Moses' lives. To express this truth more accurately, we can say that the prophets saw a *hidden, symbolic* meaning in their forefathers' external mode of life. To be a *ger* like Abraham without homeland and citizenship; *to* be a wanderer like Moses through desert wastes-these circumstances became types or symbols of interior holiness for they revealed an heroic dedication to God-'s word. By the word of God, once spoken *to* Abraham, and to Moses and now heard again in the prophets, *the spirit* of the past will be reproduced in other hearts. The deep, typical meaning will be fulfilled in other lives.

Our present concern is to see how the prophets achieved this reliving of the past. We will concentrate attention upon three factors. First of all, in announcing God's word, the prophets sounded no retreat from reality, but through faith imparted a full meaning to reality. They did not issue the impossible order of a return to the desert but they allowed the people to remain where they were. Yet the prophets were not satisfied with conditions as they were! God's plans were so vast and stupendous that the word will create a new world of happiness upon this earth. In this second factor we sense the tension of the prophetic message. To remain humbly attentive to ordinary things, so the prophets declared, prepared Israel to witness wondrous things:

> ... awesome deeds we could not hope for,
> such as they had not heard of from of old
> No ear has ever heard, no eye ever seen,
> any God but you,
> doing such deeds for those who wait for him (Is. 64: 2-3).

A new creation is the reward for humble, abiding faith in God's word.

Besides an acceptance of reality and a belief in a new creation, the prophetic message contained a third important element. God, who spoke through the prophets, was no stiff, faceless deity but a God personally interested in his chosen people.

1. The Meaning of Reality

The prophets did not summon any retreat from reality. To be a loyal follower of Moses, the sons of Israel were not obliged to dismantle their stone houses, abandon city life and begin a nomadic wandering, pitching their tents wherever darkness caught them. Some fanatic Israelites, the Rechabites, did oblige themselves to this *literal* obedience to Moses. "All our lives," they confessed to Jeremia, "we have not drunk wine ... We build no houses ... ; we own no vineyards or fields or crops, and we live in tents" (Jer. 35: 8-10).[35] Never did the Bible commit Israel to such an inflexible observance of the law; the many adaptations incorporated into the Mosaic law, the modifications of later centuries, the existence of different applications,[36] the very form of casuistic laws-all these features of biblical law rule out an obstinate, unyielding obedience to external rules. The stress is rather upon internal faith.

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[35] Another example of the Rechabite fanatic zeal for Yahwism and their extreme

The prophets saw clearly that the cause of the nation's irreligious spirit lay basically not in the externals of civilization. There was nothing sinful about houses and crafts, architecture and music. All through her history Israel borrowed freely from her neighbors and yet maintained her own separate religious identity. From the Canaanites she learned farming; from the Philistines she received the secret of iron. Egypt contributed her wisdom literature; Ugarit, her religious poems; Tyre and Sidon, their architects and building material. Despite this unabashed copying of foreign culture, Israel remained religiously distinct. Her interior faith was never suppressed by all these external wrappings. Instead of that, her faith lived in and through these externals, harnessing them to the service of Yahweh.

Israel, therefore, was not obliged to flee to a never-never land of Shangri-La but rather to direct the penetrating power of faith upon the ordinary circumstances of life. Monstrous Assyria, trampling like a lustful giant over the ancient Near East, was but exercising the will of God who was disciplining and so purifying his chosen people. Isaia, therefore, in speaking for God, called Assyria, "my rod in anger, my staff in wrath" (Is. 10:5). When God's work was completed, the rod would be tossed aside. Assyria would crash to destruction like the cedars of Lebanon roaring down a mountain precipice (cf., Is. 10:33).

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hatred for the abuses of city life is found in 4 Kings 10:15-30. The Covenanters along the Dead Sea, around the time of Our Lord, also went out into the wilderness and to a certain extent undertook a very literal obedience to the Mosaic tradition.

[36] One typical example is found in comparing the paschal laws of the north in Deuteronomy with those of the south in the Priestly Tradition. Deut 16:7 stipulates about the paschal lamb: "You shall boil and eat it " while Ex. 12:9 states just as explicitly: "It shall not be eaten raw or boiled, but roasted whole." The identical Hebrew verb *bsl* is used in both cases for "boil."

How poignantly Israel wanted to escape to some other world, rather than recognize God's chastening hand in Assyria! Such an escape was as impossible as Jona's ridiculous attempt to flee across the sea from "the God of heaven who made the sea" (Jona 1: 9). God clearly acted in every movement and change of Palestinian life, and consequently God could be found *only in* these earthly involvements. Amos made that point very clear. Draught or locust plague; blight or searing wind; pestilence or death-all these catastrophes come from God ...

> Yet you returned not to me,
> says the Lord (Am. 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11).

All these disasters were God's word, *acting* in their midst, calling Israel back to personal love and loyal faith. These calamities destroyed, only if they were not accepted as the " word of God." In the depth of such darkness, faith became an act of heroic fortitude.

When Habacuc complained about violence, ruin and misery, God replied that he will act (or speak) by " raising up Chaldea, that bitter and unruly people" to punish the wicked Jerusalemites (Hab. 1: 6). This answer provoked another question from the prophet:

> Why, then, do you gaze on the faithless in silence
> while the wicked man devours
> one more just than himself? (Hab. 1: 13) .

This time God's answer would be so important that it must be written

> Clearly upon the tablets,
> so that one can read it even on the run....

The words of life, deserving to be chiseled by iron on stone tablets, are:

> The just man lives by faith (Hab. 2:2, 4).

Faith is life; without it, man is dead!

Israel had only one way of life at her disposal, that of faith.

Every other way of living was a living death. She could not run away; she was obliged to find God by faith in all the human surroundings of contemporary Palestine. This demand of faith was heroic, because it compelled the wicked to accept the fire of purification, while it constrained the good to remain patient. God was not asleep but actively present in the storm.

Faith accepted the outstretched arm of God in all these events; it heard the saving word of God in everything. God's word acted and like rain it brought life. This sense of the divine presence in earthly involvements was the prophets' first great contribution to biblical life.

2. A New Creation

The life begotten of faith was actually a new creation. Here is one of those many conundrums of prophetic thought. In the midst of distress man wants to run away to a new creation of his own making, to an " unreal " world different from what he has at hand. The prophets forbade such a retreat from reality. By remaining humbly subject to God's world and word, the old was transformed into a new creation. What man strove to acquire for himself, by himself, God was waiting to give. Israel, however, must accept it as *God's* creation.

No prophet sang so lyrically of the new creation as Deutero-Isaia in ch. 40-55, and at the same time he is the prophet who acclaimed with esctatic language the powerful word of God. His message was so completely God's that his name has vanished from the records and his inspired words were simply added to the scroll of his master.[37] He is sometimes named the "Great Unknown."

In speaking of the new creation, Deutero-Isaia will move with the ease of a deft weaver, crossing one strand of thought upon another. Each new idea, like a colored thread, adds its own shade of meaning to the completed tapestry.

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[37] Here we follow the opinion that Chapters 40-55 were written not by Isaia of Jerusalem who lived in the late eighth and early seventh centuries B. C. but by a disciple of his during the Babylonian exile (587-537 B. C.). This latter prophet had the teaching of his master sealed up in his heart (*cf.*, Is. 8: 16) and through divine inspiration applied it to the new circumstances of the exile.

Crisscrossing through ch. 40-55 are: (I) a new creation, (2) extending throughout the universe, (8) by which God cares for the poor and lowly (4) and accepts the suffering of the innocent in reparation for the sins of the wicked (5) but especially does his new creative act transform the lives of the children of Abraham (6) whom God will lead along a glorious exodus back to the Promised Land. Each of these themes works in and out of the two great strands of a *new creation* which the *word of God* will achieve. We can attend to only a couple of these themes, but this endeavor will aid us in appreciating the prophetic doctrine of the word.

Nowhere in the Scriptures is the Word of God proclaimed "with a richness of vocabulary, a mastery of style, and a personal intuitive grasp" [38] as in the majestic poems of Deutero-Isaia. So many of the strophes begin and rise to a climax in the Word of God. In his divine commission as a prophet, the prophet and his disciples are told to *"speak* tenderly to Jerusalem" (40: 2) . This voice is the one repeatedly crying out to the exiles, and by its word it is pulling down mountainous obstructions and lifting up depressive ravines. All will happen, exactly as the word enunciates, " for the mouth of the Lord has spoken" (40: 5) . "The word of our God stands forever" (40: 8).

Besides this brilliant presentation of the *Word of God,* Deutero-Isaia worked another key idea into this composition-the notion of a new creation. In fact, the two ideas of " word " and "creation" so delicately interchange, the transition from one to another is so spontaneous, that the reader might almost miss their double presence. The quick movement evidences the prophet's mastery of the Hebrew language. Very frequently, for instance, creation is a participle depending upon a verb *to speak.* " The participle so closely coalesces with the principal verb, that God speaks *by, through* and *simultaneously with* the act of creating." [39] One instance where four participles complete the idea of the principal verb is the following:

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[38] C. Stuhlmueller, "The Theology of Creation in Second Isaias," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (October 1959)

•• C. Stuhlmueller, *art. cit.,* 454.

THUS SAYS the Lord, the only God,
creating the heavens and *stretching* them out,
extending the earth with its covering of vegetation,
giving breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk on it (Is. 42: 5).

If creation is accomplished through the act of speaking, then the wisdom of the divine word guides the act of creation. This statement has profound implications. God directs each act of nature, whether they be ordinary acts of almost childish proportions like counting drops of rain and weighing "dust on a scale" (Is. 40: 15) or grand deeds of majestic splendour like marking "off the heavens with a span" (40: 12) and summoning the stars by name (40: 26). Small or mighty, each act is so truly from God that the prophet exclaims:

Who has directed the spirit of the Lord,
or who has instructed him as his counselor?
Whom did he consult to gain knowledge?
Who taught him the path of judgment? (40: 13-14).

Because creation is an act of God's word, it must originate, like the word, in the deep recesses of God's mind. It is not so much the product of his hands as it is the thought of his heart. Creation's principal purpose is not an exhibition of power, leading man to acknowledge the existence of an omnipotent deity. In creating the world what God wanted more than anything else was to draw man by love deep into his heart where creation began.

It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Deutero-Isaia is the prophet who sings exquisitely of the personal bond of love between God and his people. He wrote those touching lines so familiar to every Bible reader:

Can a mother forget her infant,
be without tenderness for the child of her womb?
Even should she forget,
I will never forget you.
See, upon the palms of my hands I have written your name
(Is. 49: 15-16).

With delicate finesse he arranges his sentence-structure so that the reader is intuitively aware of the presence of God. Even the grammar of the Hebrew word is called into service, so that the love of God may be presented in tones of beauty. In one magnificent passage he juxtaposes over and over again, yet never with monotony the personal pronouns: You (Israel) and I (God). The Hebrew language easily adapts itself to this procedure, but no Hebrew writer or speaker has used it to such advantage as Deutero-Isaia. In Hebrew the personal pronoun is ordinarily employed only for emphasis. These pronouns can be added immediately to the verb, with the result that one compact word contains verb-subject-object. In the following example each *ka* or *ta* sound signifies "you " while every i or *ti* expresses " I " or " me."

But *you* (*we'atta),* Israel, *my* servant *('abdi),*
Jacob, *you* whom I have chosen *(b'/:wrtika),*
offspring of Abraham *my* friend *('ohabi),*
You whom *I* have taken from the ends of the earth *(hel},ezeqtika)*
you whom *I* have summoned from its far-off places (*q'ra'tika)*
You whom *I* have called *my* servant *(l'ka 'abdi-'atw)*
I have chosen you *(b'l},artika)* and *I* will not cast *you*
off *(m''astika)*
Fear not, *I* am with *you* *('imm'ka-'ani)*
be not dismayed; *I* am *your* God *(ki-'ani 'eloheka)*
I will strengthen *you* *('immastika)*
indeed, *I* will help you *('azartika)*
Surely, *I* will uphold you *(t'maktika)*
with *my* right hand of justice (Is. 41:8-10).

This I-Thou exchange booms like a heavy drum, sounds deep like the great diapason tones of a pipe organ. The depth of sound comes from the infinite reserve of God's love. Because creation is so intricately linked with the act of God's speaking, Deutero-Isaia can present it as an act of God's knowing and loving.

It comes, therefore, as no surprise that God is specially concerned with "the afflicted and the needy." The *word* of a *new creation* is spoken especially for them. When "their tongues are parched with thirst " so that they can no longer utter any human word, God comes to their relief by speaking his divine word. Only the faithless would sneer at this kind of help, but with faith the poor recognize the wonder of God's creative word:

> I, the Lord, will answer them; ...
> I will open up rivers on the bare heights,
> and fountains in the broad valleys....
> That all may see and know,
> observe and understand,
> That the hand of the Lord has done this,
> the Holy One of Israel has *created* it (Is. 41: 17-fW).

To this divine Word Deutero-Isaia attributes every saving work, even the redemptive role of the Suffering Servant. In many ways, the songs of the Suffering Servant bring the Old Testament doctrine of redemption to its point of fullest development. The doctrine of the expiatory suffering of the innocent is here presented with a clarity as startling as the tone of a tolling bell.

> He was pierced for our offenses,
> crushed for our sins;
> Upon him was laid the chastisement of our peace,
> by his stripes we were healed (Is. 53: 5).

This redemptive word could never have been spoken, had the suffering Servant not been able to write:

> Morning after morning
> he opens my ears that I may hear (50:4).

The servant himself is swept forward into his redemptive work by listening to the word of God. The servant further admits:

> The Lord God has given me
> a well-trained tongue,
> That I may know how to speak to the weary
> a word that will rouse them (50:4).

And by uttering God's word the Servant gathers all others into the redemptive design of God.

This divine purpose, enunciated by the word, is a new creation. As always, Deutero-Isaia introduces the thread of a new idea-here, the idea of sorrow and of the songs o£ the Suffering Servant-only to enhance the depth of beauty in the new creation.

> If he gives his life as an offering for sin,
>   he shall see his descendants in a long life,
>   and the will of God shall be accomplished through him.
> Because of his affliction
>   he shall see the light in the fullness of days....
> Therefore I will give him his portion among the great.

The word " creation " is not used, but the thought is present, a new resurrection from the dead for the sorrowing people of God.

3. God's Personal Concern

The prophetic message of the Word vibrated with the tones of God's personal love. This feature of God's *personal* existence is the final notion in our study of the prophetic mission of the word. It has frequently entered this discussion, so that we can now be very brief.

By their emphasis upon the Word of God, the prophets kept the religion of Israel from destroying itself. God had revealed himself to Abraham and Moses, it will be recalled, as a personal God who loved and cared for his people and wanted their loyalty and love in return. The early history of Israel recorded the great promises of God, and religion unfortunately centered more and more on what the people could get out of their worship. The momentum of the people's faith was an eager desire to receive more and more from God-a land, flowing with milk and honey; children, numerous as the stars in the heavens; a royalty, everlasting as God's fidelity; a temple where God answered every prayer. Without full consciousness of what was happening, Israel began to look upon God as a wealthy benefactor, an indulgent Father, an extravagant deity. Though God, He was helplessly bound to his promises; regardless of the people's sins He must be faithful to his word and bless Israel.

The prophets reversed this suicidal tendency in Israel's religion and brought the people back to a *personal* God who is strong in giving love and desirous of receiving the people's love. Listen once again to God's reply through Osee to a presumptuous people:

> It is love that I desire, not sacrifice,
> and knowledge of God rather than sacrifice (Os. 6: 6) .

By his word, God destroyed everything which the people were substituting for himself: land, city, temple, children, family ties, government, king and priest. The dreadful catastrope of 587 ·B. C. could not be avoided once the prophets spoke the devastating word of God. Osee therefore uttered this sentence of doom:

> For this reason I smote them through the prophets,
> I slew them by the words of my mouth (Os. 6: 5).

This destruction, nonetheless, was meant to save the people. If, as Isaia taught, God smote the Egyptians in order to heal them (Is. 19: QQ), how much more truly would the sorrows of his own people instruct them in the way of salvation?

As Jeremia told Israel:

> Your conduct, your misdeeds, have done this to you;
> how bitter is this disaster of yours (4: 18).

The punishment was deserved and was necessary. A personally loving God, however, could react only with poignant sorrow, and plead:

> Return, rebel Israel, ...
> I will not remain angry with you;
> For I am merciful, ...
> Only know your guilt (Jer. 3: 1fl-13).

Israel must recognize what is destroying her happiness in order to find her way back to God. Jeremia's teaching rises in joy and merry-making in Ch. 31:

> I will turn their mourning into joy....
> Cease your cries of mourning,
> wipe the tears from your eyes.
> The sorrow you have shown shall have its reward
> (Jer. 31:13, 16).

Salvation, then, was the knowledge of God's love. If God drives the people. into exile, it is only that they may be forced to return to him for help. *To return,* this word is one of *les mots-cles* of all the prophets. We meet it with a great variety of meaning in the Book of Emmanuel, Is. ch. 7-12. In Is. 40:11 the thought of "return" is heard again in the tender strains of a new song.[40] The return is to a personal God who will be satisfied only when his people enjoy in their heart the fullest posible happiness. Jeremia wrote of this religion of the heart:

> This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord. I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts; I will be their God and they shall be my people (Jer. 31:33).

Once this *cor ad cor* religion is established, God can trust his people with his gifts.

The conviction that the Lord personally loves his people induced the prophets to make high, moral demands. In other words, the prophets did not begin as moral reformers. Their primary intuition of faith glimpsed God's personal love and interest. Such a God could never be satisfied with external behaviour; he wanted his people's love in return. Very similar, therefore, to the modern trend in Moral Theology, the prophetic movement stressed the primacy of charity, a supernatural, even mystical devotedness to God. From charity there was derived the standard for all other virtues.

Nowhere was the moral code so well expressed as in the Prophetic Torah of Michea:

> Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
>   with myriad streams of oil?
> Shall I give my first-born for my crime,
>   the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
> You have been told, 0 Man, what is good,
>   and what the Lord requires of you;
> Only to do the right and to love goodness,
>   and to walk humbly with your God (Mich. 6:8).

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[40] *Cf.*, I.s. 4Z: 10, "Sing to the Lord a *new* song." The new song book comprises many lyrics of salvation.

If God were just an impersonal power or simply a distant governor, he would certainly be satisfied "with thousands of rams " and " myriad streams of oil." But if God is an interested Person, close to his people in a bond of love, then he wants nothing less than the personal affection of his children. All the works of the flesh cannot compensate for the refusal of the soul to love. The beginning of such a love-bond between God and his chosen people is a recognition by Israel of how unworthy she is of God's attention. Humility not only attracts God's tender pity, but it also evokes from Israel a gracious gratitude for undeserved love.

Because the prophets grasped so clearly God's supreme personal love for Israel, they understood all other truths in their depth and expanse of meaning.

Jeremia and Ezechiel forbade the people to consider themselves just a mass of humanity, suffering indiscriminately for everybody's sins and finding peace in just anybody's virtue. Ezechiel expressed it this way: "All lives are mine; the life of the father is like the life of the son, both are mine" (Ez. 18:4) . God loves each one personally, individually. This prophetic doctrine of "personal responsibility" and all of its implications emerged from the prophetic understanding of God's personal love.

Messianism too developed vigorously through faith in God's personal concern for Israel. This growth is significant, because the prophets so often saw Israel in a shambles of destruction and apostasy. Threat and doom explode again and again in prophetic preaching as the prophets condemn, argue, plead and finally give up. Isaia began his ministry with this discouraging prediction from God:

> You are to make the heart of this people sluggish,
>   to dull their ears and close their eyes;
> Else their eyes will see, their ears hear
>   their heart understand,
>   and they turn and be healed (Is. 16:10).

To Jeremia God entrusted the dismal sentence:

Behold, I make my words
in your mouth, a fire,
And this people is the wood
that it shall devour (Jer. 5: 14).

Although looking out on such bleak infidelity, the prophets still foresaw a vista of future joy and light. Their staunch faith in God's infinite, personal love could enable them to predict such wonders as:

. . . songs of praise,
the lahghter of happy men (Jer. 30: 19).
Fear not, 0 land!
exult and rejoice!
for the Lord has done great things! ...
The threshing floor shall be full of grain
and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil
(Joel 2:21, 24).
There shall be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain;
so the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord,
as water covers the sea (Is. 11:9).

This messianic panorama of glory, like rays of sunlight, shines from the heart filled with the knowledge of the Lord, with the *word of God.* Knowledge, deep and personal, yet extending to every inch of the universe, catching up all things into the outstretched arm of God, into the depth of God's infinite life-this saving knowledge came from God in his word, reached other men through the prophets, and thus like rain and snow coming down from heaven achieved the end for which God sent it (cf., Is. 55: 11).

Conclusion

The Word of God, spoken by the prophets, was alive with God's power. It was and is the presence of God. True to their Ancient Near Eastern background, the prophets could not consider the word just a "thought" or "concept" of the intellect. It was a thrust forward of all the powers of the one speaking. If the speaker was God, then it brought man into the dynamic, impelling presence of the Lord.

When God addressed Abraham, Moses, and his chosen people, he often left the most important part of his message unspoken. Here entered *faith,* a strong, unconditional surrender of one's whole self to God. The word led Abraham forward to " the land which I will show you" (Gen. **1).** Abraham did not know beforehand exactly where the land was, and when he was assured that it was Palestine, he was not certain *when* or *how* it would be acquired.

The land was to be accepted as a gift from a personally loving God. Once the gift became a substitute for God, God summoned the prophets.

These men of God restored the faith of Abraham among the Israelites by calling out: "Hear the word of God." To hear this life-giving word, Israel must not flee into a dream world of unreality, but remain in her sorrowful situation. Only, Israel must humbly acknowledge her guilt and recognize her misery. In tender mercy God will then speak to the heart of His people. The prophets will be His spokesmen, but their word will be God's. The word will be God Himself, present to save and to make happy, creating a new wonder for his people. The greatest joy of this new wonder will be the personal bond of love between God and each of his servants.

I will espouse you to me forever;
  I will espouse you in right and in justice,
  in love and in mercy,
I will espouse you in fidelity,
  and you shall know the Lord (Os. f.).

Israel will know God, when she receives this word of God in her heart. By their own strong dedication to a personal God, the prophets prepared for the messianic glory of the Word of God, the second Person of the Holy Trinity. This wonder, however, outwitted their most imaginative hopes *(cf.,* Lk. **10:** f.). **It** was the unspoken element in God's word to them, as with faith they awaited the new creation which God promised through his prophet Isaia.

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SOME CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANTHROPOLOGY TO ETHICS

THE thomistic theory of natural law presents a framework upon which to build an edifice of human morality and it also points out the way in which the edifice is to be built. Nevertheless, a fundamental deficiency accompaning this theory of natural law at the time of its formulation was precisely a lack of the material without which the edifice itself could remain little more than a framework. That material was human experience. St. Thomas Aquinas, as opposed to the natural law thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, constantly insisted upon the great part played by human experience in coming to know moral matters.[1] To be sure, the people of his time had considerable human experience and were also the benefactors of much human experience, but their experience was largely the unreflective kind of experience which we often term " common experience." It was for the most part not a formal, catalogued type of experience such as we find in modern critical history or the social sciences, nor was it the result of experiment such as we find, for example, in modern experimental psychology. In short, it was a prescientific rather than a scientific kind of experience.

Today, on the contrary, we have a distinct advantage over the middle ages in that we have at our disposal a number of sciences which have as their goal precisely the cataloguing and analysis of various aspects of human experience e. g., history, biology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, etc. From these sciences then there is obviously an abundance of material-the collected, sifted, and measured material of human experience-which should prove and already has, to a degree, proven fruitful in adding to our knowledge of human nature and man's moral being. This article has as its purpose the illustration of the possible direction and results of the way in which anthropological knowledge might prove useful to the moral philosopher.

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[1] " Ostendit insufficientiam motivi propter defectum experientiae: et dicit quod ad hoc quod leges bene ponatur, oportet hoc non ignorare, quia debet aliquis multo tempore considerare et multis annis, ut manifestum .sit per experientiam, si tales leges vel statuta bene se habeant." *In II Pol., 5; In VI Eth.,* 13; *Summa Theol.,* I-11, *95,* 2, ad 4; *Sum. cont. Gent.,* III, 123.

Anthropology and Ethics: Points of Influence

One might wonder, at the outset, in what possible way an- knowledge could and should influence the thought of the moral philosopher. As a matter of fact there are several ways in which a knowledge of anthropology is of direct value to him. In the first place, the primary concern of the moral philosopher is the proper direction of human actions. The moral philosopher attempts to determine the direction human actions should take by determining the most general ends of man. He derives these most general ends of man from a philosophical analysis of the common experience of man considered simply as a rational animal. Further analysis may reveal a few of the most general means to these most general ends of man. But a problem arises at this point. The concretization of human action takes place and must of necessity take place in situations that are singular and unique. Consequently in the field of ethics the most general guides to human action prove to be the least useful to man.[2] In order to remedy this situation, then, we need to know not only the most general means whereby man may secure those basic ends demanded by his nature, but also the more particular means whereby the more general means may be attained.

An example will illustrate the point. The analysis of the common experience of the nature of man as a rational animal suggests to us that he is a being made for love, a love which can only attain complete fulfillment in and through a society of some kind. From this we conclude that one of the most general ends of man is to love and to be loved and that the general means to attain this end is in and through society. But the question remains: what kind of society? It is precisely at this more specific level that the sciences dealing with man can be of immense value for the moral philosopher. Thus, for example, the answer to the question just now raised cannot be determined in an " a priori " manner for the simple reason that it is impossible to foresee the vast array of contingencies which will enter into and affect, for better or worse, the concrete realization of any society. Rather the approach to the solution of this problem is to be sought in the experience and results mankind has gained in its attempts to set up different societies which had as their purpose (whether avowed or not) the attainment of man's most general ends which include his need for love. At this point a knowledge of anthropology is clearly indispensible. For its subject-matter is precisely the study of culture. From it the moral philosopher may learn which societies are most apt to bring about the fulfillment of man's basic need for love, which institutions within society either help or hinder the fulfillment of this need, and which of numerous other factors in this complex business of social living contribute to or oppose this most general end of man. In line with possibilities such as these Benedict remarks, "It is possible to scrutinize different institutions and cast up their cost in terms of social capital, in terms of the less desirable behavior traits they stimulate, and in terms of human suffering and frustration." [3]

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[2] "--- sermones enim morales universales sunt minus utiles, eo quod actiones in particularibus sunt." IIa IIae, prologus.

[3] R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture,* Mentor, ed., (New York, 1934) p. 229; " Examining different cultural systems, the anthropologist, working with other specialists, might fairly endeavor to establish how far the premises underlying action in this and that culture correspond with proved scientific truth or rest on mythical or other bases: as, say, in interpretations of physical laws or of sickness. He might help to rate technological efficiency in terms of tool performance or resource productivity. He might venture some gr:;.ding of organizational effectiveness in terms of order and disorder, decision making and other criteria. He might note the relative clarity of different symbol systems, or the contexts which favor or militate against physical and mental health." F. Keesing, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York, 1958) pp. 183-184; M. Edel and A. Edel, *Anthropology and Ethics* (Springfield, Illinois, 1959) pp. 229-231; C. Brinton, *A History of Western Morals* (New York, 1959) p. 448; Y. Simon, *Critique de la Connaissance Morale* (Paris, 1934) p. 123; A. Macbeath, *Experiments in Living* (London, 1952) p. 415; S. Deploige, *Le Conflict de la Morale et de la Sociologic* (Paris, 1923) p. 316.

In a study of anthropology one becomes aware of just how ethnocentric are many of his own moral judgments-judgments which affirm that such a thing ought to be done because it is " in accord with human nature " or deny that such a thing should be done on the ground that it is " not in accord with human nature." This awareness of the ethnocentric nature of many of our judgments by no means implies that all of our ethical judgments are without value. It should rather awaken us to the need that they have to be subjected to a critical reappraisal in order to determine precisely what this value is. For, as Brandt has pointed out, such information can hardly prove the whole or a great part of traditional Western moral thought to be radically defective. But in order that what is substantial in this moral thought be brought to light and thereby be of aid in the solution of problems the world over, its ethnocentric accretions must be purged from it.[4]

Another value of anthropology for ethics is to be found in the knowledge which it gives us of human nature. For human nature as we actually find it is never "raw or pure human nature." It is always human nature subjected to cultural conditioning of some sort. Anthropology is helpful in this regard because it indicates what derives from or is peculiar to a particular culture and by contrast what is transcultural and thereby fundamental to human nature as such.[5] One of the main ways that anthropology does this is through knowledge of cultural universals. For through these universals we are given an indication of certain tendencies which are fundamental to human nature.[6] Thus Kroeber suggests that we" delimit the perimeters of historic human culture " in order to come to a knowledge of human nature because "the limits of human culture, both normal limits and extreme ones, are presumably set mainly if not wholly by the normal and extreme limits of congenital human nature."[7] And Benedict has suggested that the degree of conformity permitted by the standards of a culture would show us how deeply certain tendencies are rooted in man.[8]

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[4] R. Brandt, *Hopi Ethics* (Chicago, 1954) p. 12; cf. M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 234.

[5] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* pp. 13-15; D. Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology* (New York, 1953) p. 99.

[6] C. Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man* (New York, 1949) p. 38; J. Krutch, *Human Nature and the Human Condition* (New York and Toronto, 1959) p. 189.

A knowledge of anthropology forces the moral philosopher to be aware of the fact that ethical judgments can never be fully understood when taken from the context in which they are made or from the pattern of life of which they are a part. For as morality influences other cultural institutions, these, in turn, influence it.[9] For example, it is possible to understand the Eskimo's killing of his aged parents only by taking into account both the constant hardships of his physical existence and the fact that it is his religious belief that his parents continue on in the " other world" in the same physical state in which they leave this world. Again, we see in our own history the relation between the Puritan mentality and economics, i. e., the fact that economic success was indicative that the successful one was among the "Elect." The society of the Plains Indians, dominated as it was by a war mentality, offers us an insight into the relation that may exist between such an outlook and the practice of sexual abstinence. And among the Zuni we see the relation between the belief that most sickness is caused by worry and the " ideal Zuni" pictured as one who lacks all ambition and demonstrates little passion.[10]

A final bearing that anthropology might have on the field of ethics is that of providing a test for different ethical systems. Thus, for example, Montagu has presented anthropological evidence to show that love is the "most important of all developers of the potentialities of the human being," and that because of this it is a great evil that mother and child be separated.[11] Moreover, Murdock has made the following point regarding the indispensibility of the family, "Man has never discovered an adequate substitute for the family, and all Utopian attempts at its abolition have spectacularly failed."[12] Such anthropological evidence would indicate, at the outset, that evil effects could be anticipated from any theory whatsoever proposing the separation of mother and child and the breakdown of the family, such as we find, for example, in the communes of Red China.

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[7] A. Kroeber, "Of Human Nature," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology,* II (1955) 199-200.

[8] Benedict, *op. cit.,* p. 255.

[9] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 18, pp. 353-356; M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 84, p. 223; Brandt, *Ethical Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1949) pp. 101-102; Benedict, *op. cit.,* pp. 224-226.

[10] K. Duncker, "Ethical Relativity," *Mind,* XLVIII (1939) 41-43; Benedict, *op. cit.,* Chapter IV; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* Chapter VIII.

It should be noted, however, that despite what has been said of the value of social science to ethics, social science can by no means replace ethics. For the function of social science in this regard is simply to present the social facts to the moral philosopher. As Johnston has pointed out, precisely because they are descriptive the social sciences present to us a speculative knowledge of an operable object.[13] Only when moral philosophy has subsumed them into an intelligible context of its own, do these facts take on moral meaning. And social scientists themselves point out that it is necessary for social facts to have this moral meaning if social progress is to occur.[14]

Cross-cultural Study: its Nature and Limitations

Since the remainder of this article presupposes the validity of cross-cultural study, it might be well to point out several problems connected with an undertaking of this kind. One limitation encountered in such a project is that though the same norms may be found in different societies they may receive different emphasis within those different societies or even different emphasis within the same society at different times. Most cross-cultural studies, using a statistical method of some sort, are unable to take this into account. In view of this, therefore, we should not look for identities but rather simularities between cultures.[15] A problem arising in any cross-cultural study of ethics is that of deciding just what is considered ethical in any society. Here the possibility of ethnocentricism enters in if we limit our judgment of what is considered to be ethical in another society by what we consider to be ethical in our own society.[16]

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[11] M. Montagu, *Anthropology and Human Nature* (Boston, 1959), pp. cf. M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. R. Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," in *Method and Perspective in Anthropology,* ed. R. Spencer (Minneapolis, 1954) p. 161.

[12] G. Murdock," The Common Denominator of Cultures," in *The Science of Man in the World Crisis,* ed. Linton (New York 1945) p. 141.

[13] H. Johnston, " A Pattern for Relating Ethics and the Social Sciences," in *Ethics and the Social Sciences,* ed. L. Ward (Notre Dame, 1959) p. 81.

[14] J. Casserley, *Morals and Man in the Social Sciences* (London, 1951) p. R. Redfield, *The Primitive World and its Transformations* (Ithaca, New York, 1953) pp. M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp.

Another point to be mentioned is that if we do not find the same values everywhere we cannot assume simply on the basis of this fact that a disagreement between cultures exists. This difference may be due to the fact that the values of the one culture are unknown to another and, if they were known, they would also be valued by that other culture, e. g., scientific knowledge of medicine would be valued by the primitive if he knew it.[17] In comparing diverse cultures, the particular need of human nature being fulfilled by a particular institution should be considered. Thus, Duncker suggests that if the possession of many wives in one culture is simply meant as a sign of much wealth, marriage in that tribe should be compared with trade in another tribe. And he concludes, " One would be less prone to confuse diversity of cultural patterns with differences in human nature."[18]

The undertaking upon which we are about to embark must expect to conclude with only limited results. As the author of one recent work of this type points out, such a study as this can only " suggest and sample some of the fruits that a cooperative study might produce."[19] There are a number of reasons for this. In the first place, cooperative, interdisciplinary research of this type is new. The transition from the illusion of the complete self-sufficiency of each branch of knowledge to the recognition of the real need for cooperative, interdisciplinary activity was by no means a small achievement.[20]

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[15] Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles: An Anthropological View," in *Moral Principles of Action,* ed. R. Anshen (New York, 1952) p. 659; Brandt, *Hopi Ethics,* p. 247; Murdock, "Common Denominator," p. 124; M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 207.

[16] J. Ladd, *The Structure of a Moral Code* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957) p. 76; M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 12.

[17] A. Edel, *Ethical Judgment: The Use of Science in Ethics* (Glencoe, lllinois, 1955) p. 215.

[18] Duncker, *op. cit.,* p. 46; cf. M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 192, p. 205.

Another important factor to be taken into consideration is the limited state of anthropological knowledge today. Edel has made the following remark in this regard, "When all the complex factors to be analyzed are taken into consideration, the search for invariants is not hopeless; it has scarcely begun."[21] Both Brandt and Ladd have pointed out that the empirical description of the morality of diverse cultures has been done only to a very limited extent.[22] And May Edel has observed that between 1888-1938 only four articles in the *American Anthropologist* were devoted to morality.[23] Finally, Macbeath, the author of one of the best works to date concerned with this kind of study, informs the reader that it took him many years to prepare to write a book of this kind. He points out that "the subject has been largely neglected by recent and contemporary anthropologists . . . and much of what they say has to be gathered from occasional remarks scattered throughout their treatment of other subjects."[24] He finds one of the main reasons for this in the fact that morality appears to be concerned with the whole pattern of life and, therefore, tends to be included in the examination of other aspects of culture. Thus moral duties may also be religious, social, economic or legal duties. And in view of the fact that these kinds of duties themselves can only be fully understood in the light of the pattern of the culture itself, i.e., that which the people of that culture themselves judge to be right and wrong, any special treatment accorded to morality itself as an aspect of culture tends to be regarded as mere repetition.[25]

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[19] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* "Considering the extent of the field to be covered and how little work has been done recently on primitive morality, all I can hope to do in these lectures will be tentative and exploratory; and any conclusions at which I arrive will be provisional. What I am really anxious to do is to call attention to what seems to me a rich and largely unexplored field of moral material, which I am satisfied is highly relevant to our ethical enquiries, and to express the hope that others, both moral philosophers and social anthropologists, will devote more attention to it, and either confirm or modify my tentative conclusions." Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p.

[20] A. Edel., *op. cit.,* p.

[21] *Ibid.,* p. cf. Redfield, *op. cit.,* p. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions,* Papers of the Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, XLVII-No. I (Cambridge, Mass., 175.

[22] Brandt, *Hopi Ethics,* p. 4; Ladd, *op. cit.,* p. 6.

[23] M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 4.

Despite what has been said about the limitations and problems, however, some cross-cultural study and evaluation is possible, even in our present state of knowledge. But for the present it will probably be limited for the most part to the discovery of negative rather than positive criteria, i.e., to the discovery of what ought not to be done rather than what ought to be done.[26]

In order to see just how anthropologists might supply us with at least some negative criteria whereby we are informed as to what we ought not to do or to think, let us look at some illustrations. Had the seventeenth and eighteenth century had the advantages of anthropological knowledge, some serious errors might have been avoided. Thus the Hobbesian conception of the state of nature as a war of all against all would never have been looked upon as anything other than a fiction, which in fact, it was; for, as Redfield has pointed out, precivilized man recognized moral obligations,[27] and both Malinowski and Montagu affirm that anthropological evidence points to the fact that man is by nature a cooperative rather than competitive or aggressive animal.[28] Rousseau's conception of the state of nature would also receive some hard treatment at the hands of the anthropologists. Thus Bidney brands the assertion that natives lead care-free lives "a novelistic fiction." As a matter of fact he points out the "tragic sense of life" that pervades their lives.[29] And Benedict mentions that when Linnaeus came across children who had been abandoned at an early age in the forest, he was so struck by their sub-human characteristics that he classified them as a distinct species " Homo ferus."

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[24] Macheath, *op. cit.,* p. 22.

[25] *Ibid.,* pp. 26-27.

[26] M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. 232-236.

[27] Redfield, *op. cit.,* p. 140.

[28] B. Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1944) p. 143; Montagu, *op. cit.,* pp. 12-13.

> He could not conceive that these half-witted brutes were born human, these creatures with no interest in what went on about them, rocking themselves rhythmically back and forth like some wild animal in a zoo, with organs of speech and hearing that could hardly be trained to do service, who withstood freezing weather in rags and plucked potatoes out of boiling water without discomfort.[30]

This is a far cry from the "noble savage" of whom Rousseau spoke. Finally, several of Pufendorf's assertions would come under anthropological attack. Thus when he remarks, " when one sins against the natural law, he feels that he offends God,"[31] Pufendorf commits the not uncommon error of some one raised in western society and influenced by the Judea-Christian tradition in seeing a necessary connection between morality and religion. However, as Linton and Macbeath have pointed out, there is no necessary connection here. For the most part, it is only with the rise of the higher, monotheistic religions that one witnesses an association of this kind.[32] Pufendorf's assertion that monogamy,[33] descent of a man's property through his blood line,[34] and the father's priority over the mother in regard to the children, property, etc.,[35] is" according to nature" would scarcely be challenged today because of its naivete.[36]

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[29] Bidney, *op. cit.,* pp. 408-409.

[30] Benedict, *op. cit.,* p. 11.

[31] S. Pufendorf, *The Two Books on the Duty of Man and Citizen according to the Natural Law,* trans. F. Moore, The Classics of International Law, ed. J. Scott, X (New York,

·12 Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," pp. 155-156; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. p. 451.

[33] Pufendorf, *op. cit.,* pp. 94-96.

•• *Ibid.,* p. *65.*

Aside from these corrections of past errors, there are a number of present errors that an attentive examination of the data of anthropology would eliminate. Thus Mead has shown us that the so-called "period of crisis" that takes place during adolescence is not attributable to human nature as such but is a phenomenon distinctly western in origin.[37] Kluckhohn and Montagu have made it clear that the idea of racial superiority is simply a myth."[8] Anthropological studies may also prove to have a catalytic effect on some of our ideas regarding sex and marriage. Thus Murdock points out that in view of the quite frequent allowance of extramarital relations in various societies, it cannot be maintained that sexual activity and its regulation are the only reasons or indeed even the primary reasons for marriage.[39] And Benedict and Macbeath have shown that in a number of societies the economic motive is the predominate motive for marriage.[40] Again, to one who would claim that a society which continues to permit, much less encourage, sexual activity outside marriage is bound to become corrupted, Murdock makes the following reply, "The vast majority of human societies make no attempt to confine sexual intercourse to marriage through a generalized sex taboo."[41] To one who would argue that divorce is wrong because of the traumatic effect that it has on the child, Macbeath would reply that such may indeed be the case in Western society. But he would immediately add that this by no means proves that divorce as such is wrong. And he would give as an instance, the effect of divorce in Bantu society. For among the Bantu the closest tie is that of blood relationship and the emotional satisfaction that those of western culture seek in marriage is taken care of for the Bantu within the immediate family and close kin. Furthermore, the children of a Bantu marriage call their aunts and uncles indifferently father or mother as the case may be and they live with their aunts and uncles as well as with their mother and father. Keeping in mind these facts and the fact that the Bantu look upon marriage primarily as an exchange of property, it is understandable that the occasion of divorce is among the Bantu rather like the split-up of a business partnership and certainly involves very little traumatic effect for either the parents or children.[42] Finally, Linton has noted that for the stability of society "permanence of matings" is considered a desirable thing and that one of two opposing ways is usually adopted in different societies for accomplishing this end. In some societies premarital chastity is enforced on the theory that one who enters marriage without previous sexual experience will be deterred by timidity from extramarital experimentation, thereby preserving the marriage bond. The other way proceeds on the assumption that the permanence of marriage rests on physical and emotional adjustment. Consequently a period of premarital experimentation is looked upon as conducive to this adjustment as well as satisfying one's curiosity about other possible partners. Both ways have proven viable and both seem to have their advantages and disadvantages.'[3] At the present time, therefore, it would at least be an unproven statement to say that one way is " better than " the other way.

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[35] *Ibid.,* p. 97.

[36] Cf., for example, Murdock, *Social Structure* (New York, 1949).

[87] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 14.

[38] Kluckhohn, *op.* cit., pp. 82-113; Montague, *op. cit.,* pp. 4-5.

[36] "From available evidence, however, it seems unlikely that a general prohibition of sex relations outside marriage occurs in as many as five per cent of the peoples of the earth." Murdock, *Social Structure,* p. 264, cf. pp. 5-10.

[40] Benedict, *op. cit.,* pp. 191-192, p. 224; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* pp. 174-175.

[41] Murdock, *Social Structure,* p. 268.

Ethical Relativism

One position that must be considered in detail before it can be said that anthropology has any positive relevance for ethics is ethical relativism. Ethical relativism in this context means simply that the only possible way of evaluating an ethical judgment or position is in terms of the particular cultural pattern or way of life of which it is a part. For ethical judgments and positions themselves are merely functions of the particular society in which they happen to be found.[44] There are no trans-cultural criteria for evaluating all cultures nor are any possible. Any attempt to set up such criteria is doomed to failure from the outset because of the unavoidable, enculturated condition of any thinker who would make such an attempt.[45] What ethical relativism does not mean-and this anthropologists of the most diverse outlook are agreed upon[46]-is that any kind of conduct is right for anyone. It means rather the opposite: precisely because one has been raised in a particular culture and has thus had his nature enculturated or determined in this rather than in some other way, what is right *for him* is to act according to the norms of the society in which he received his particular enculturation. The basic point that the position of ethical relativism wishes to maintain is that there neither is nor can be any objective or scientific way of saying that one kind of human behavior is better or worse than another kind apart from the particular context in which they take place. As Von Fritz has pointed out this is not a new position. What is new is the assertion that it has been scientifically established.[47]

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[42] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* pp. 177-180.

[43] Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," pp.

The reasons for the rise of ethical relativism seem to be multiple and to derive from both anthropological and non-anthropological sources. One of the main reasons is to be found in the sincere desire on the part of anthropologists themselves to avoid ethnocentricism as well as to make others aware of this problem. Such, for example, is the reason for Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* and for much of Boas' work.[48] Again it was Boas and Rivers who in their destruction of the 19th century anthropological theory of unilinear evolution offered the idea of cultural pluralism in its place.[49] As Krutch has pointed out, this was really a reaction to the attempt to reduce man to " a few crude needs."[50] Thus Kluckhohn notes that due to Boas' influence in America the period from 1910 to 1940 was devoted almost exclusively to the study of cultural diversities accompanied by a strong anti-theoretical bias on the part of American anthropologists.[51]

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[44] Kluckhohn describes the position as follows:

". . . the simplest self-contained unit of conduct, which can justify or render intelligible a final moral judgment is a way of life as a whole, or at least a very substantial part of such a way of life." C. Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity: Sic et Non," *Journal of Philosophy,* LII (1955) 668.

[45] M. Herskovits, " Tender-and Tough-Minded Anthropology and the Study of Values in Culture," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology,* VII (1951) 27.

[46] Thus Kluckhohn remarks that ethical relativism does not simply mean " that any set of customs and institutions, or way of life, is as valid as any other." He describes this as " an inaccurate vulgarization " to which no anthropologist would subscribe. And he says that to the above phrases must be added, " for a group living under certain circumstances and having had a particular history." Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity," p. 668; cf. Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. 38; Montagu, *op. cit.,* p. 7; Herskovits, "Some Further Comments on Cultural Relativism," *American Anthropologist,* LX (1958) 269.

[47] K. Von Fritz, "Relative and Absolute Values," in *Moral Principles of Action,* ed. Anshen (New York, 1952) p. 95.

Abraham and May Edel point out a number of causes outside the field of anthropology which contributed to the rise of ethical relativity. In the field of psychology the behaviorist theory of Watson insisted on the pure plasticity of human nature. In the field of philosophy the language analysts such as A. J. Ayer would reduce all ethical statements to simply expressions of emotion. In the field of politics Machiavellian thought and spirit makes its only "fixed" principle that of expediency. Finally, sociology was itself going through a period of crisis marked by tendencies that were destructive rather than constructive.[52]

During the last two decades, however, there has been a change among the anthropologists themselves regarding ethical relativism. Thus, while retaining the *methodological* principle that initial anthropological investigation of any culture must seek to understand that culture in its own terms, the majority of anthropologists today would not accept the *philosophical* principle of ethical relativism. As a matter of fact within recent years ethical relativism as a philosophical position has, as we shall see, been subjected to more and more serious attacks by anthropologists themselves. Thus almost all the literature referred to in this article is directly or indirectly an attack on the philosophical position of ethical relativism.[53]

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[48] Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," *Anthropology Today,* ed. Kroeber (Chicago, 1953) p. 688; Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* p. *285.*

[49] Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 687.

[50] Krutch, *op. cit.,* p. 110.

[51] C. Kluckhohn, "Universal Categories of Culture," in *Anthropology Today,* ed. Kroeber (Chicago, 1953) p. *511.*

[52] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. 19-28; M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. 24-25.

As the anthropological conception of human nature has varied, so too has the position of anthropologists in regard to ethical relativism varied. A. L. Kroeber, the late dean of contemporary anthropology, points out that there have been three different generally accepted views of human nature in the history of anthropology. The first was that held between 1860-1890. During this period, human nature was considered as a constant and the whole of culture was explained in terms of it. The second anthropological view of human nature lasted from around 1900 to 1945. Human nature now came to be considered as a pure plasticity which received its total determination from the culture in which it existed. As a result, the doctrine of ethical relativism flourished. The third and latest period from 1945 to the present is a period in anthropology characterized by moderation. In this period one is witnessing a return to the concept of human nature, but not in the nineteenth century sense of the term. For the return is much more cautious, one that seeks to take into account *some* unity in human nature, thereby allowing that it is truly a nature, while at the same time it affirms the enculturated condition of human nature, thereby rejecting any conception of a "pure human nature."[54]

In approaching the problem of ethical relativism it will be necessary to spend some time considering the broader problem of cultural relativism and seeking some solution to that problem. For, if cultural relativism is true, then, of course, ethical relativism is also true. But should cultural relativism be shown to be false, it will be a strong indication that ethical relativism is also false. Nevertheless, although the refutation of cultural relativism is a necessary condition for the refutation of ethical relativism, it is not a sufficient condition for such refutation. It is still conceivable that although not all aspects of culture are relative, that aspect of culture which has to do with morality may be relative. Consequently the problem of ethical relativism itself will have to be directly examined later.

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[53] Cf. L. Ward, "The 'Natural Law' Rebound," *The Review of Politics,* XXI (1959) 114-130.

[54] Kroeber, "Of Human Nature," pp. 197-198; cf. Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity," pp. 663-664.

Cultural relativism simply means that cultures are not able to be compared in any way because they are diverse in all ways. It may appear that different aspects or institutions within them are comparable but this is an illusion because these institutions while outwardly appearing the same take on meaning only when seen in the total context or cultural pattern of which they are a part. But since cultural patterns themselves are simply diverse and therefore, not comparable, it is clear that their parts are in no way comparable.

A great many present-day anthropologists have reacted against the theory of cultural relativism. One of their chief reasons is to be found in the fact that such a position leaves culture itself without an explanation. For if there is nothing determinate within culture, as such, it could be anyway at all. But if such were the case, if culture were a purely random sort of thing, it would defy probability that there should be anything universal about it because that which happens always or frequently does not, as Aristotle has observed/[5] happen by chance. But, in fact, we find quite a number of things that are universal about all known cultures.

In the first place, unless the term "culture" itself is an equivocation, we must concede that it is universal, that is, wherever groups of men are found (and men live only in groups unless because of some accident) culture or the works of man are also found. Moreover, culture is itself a distinctly human phenomenon as opposed to society which is found even in the animal kingdom. For it concerns that heritage of mankind

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[55] Aristotle, *Physics,* II, 5.

which has arisen from those powers which specify man from the brute, namely, his power of abstraction and communication through speech.[56] Finally, in all known cultures we do, in fact, find quite a number of universals. Thus in every culture we find: religion (belief in supernatural beings and in their aid), government, morality, marriage and the nuclear family (parents and children), law, leadership, belief in life after death, property (land, clothing, tools, etc.), division of labor according to sex, age, etc., mythology, language, concern with the acquisition of knowledge, kinship systems, aesthetic expression (art, music, dance, etc.), education, security, love and friendship, food and shelter, some degree of mutual trust, belief in some order in universe (never pure chaos), non-utilitarian group activities such as clubs, games, etc.[57] In the light of the universality of these cultural phenomena as well as a host of others that exist,[58] the position of cultural relativism becomes untenable. Such a frequency of "accidents" makes them no longer "accidents" but elements that are in varying degrees necessary to the human social situation.

In answer to the question as to why these elements exist universally a great number of contemporary anthropologists have replied that they exist as ways of fulfilling man's basic biological, psychological, and social needs. In other words, society is here conceived as having a job to do, namely, to bring about the fulfillment of man's basic biological, psychological, and social needs. Therefore, 'in order that a society may come into existence and continue to be, it must present a social structure which satisfies at least minimally these basic needs of man.[59] To the degree that a society accomplishes the fulfillment of man's basic needs it is considered good and to the degree that it fails in this accomplishment it is considered bad. It is in the light of criteria such as these that cross-cultural evaluation becomes possible.[60]

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[58] A. Kroeber, *Anthropology,* 2nd ed. (New York, 1948) pp. 7-10.

[57] Murdock, *Social Structure,* pp. 2-8; F. Boas, "Anthropology," *Sdections from the Encyclopedia of Social Sciences,* **II** (New York, 1947) 82-83; Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* pp. 23-26; "Universal Categories of Culture," pp. 520-521; Macheath, *op. cit.,* pp. 76-83, p. 100; Kroeber, *Anthropology;* p. 289, p. *599;* Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* pp. 86-89; D. Bidney, "The Philosophical Presuppositions of Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism," in *Ethics and the Social Sciences,* ed. L. Ward (Notre Dame, 1959) p. *53; Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 64; A. Edel, *op.* cit., pp. 171-173, p. 299; Malinowski, *op. cit.,* pp. *55-66;* Redfield, *op. cit.,* p. 11; Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," pp. 153-165; "Universal Ethical Principles," pp. 646-647; Casserley, *op. cit.,* p. 100; M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 30.

[58] "The files of the Cross-Cultural Survey at Yale University are organized according to categories such as 'marriage ceremonies,' 'life crisis rites,' 'incest taboos.' At least seventy-five of these categories are represented in every single *mw* of the hundreds of cultures analyzed." Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* pp. 22-23.

Having seen, therefore, the untenability of the position of cultural relativism, we find ourselves led to suspect that the untenability of ethical relativism may be shown in a similar manner. For the fact that certain basic minimal conditions are required in order to render man's social existence feasible and that morality itself is one of these basic conditions, suggests to us that this basic condition itself has certain fundamental, minimal requirements in order for it to be, due again to the fact that the ways in which man's basic needs may be reasonably satisfied are of limited variation.

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[59] " The members of all human face some of the same unavoidable dilemmas, posed by biology and other facts of the human situation. This is why the basic categories of all cultures are so similar." Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. 26; " There is room for a wide variety in the kinds of lives men build for themselves, but certain minimal standards must be met if these ' experiments ' are to be successful at all . . . This common human nature sets limits to the forms that any experiments in living can take, to the possible techniques of motivation, the scope of sympathy, the effectiveness of sanctions.

Common needs, common social tasks, common psychological processes are bound to provide some common framework for the wide variety of human behaviors that different cultures have developed." M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp.. 30-31; " Human nature is the locus of culture and the potentialities of human nature may be said to set limits to the kind of cultural processes which may be introduced and encouraged." Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 140; "Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism," p. 63; Malinowski, *op. cit.,* pp. 9-10, pp. 37-38, p. 75 ff.; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 646; "The Problem of Universal Values," p. 149; Murdock, "Common Denominator," p. 125; Casserley, *op. cit.,* p. 100; A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. 241-242; Redfield, "Relations of Anthropology to the Social Sciences and to the Humanities," in *Anthropology Today,* ed. Kroeber (Chicago, 1953) p. 730; Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* p. 287; Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.,* pp. 172-176; R. Firth, "The Study of Values by Social Anthropologists," *Man,* LUI, (1953) 148.

[60] ". . . biological, psychological, and sociosituational universals afford the possibility of comparison of cultures in terms which are not ethnocentric ... ," Kluckhohn, "Universal Categories of Culture," p. 517; "The stability of a society through time is a tribute to the efficiency of its institutions. On the other hand, its failure to advance towards new and greater achievement betrays their limitations," Casserley, *op. cit.,* p. 100; Malinowski, *op. cit.,* p. 37; A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. 241-242; Linton, "Universal Categories of Culture," p. 646.

As we approach this topic of ethical relativism we note that of the names most usually associated with this position those of Benedict and Herskovits stand to the fore. However, the examination of Benedict's major work, *Patterns of Culture,* the work most frequently cited as an illustration of her espousal of the position of ethical relativism, reveals several things that lead one to doubt that the intention of this work was to promote the doctrine of ethical relativism. In the first place, Benedict herself indicates to us that the book was written simply in opposition to the ethnocentric tendencies of the times.[61] Such an undertaking as this obviously does not necessitate the adoption of the position of ethical relativism. Secondly, as others have previously noted,[62] her own value judgments appear frequently throughout the book.[63] Thirdly, by such references as "human adjustments ... that are common and . . . inevitable in mankind,"[64] "Since we are forced to believe that the race of man is one species . . . ,"[65] ". . . the institutions that human cultures build up upon the hints presented ... by man's physical necessities ..."[66] she seems to imply a conception of human nature that would not admit of its pure plasticity. Fourthly, she allows for the possibility of cross-cultural universals. Thus she speaks of "those few traits that are universal or near-universal in human society" and uses as illustrations of these belief in animism, exogamous restrictions upon marriage, belief in the human soul and afterlife.[67] She speaks of "those responses that are specific to local cultural types and those that are general to mankind"[68] and how as our knowledge of culture increases " we shall be able to isolate the tiny core that is generic in a situation and the vast accretions that are local and cultural and man-made." [69] Moreover, she notes that "the dominant traits of our civilization need special scrutiny. We need to realize that they are compulsive, not in proportion as they are basic and essential in human behavior, but rather in the degree to which they are local and overgrown in our own culture." [70] Fifthly, she looks forward to the day when society will receive "sane and scientific direction " as opposed to being allowed to drift at random wherever it will as it has in the past. [71] In view of the points just mentioned, therefore, and keeping in mind the fact that anthropologists seldom express themselves with philosophical precision, it appears that one must conclude not that Benedict was a proponent of ethical relativism, but rather that she was an ardent opponent of ethnocentricism. [72]

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[61] Benedict, *op. cit.,* pp. 9-10.

[62] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. 213-214; Redfield, *Primitive World,* pp. 150-151.

[63] Cf. Benedict, *op. cit.,* pp. 8, 9, 11, 18, 29, 95, 178, 200, 205, 230, 236, 247, 255, and 256.

[64] *Ibid.,* p. 15. [65] *Ibid.,* p. 17. [66] *Ibid.,* p. 32. [67] *Ibid.,* p. 17. [68] *Ibid.,* p. 18.

The Po8ition of Herskovits

Let us turn then to Herskovits as being the foremost representative of ethical relativism today and examine his position closely before offering any criticism of it. It is the position of Herskovits that "Even the facts of the physical world are discerned through the enculturative screen so that the perception of time, distance, weight, size and other 'realities' is mediated by the conventions of any given group." [73] Having assumed this position, it logically follows that it is impossible to establish any cross-cultural criteria of evaluation and, therefore, that any search for ethical universals would be doomed to failure from the very outset. [74] Herskovits will admit that universals exist-but only in the formal sense, i.e., as abstract forms whose content may be indefinitely varied. Thus, for example, morality itself is a cultural universal. But the number of ways in which it could be realized are infinite.[75] Herskovits' reason for adopting the position of ethical relativism aside from the epistemological one mentioned above seems to be that he, as Benedict, is highly sensitive to the evils of ethnocentricism, especially western ethnocentricism and its tendency to superimpose its culture upon all others as "the best" regardless of their particular conditions and he seems to feel that the only position that will effectively combat ethnocentricism is that of complete ethical relativism with its "hands off" policy.[76] He states that since the Second World War the historical development of anthropology has been in the direction of ethical relativism [77] and that today (i.e. 1951 A. D.) almost all anthropologists would accept the doctrine of ethical relativism.

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[69] *Ibid.,* p. 226.

[70] *Ibid.,* pp. 230-231.

[71] *Ibid.,* pp. 251-257.

[72] Cf. M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 27.

[73] M. Herskovits, *Man and His Works* (New York, 1948), p. 64.

[74] " But where are the cross-cultural guides of the anthropologist? He, like all human beings, has undergone enculturative conditionings to the standards of his proper culture. Can his judgments be so Olympian that they are not influenced by those standards? " Herskovits, "Tender-and Tough-Minded Anthropology," p. 27.

As to this last assertion made by Herskovits, aside from statements to the contrary by Kroeber and Kluckhohn that we have already seen, it is the contention of this writer that as of 1964 such an assertion would definitely not be affirmed by the following anthropologists-Bidney, Redfield, Linton, Murdock, Levi-Strauss, Firth, Asch, Ginsberg, Montagu, Edel, Keesing, Casserley, Malinowski, Childe, Fortes, Hall, Mead, Hallowell, Cooper, and Spiro. Undoubtedly there are others. But this list is, I believe, sufficient to suggest that Herskovits' statement is at least inaccurate.

Logic and Consequences

As we review Herskovits' position, we can see in its declaration of the cultural conditioning of man's perception of space and time a certain affinity that it has with idealist metaphysics. Thus Bidney observes that Herskovits quotes with approval the opinion of the Neo-Kantian, Ernst Cassirer, that "experience is culturally defined." [78]

[76] M. Herskovits, *Cultural Anthropology* (New York, 1955) p. 364.

[76] Herskovits, "Tender-and Tough-Minded Anthropology," p.

[77] *Ibid.*

[78] Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p.

The consequences inherent in the theory of ethical relativism have brought forth reactions in both the fields of anthropology and philosophy. For it has been pointed out that Dachau and Buchenwald and all that these represent make it a bit hard to consider all cultures as " coexisting and equally valid patterns of life which mankind has created for itself from the raw materials of existence."[79] Moreover, there are a host of extremely urgent modern, international problems requiring for their solution some sort of common morality. It is evident that in this state of affairs the position of ethical relativism will not be a popular one.[80] Finally, Bidney notes along the same line that, "If there is a danger of imposing ethnocentric ideals and institutions upon the adherents of alien cultures, there is equally the danger that the liberal advocates of cultural laissez faire may fail to correct gross injustices committed by those who recognize no common human rights and values."[81]

Another reason for Herskovits' position is to be found in the fact that he believes that there is some necessary connection between the methodological relativism of the practicing anthropologist and the assumption of the position of philosophical relativism. Thus he speaks of their "logical sequence."[82] Several writers have pointed out, however, that no connection necessarily exists between these two kinds of relativisms.[83] And as a proof of their point they have, in fact, adopted the position of methodological relativism while opposing that of philosophical relativism. For they declare that there is no contradiction in proceeding in anthropological field work to treat each society and its institutions purely in their own terms while admitting the possibility, if not the fact, that after the individual examination of cultures, cross-cultural study will exhibit a certain core that is universal and not simply relative to the particular cultures concerned. Thus Kroeber remarks, " Realization of relativity is a needed first step, not the end of the journey ... Successful discovery of regularities in human history and culture can begin after a high degree of relativity (= complexity) of culture is assumed as a premise." [84]

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[79] Benedict, *op. cit.,* p. (I used this phrase of Benedict's because it is so often quoted in support of the position of ethical relativism-not because I believe that she subscribes to that position.) Cf. Redfield, *Primitive World,* p. 148; Bidney, "Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism," p. 71.

[80] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 18; Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 698.

[81] *Ibid.,* pp. 697-698.

[82] Herskovits, "Tender-and Tough-Minded Anthropology," p.

[83] G. St. Hilaire, "Cultural Relativism and Primitive Ethics," *The Modern Schoolman,* XXXVI (1959) p. 180; Casserley, *op. cit.,* p. 222; Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 691; Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* p.

Herskovits' simultaneous insistence on the doctrine of ethical relativism and the universal need for tolerance among cultures and people within cultures has been the target of much criticism.[85] For one is led to wonder whether the plea for tolerance may not simply be " a reflection of a culturally developed liberalism in the western world." [86] Furthermore, one is led to wonder what it is that makes the doctrine of ethical relativism a " good " doctrine and that of ethnocentricism a " bad " doctrine.[87] And if one is to adjust to the culture in which he is, when he goes from a culture that is non-ethnocentric to a culture that is ethnocentric, should he become ethnocentric? [88] Moreover, an important psychological point overlooked by the ethical relativist is the fact that unless men *believe* that their basic moral values are in some sense absolute they can hardly be expected to act on them especially if such action is inherently difficult. In this sense Krutch points out that "'cultural and moral relativism' is a doctrine repugnant to the nature of man and that the attempt to build a society upon such relativism is certain to reduce him to a condition which he can come to accept comfortably only in so far as he succeeds in dehumanizing himself."[89]

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[84] Kroeber, "Critical Summary and Commentary," in *Nlethod and Perspective in Anthropology,* ed. R. Spencer (Minneapolis, 1954) p. 286.

[85] Herskovits, "Tender-and Tough-Minded Anthropology," p. 28.

[88] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 212.

[87] " There are apparently two kinds of ethnocentricism-a vicious and a benign kind. The vicious kind of ethnocentricism involves belief in objective absolute values and hence intolerance of other codes. The benign kind involves preference for one's own value system, as well as mutual respect for those of other societies. How it is possible to transcend ethnocentricism of the intolerant variety, if there is no objective standard of comparison, is not explained." Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 424; "... the affirmation that we should have respect and tolerance for the values of other cultures is itself a value which is not derivable from the proposition that all values are relative. An anthropologist may wish to hold such a position. But if he does so, it must be on other grounds." Firth, *op. cit.,* p. 150; Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 690; A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 82; Ladd, *op. cit.,* p. 324; Redfield, *Primitive World,* p. 147; Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* pp. 288 ff.; Keesing, *op. ct.,* p. 182.

[88] Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* pp. 424-425.

Another problem with the position of ethical relativism is that it logically excludes the very benefits that were thought to follow from that position. For it was thought that because no claim could be made to any transcultural criteria of evaluation any possibility of clandestine, ethnocentric impositions of one culture upon another in the name of these criteria would be eliminated from the very outset. As a result, tolerance for all would be guaranteed. Actually the opposite is true. As long as no common morality exists or is possible, what else can one be but ethnocentric? Thus Bidney remarks:

> So long as the attitude of cultural and moral relativism prevails, ethnocentrism is unavoidable in principle. If we are told and believe that, in spite of so-called cultural universals, we share no common human perspectives and no common rational values, and that each individual is to adhere to the culture norms of his society because it makes for individual adjustment and social integration then there is no alternative to ethnocentrism. The members of each society are bound to act as they have been conditioned by their culture and to prefer its values to all others. To say that one ought not to be ethnocentric under the supposed conditions of cultural relativism is to ask the impossible.[90]

Bidney also points out the paradox that extreme liberalism and extreme conservatism as regards moral values coincide at the practical level. For they both oppose any objective statement of common, universal values: the liberals, i.e. the relativists, because they fear that this will be used as a pretext for ethnocentric interference in another society, the conservatives because they oppose anything that would appear to do away with their position as an "elite" and certainly the recognition of common moral values would tend in this direction.[91] The only rational justification for man to rise above a completely ethnocentric outlook is to be found in some common core of values. Only in this way can there be mutual tolerance and respect for ethical differences.[92] In the light of this last remark Bidney notes that the degree of cooperation in world affairs which mankind has so far attained would not have been possible without there being more concrete similarities of values than ethical relativists care to admit.[93]

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[89] Krutch, *op. cit.*, pp. 183-184; ". . . cultural relativists, in general tend to assume that men would continue to adhere to, and respect, their cultural values, even after they were convinced by the ethnologists that their so-called 'absolute; and 'universal' values were but subjective delusions." Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 696; *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 427.

[90] Bidney, " Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism, pp. 65-66.

Another argument for tolerance in the sense of non-interference between societies is what we might call the "cultural pattern argument." The point of the argument is that the very existence of the pattern of whatever particular culture may be in question is itself proof that that pattern is a successful one and, therefore, necessary for the survival of the group. To interfere with this pattern might destroy it and eventually the group which depends on it for its existence. The whole " pattern of culture" idea itself has recently come under attack. For it presupposes that cultures are more close-knit than, in fact, they are. Thus Casserley has pointed out that the theory of the cultural pattern is not sufficient to characterize highly complex modern societies. "For the chief distinguishing characteristic of our society is precisely its lack of any one sovereign culture pattern."[94] And he goes on to make the important observation (in opposition to the cultural determinists) that man in modern society is not, therefore, determined by a particular cultural pattern but must freely choose his pattern and maintain it in the face of opposing patterns.[95] Moreover, he points out that such institutions as Christianity and the other higher religions have not come into being and ceased to be with particular cultural patterns. They originated in one kind of culture, e. g., Christianity in Judea, and have long outlived that culture.[96] Again Macbeath has pointed out, following the functionalistic theory of Malinowski, that the "pattern of culture " theory really refers to *how* something is to be done, i.e., the attitude of mind or spirit with which something is to be done rather than *what* is to be done.[97] Aside from these arguments directly against the "pattern of culture " theory itself others have wondered just how really destructive it would be of one culture if those of another culture sought to remove institutions such as slavery, headhunting, persecution for witchcraft, etc. from that culture.[98]

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[91] Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 694.

[92] "Unless science can provide potentially universal cultural values capable of winning ardent adherents, other methods will be found to fill this need, such as the mythological appeal to race, class, or nationality." Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 432.

[93] llidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 694.

[94] Cas<>erley, *op. cit.,* p. 97.

Krutch makes an interesting reply in answer to the assertion that man can be determined in any direction by the cultural conditions in which he exists. He notes that recent study of animal behavior reveals that its limitation to the categories of inborn or learned is no longer sufficient. For there is a third type of behavior which is somewhat of a combination of the two in as much as there is an inborn *ability* to *learn* in a certain direction rather than in another direction. Consequently, though an animal may be taught to do something for which it lacks this inborn ability, e. g., a robin taught to swim, this process will be a difficult one as opposed to the one that accords with the animal's natural ability. He extends this notion to man and remarks of his possible enculturation in any direction, "Perhaps you can condition an individual or a society to think and behave 'unnaturally' just as you might teach a robin to swim. But men who have been conditioned to think or behave unnaturally are as unhappy and as inefficient as swimming robins."[99]

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[95] *Ibid.,* pp. 98-99.

[96] *Ibid.,* pp. 105-106.

[97] Macbeath, *op.* cit., p. 88.

[98] Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* p. 292; St. Hilaire, *op.* cit., p. 195.

[99] Krutch, *op. cit.,* pp. 174-175.

Another uncomfortable consequence of the position of absolute relativism is that it would destroy the meaning and value of the scientific method itself. For it would throw into doubt its objectivity. Thus Rapoport has remarked. "So it is incorrect to say that the scientific outlook is simply a by-product of a particular culture. It is rather the essence of a culture which has not yet been established-a culture-studying culture. Ironically, the anthropologists, who often are most emphatic in stating that no noncultural standards of evaluation exist, are among the most active builders of this new culture-studying culture, whose standards transcend those of the cultures which anthropologists study and thus give them an opportunity to emancipate themselves from the limitations of the local standards." [100]

Those who propose the theory of ethical relativity often speak of it as being "scientifically" established. [101] However, it has been pointed out by several writers that if anthropology is ever to be anything more than merely descriptive, if it is to rise to a level that is truly scientific, which it can only do in virtue of its ability to make generalizations, then of necessity it must become comparative. Otherwise it remains only history. [102] And Kroeber observes, "Insistent recognition only of phenomenal variety, however true and however satisfying aesthetically, is necessarily sterile as an intellectual aim or achievement; just as belittling of variety is an intellectual evasion. The variety must be overcome, not deplored, denied, or shrugged off." [103]

Opposing the doctrine of ethical relativism, Duncker proposes a thesis frequently mentioned in literature pertaining to this subject. What this thesis really amounts to is taking the ethical relativists at their word regarding the non-comparability of institutions and customs within different cultures and paradoxically enough accusing them of being "abstract" when they compare what they call the "same" institution in different cultures. His point is that circumstances are *not extrinsic* to an act but enter into the very essence of the act so that to change the circumstances is to change the act.[104] Moreover, he believes that "given the same situational meanings an act is likely to receive the same ethical valuation."[105] Others have implicitly adopted at least a modified form of this thesis in explaining such things as parricide, infanticide, etc. Thus the killing of one's parents in a culture where the physical conditions of existence render life extremely hard and where one's religious belief is that a person continues in the next world in the same physical state in which he left this life is really, according to Duncker's thesis, a different act from what it would be in a culture where such conditions do not exist precisely because it has a different meaning.[106]

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[100] A. Rapoport, *Science and the Goals of Man* (New York, 1950), pp. 232-233 quoted in Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-179.

[101] Herskovits, "Some Further Comments," p. 267; "Tender-and Tough-Minded Anthropology," p. 24.

[102] Casserley, *op. cit.*, p. 6; Malinowski, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41; Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* pp. 427-428.

[103] Kroeber, "Critical Summary," p. 286; cf. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

A final point to be noted is the acute observation of Kluckhohn and Kroeber that paradoxically enough it was due precisely to the analytic comparison between diverse cultures that ethical relativism itself arose and yet today that same doctrine denies even the possibility of valid cross-cultural comparison.[107] The reason that ethical relativism had to arise in this way is seen in the fact that utter diversity is simply unintelligible. In the words of Florence Kluckhohn, "... certainly it is only within a frame of reference which deals with universals that variation can be understood. Without this framework it is not possible to deal systematically with either the problem of similarity and difference as between value systems of different societies or the questions of variant values within societies ... "[108]

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[104] "For ethical valuation is not concerned with acts as abstract events in space-time. The ethical essence of an act depends upon its concrete pattern of situational meanings." Duncker, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[105] *Ibid.*, p. 44.

[106] A. Edel, *op. cit.*, p. Brandt, *Ethical Theory*, p. 100; M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

[107] Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

The Claim of Empirical Verification

One of the most important points in the discussion of ethical relativism was the claim that the position of ethical relativism had been scientifically validated. Just how valid is this claim? It would be well to inquire first what the ethical relativist has in mind when he says that the theory of ethical relativism has been "scientifically validated." What he seems to have in mind is that much empirical data points to ethical relativism. For, as Herskovits notes, the theory of ethical relativism itself is not new. What is new is " the massive documentation that derives from the great body of comparative data bearing on variation in custom ... "[109] Now there is no question about the fact that the data spoken of do show considerable ethical variation among different societies. But this is not all that the data show, for they are after all (recalling Kluckhohn's remarks) *comparative.* Along with the diversity a surprising degree of similarity is also exhibited. And in view of the functional nature of society this is not really too surprising. These ethical similarities have come to have the name, ethical universals. Let us take a look at a number of them. The following list (by no means complete) represents some ethical universals admitted by anthropologists themselves or by those closely associated with anthropology.

1. Prohibition of murder or maiming without justification. [110]
2. Prohibition of lying at least in certain areas e. g. oaths, etc. [11]

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[108] F. Kluckhohn, "Dominant and Varient Cultural Value Orientat:-:ms," in *The Social Welfare Forum* (New York, 1951) pp. 108-109 quoted in Kroeher and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.,* p. 174.

[100] Herskovits, "Some Further Comments," p.

[110] Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 657; Bmw, *Anthropology and Afodern Life* (New York, p. "Anthropology," p. 97; Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* p. 95; Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.,* p. 177.

[111] Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life,* p. Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.,* p. 177; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 289; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 657.

3. Right to own property (land, clothing, tools, etc.) .[112]
4. Economic justice: reciprocity and restitution. [113]
5. Preference of common good over individual good.[114]
6. Demand for cooperation within group.[115]
7. Sexual restriction within all societies.[116]
    a. Incest prohibition within nuclear family.[117]
    b. Prohibition of rape.[118]
    c. Some form of marriage demanded.[119]
    d. Prohibition of adultery, with only a few strictly limited legal exceptions.[120]
    e. Opposition to promiscuity in the sense of having a large number of partners.[121]
    f. Lifelong union of the spouses is the ideal.[122]
    g. Exogomy (further determination of incest taboo) .[123]
8. Disrespect for illegitimate children.[124]

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[112] Kroeber, "Critical Summary," p. 285; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. *655;* Boas, "Anthropology," p. 79; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 289.

[113] Boas, "Anthropology," p. 84; Casserley, *op. cit.,* p. 107; Linton, "T11e Problem of Universal Values," pp. 158-159; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 215; Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity," p. 672; Kroeber, "Critical Summary," p. 284.

[114] Boas, "Anthropology," p. 97; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. *659;* Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 209.

[115] Boas, "Anthropology," p. 97.

[116] Murdock, "Common Denominator," p. 4; Linton, "Universal Ethical Pru1ciple.s," p. 651; Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. 32; Casserley, *op. cit.,* p. 62; Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p. 60; Krutch, *op. cit.,* p. 185; Malinowski, *op. cit.,* p. 26.

[117] Murdock, "Common Denominator," pp. 140-141; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 653; Boas, "Anthropology," p. 85; Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 452; Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p. 60; Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity," p. 672; Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* p. 95; Keesing, *op. cit.,* p. 183.

[118] Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 651; Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Men,* p. 218; Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life,* p. 219.

[119] F. Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York, 1922), p. 172; Murdock, "Common Denominator," p. 140; Casserley, *op. cit.,* p. 107; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 652.

[120] Malinowski, *op. cit.,* p. 113; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles, p. 653.

[121] Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 652.

[122] *Ibid.*

[1,28] Murdock, *Social Structure,* pp. 47-48; Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p. 400.

[124] B. Malinowski, *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (New York, 1927) p. 212 quoted in Macbeath, *op.* cit., p. 137.

9. Reciprocal duties between children and parents: parents -care for and train children; children-respect, obey, and care for parents in old age.[125]
10. Loyalty to one's social unit (family, tribe, country) .[120]
11. Provision for poor and unfortunate. [127]
12. Prohibition of theft. [128]
13. Prevention of violence within in-groups. [129]
14. Obligation to keep promises. [130]
15. Obedience to leaders. [131]
16. Respect for the dead and disposal of human remains in some traditional and ritual fashion. [132]
14. Desire for and priority of immaterial goods. [133]
18. Obligation to be a good mother. [134]
19. Distributive justice. [135]
20. Inner rather than external sanctions considered better. [136]
21. Courage is a virtue. [137]
9.2. Justice is an obligation. [138]

One objection to a list of this type is that we do not yet have enough empirical data to make any such generalizations. The objector will often admit the possibility of future generalizations as well as the possibility that further research may show us that it is impossible to make such generalizations. While admitting that much empirical work remains to be done in this area, I would simply point to the names of the leading anthropologists associated with this list as rather convincing evidence that even at the stage of anthropological knowledge as of 1964 some generalizations are in order. Thus Ralph Linton, a leading anthropologist himself, has remarked, " Information is now available on a large number of cultures which are so widely distributed in time and space that they provide an adequate sample for comparative studies." [139] Moreover, the cross-cultural survey at Yale University, which is probably the world's leading source for comparative studies, though begun as late as 1937, by 1943 had 500,000 cards containing full or substantial information on 150 cultures.[140] By 1945 George P. Murdock, the founder of the Survey, mentioned that the empirical backing of some statements that he made regarding the nature of the family came from the" careful analysis of 220 societies " [141] and by 1949 he had a working base of empirical data from societies.[142] In view of these facts it certainly seems that Linton's assertion is justified although, as with any empirical science, the generalizations themselves may prove subject to some modification in the light of further empirical discoveries.

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[125] Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity," p. 672; Boas, "Anthropology," p. 97; Linton, " Universal Ethical Principles," p. 652.

[126] Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. *655.*

[127] *Ibid.,* p. *656.*

[128] Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.,* p. 177; Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 452; Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life,* p. 219; Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. *656.*

[129] Linton, *Ibid.,* p. *659.*

[130] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 289.

[131] Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," p. 159.

[132] Krutch, *op. cit.,* pp. 177-178; Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.*

[133] Krutch, *Ibid.,* p. 186.

[134] M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 34.

[18°] Krutch, *op. cit.,* pp. 68-76.

[136] M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 224.

[137] Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p. 60.

[138] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* pp. *52-53.*

There are several things to be noted in regard to the so-called ethical universal. In the first place, its realization takes place in an analogical rather than in an univocal manner, i.e., while it exists in all or almost all societies, it, nevertheless, may not exist in them in exactly the same way but in somewhat different ways.[143] As Linton has noted, while all societies require truth-telling in certain cases the North European is almost unique in requiring verbal truth in virtually all cases.[144] And

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[139] Linton, " Universal Ethical Principles," p. 658.

[140] G. Murdock, *Outline of Cultural Materials,* (New Haven, 1950) p. XIII.

[141] Murdock, "Common Denominator," p. 140.

[142] Murdock, *Social Structure,* p. 140.

[143] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 204; Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," pp. 150-152; Krutch, *op. cit.,* pp. 177-178.

[144] Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. 657.

Kluckhohn has noted that few universals of this kind are identical in content.[145] For this reason he prefers to speak of them as "moving absolutes" or "conditional absolutes" and opposes them to what he calls" metaphysical absolutes" (those absolutes which are identical in content) ,[146]

A second point is that the ethical universal does not have to be in the present nor to have been in the past an ethical universal in order to be an ethical universal by its very nature. In other words, it is quite possible that many things which are not universally accepted ethical prescriptions are by their very nature such that some day they will be universally accepted by mankind. Thus as in the past we have seen the abolition of slavery become universally accepted, in the present we are witnessing the rise of the subjected peoples of Africa and Asia to the freedom and dignity proper to every man simply because he is a human being.[147]

Thirdly, when anthropologists speak of universals they usually also include the phrase "or near-universals." Some of the universals mentioned in the list do admit of a few exceptions. But Kluckhohn has remarked on this point, "The traits of a zoological species are not the less objective or in a sense 'universal ' because of the occasional birth of ' sports ' or monstrosities."[148] And the Edels have suggested that when a society is found that lacks the near-universal the viability of that society should be brought under examination in order to see what degree it is able to accomplish its function which is the fulfillment and satisfaction of human needs.[149]

Fourthly, the reader may recall that Herskovits will admit of " universals " but only as being empty forms the content of which will admit of indefinite variation. At least three leading anthropologists, Kluckhohn, Linton, and Bidney have explicitly denied this assertion while its implicit denial is certainly to be found in those anthropologists listed above who admit to the existence of ethical universals and of their being meaningful. Let us quote a rather extended passage from Kroeber and Kluckhohn which goes right to the heart of the matter.

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[145] Kluckhohn, "Universal Categories of Culture," p. 519.

[146] Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity," p. 678.

[147] " Some phenomena although expressed in the mode of a particular culture turn out to be transcultural, and some phenomena although very specifically wedded to a particular culture are capable of trans-cultural systematization." A. Edel, *op.* cit., p. 210.

[148] Kluckhohn, "Ethical Relativity," p. 676.

[149] M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 42.

> Nor is the similarity between cultures, which in some ways transcends the fact of relativity, limited to the sheer forms of the universal culture pattern. There are at least some broad resemblances in content and specifically in value content. Considering the exhuberant variation of cultures in most respects, the circumstance that in some particulars almost identical values prevail throughout mankind is most arresting. No culture tolerates indiscriminate lying, stealing, or violence within the in-group. The essential universality of the incest taboo is well-known. No culture places a value upon suffering as an end in itself; as a means to the ends of the society (Punishment, discipline, etc.), yes; as a means to the ends of the individual (purification, Mystical exaltation, etc.), yes; but of and for itself, never. We know of no culture in either space or time, including the Soviet Russian, where the official ideology denies an after-life, where the fact of death is not ceremonialized. Yet the more superficial conception of cultural relativity would suggest that at least one culture would have adopted the simple expedient of disposing of corpses in the same way most cultures do dispose of dead animals-i. e., just throwing the body out far enough from habitations so that the odor is not troubling. When one first looks rather carefully at the astonishing variety of cultural detail one is tempted to conclude: human individuals have tried almost everything that is physically possible and nearly every individual habit has somewhere at some time been institutionalized in at least one culture. To a considerable degree this is a valid generlization-but not completely. In spite of loose talk (based upon an uncritical acceptance of an immature theory of cultural relativity) to the effect that the symptoms of mental disorder are completely relative to culture, the fact of the matter is that all cultures define as abnormal individuals who are permanently inaccessible to communication or who fail to maintain some degree of control over their impulse life. Social life is impossible without communication, without some measure of order: the behavior of any " normal" individual must be predictable-within a certain range-by his fellows and interpretable by them.[150]

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[160] Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

It seems to me that Linton and Bidney have made a fundamental point in their opposition to the limitation of ethical universals to mere hollow forms when they state that the ethical *content* in all cultures is in a large degree the same but relativity enters in at that point in different cultures where it has to be decided which aspects or parts of the ethical content are more important and should, therefore, receive the greater emphasis.151 Looking at ethical institutions functionally, this is what we might expect. For every culture will have to have present certain basic, minimal requirements in order for it to function at all. But once these requirements are present the further question will remain as to the way in which these are to be interrelated. Here, of course, variability will enter in because of the different conditions, history, experience etc. of that culture. For example, two fundamental elements of human nature that have to be dealt with in any human society are those of man's desire to be esteemed by his fellow-man and his sexual desire. But one culture may choose to emphasize the former element in man's nature and not be too concerned with the latter element. Consequently, the slightest offense to one's honor may result in a life-and-death-duel while sexual deviations are treated as matters of secondary importance. On the other hand where sexual control and moral virtue are often identified, the opposite is frequently the case.

Fifthly, it is to be noted regarding the ethical universal that the fact of its universality is by no means to be identified with its desirability i. e., the fact that it *is* universal does not mean that it *ought* to be universal. For slavery not too long ago in human history was universal but it is obviously far from desirable as an institution to which a human being ought to be subjected. And today equal rights for all members Gf the human race, though not yet universal, are nevertheless, desirable in virtue of man's common humanity. It seems to me, therefore, that the precise function of an ethical universal as established by the anthropologist is simply to *indicate* ten-

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[151] Linton, "Universal Ethical Principles," p. *659;* Bidney, "Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism," p. 62; cf. Brandt, *Ethical Theory,* p. *95.*

dencies that lie within human nature.[152] The answer to the question as to whether or to what degree these individual tendencies ought to be brought to realization will be determined in the light of one's conception of man and man's most general ends. Thus such pheonmena as slavery and war may indicate that there lies within man a certain aggressive tendency. But if we think of man as by nature a free, rational, and social being, there may be some question as to whether this tendency should be allowed completely unrestricted expression.

A final point to be noted is that the concern with ethical universals and a common morality by no means excludes ethical variation in all levels other than the most general level. For such a situation is neither possible nor desirable. It is not possible because, as Kroeber has suggested, the diversity of cultures is itself indicative of one of the main elements of man-his freedom. There is no diversity to be found in the societal existence of the ant or the bee.[153] And it is not desirable because of the varying conditions with which man has to cope.[154]

Human Nature

The basic presupposition in any existential grounding of human knowledge of moral values is that human nature exists and possesses a certain fundamental unity. In opposition to this presupposition there has existed the doctrine of "primitive mentality" and the famous question of " the psychic unity of mankind." An examination of the mentality of primitive peoples led certain social scientists and others to the conclusion that the "mentality" of the primitives is so inferior to that of civilized man that the primitive mentality must be different in kind from that of civilized man. Thus the psychic unity of mankind was brought into doubt and the theory came into being that different sections of "mankind" might be at different levels of evolution. Of course, it logically followed that there could be no universal human morality because there was no universal human nature on which it might be based and to which it might apply.

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[152] " Uncle id quod invenitur in omnibus aut pluribus, videtur esse ex inclinatione naturae ... " *In Eth.,* VII, 13.

[153] " This notorious plasticity or variability of human culture is due precisely to the. fact that its content and forms, its substance, are non-genetic, and are therefore exempt from the overwhelmingly repetitive and preservative influence of heredity." Kroeber, "Of Human Nature," p. 196; cf. *Anthropology,* p. 9.

[154] "Absolute ideals and varing cultural content are quite compatible in theory and practice. It is fallacious to assume that absolute ideals imply fixed modes of action regardless of the human situation. Morality and government are arts precisely because the moral man and the statesman must evaluate the changing reqairements of the particular situation while adhering to basic fixed principles." Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 378; Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. 174; Boas, "Anthropology," p. 87.

Today, however, there has been a fairly general abandonment of this view among anthropologists and a return to human nature, albeit a rather cautious return.[155] Thus Ladd in a recent work calls such a view an " outdated view" and again applies the Greek definition of man-a rational animal-to all men.[151)] It is interesting to note that Boas, the anthropologist who did most to combat the 19th century anthropological theory of unilinear evolution which rested on the presupposition of a conception of the unity of human nature and who led the way in anthropology in the direction of concentration on cultural diversity, remarked as early as 1911: "Observation has shown, however, that not only emotions, intellect, and will-power of man are alike everywhere, but that much more detailed similarities in thought and action occur among the most primitive peoples."[157] And we see a reaffirmation of this same outlook some 36 years later when he says: "It does not seem necessary to assume on account of these cultural viewpoints that primitive man has a type of mind different from that of civilized man. His intellect deals with the phenomena of the world in the same way as ours, but with a different knowledge which admits what we should call supernatural interference with the laws of nature."[158] The late dean of present-day anthropology, A. L. Kroeber, has stated: "Actually, of course, though it cannot possibly be uncovered in its purity, original or pure human nature exists as a theoretically separable and essentially constant component in the Chinese, Italian, and hundreds of other ethnic and social groups, which are fusion products of genetic, individual-accidental, and socio-cultural influences."[159] And Benedict, whose work, *Patterns of Culture,* as we have seen, is often taken to be a leading source of the doctrine of ethical relativism, remarks in that same work that "we are forced to believe that the race of man is of one species ... "[160] Finally, Montagu in a work that, as he states in its Preface, is the result of some thirty years experience in the field of anthropology, makes the following observation: "The message that the whole integrated body of anthropology yields is that beneath the superficial differences, the texture of the hair, the color of the skin, the cultural differences, is the human being who holds his humanity in common with every other human being, and that it is this that we must respect and cherish."[161]

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[155] " there is a return in our times of a conscious concern . . . with human nature . . . understood to refer to the characteristics of all human beings as acquired in whatever society." Redfield, "Relations of Anthropology," p. 730; " Other students of human differences turn to a consideration of the resemblances that one man bears to any other, and after denying for quite a time that psychic unity exists, anthropologists now take a more sympathetic interest in something not too different, universal human nature." *Primitive World,* p. 90; cf. Macbeath, op. cit., p.

[106] Ladd, *op. cit.,* p. 2; cf. Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* pp. 3-4.

[157] Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man,* p. *155.*

Kroeber suggests some reasons for the general acknowledgment among anthropologists today that such a thing as "universal human nature" exists. In the first place, such a concept is of great heuristic value in the field of social science. Therefore, " The anthropologist continues to make the assumption because if he is impartial he finds that with it his work on culture leads to coherent and productive conclusions, but without it he bogs down before he has begun."[162] Thus, for example, it is only on the assumption that some basic unity exists in human nature that the transmission of culture in space i.e., from population to population, and in time, i.e. from generation to generation, can be understood. For culture would not be able to be transmitted from population to population as it often is with ease, rapidity, and sometimes with very little change nor could it be transmitted from generation to generation without serious modification if it encountered diverse genetic strains in that transmission.[163] Secondly, anthropologists today distinguish sharply between society and culture.[164] Society is found even among the animals, e. g. the bee and the ant; culture is proper to man. Thus Kroeber remarks that organic factors alone cannot explain cultural traits or complexes because " another set of factors also becomes operative: ideas, beliefs, and the practices and affects attached to them—cultural manifestations such as no sub-human animal shows."[165] The reason no sub-human animal shows manifestations of this type is the fact that "cultural activity, even of the simplest kind, inevitably rests on ideas or generalizations "[166] and Kroeber denies that subhuman animals have either the power of generalization or of speech, properly speaking. The sounds they emit are simply "subjective expressions."[167] Another distinguishing characteristic of animal "society" is that here the individual is absolutely sacrificed for the community. Such is not the case in human society, for there is always at least a dim awareness that the individual is at the same time a person.[168]

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[158] Boas, "Anthropology," p. 108.

[159] Kroeber, *Anthropology,* pp. 196-197.

[160] Benedict, *op. cit.,* p. 17.

[161] Montagu, *op. cit.,* p. *5;* cf. Murdock, "Cornlljon Denominator," p. 1!t6; Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* pp. 22-23; A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 120; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 16 ff.; Kroeber and Kluckhohn, *op. cit.,* p. 178.

[162] Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p. 573; cf. Casserley, *op. cit.,* pp. 219-221.

One of the main reasons anthropologists rejected the concept of common or universal human nature was their belief that so-called "human nature " was, in fact, purely plastic and, therefore, completely molded and determined by culture. Opposing this position, Bidney points out that "The attempt on the part of the organic, as well as the superorganic, determinists to reduce the cultural process to an automatic process of natural selection disregards the essentially human and unpredictable element in the cultural process, namely, the normative choice of distinctively human cultural values."[169] And he takes a position in direct opposition to cultural determinists when he asserts that, on the contrary, it is human nature which lies at the origin of culture and not culture which determines the origin of human nature. However, he is careful not to resurrect the error of nineteenth century anthropology in attempting any sort of deduction of culture and the cultural process from human nature. (You will recall the above remark that the present-day "return to human nature" is a *cautious* return.) He sees rather a constant interplay or interdetermination between human nature and culture.[170]

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[168] Kroeber, *Ibid.*

[164] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[165] *Ibid.*, p. 310.

[168] *Ibid.*, p.

[167] *Ibid.*, p. 41, pp. 67-70; "Of Human Nature," p. 196.

[...8] Kroeber, *Anthropology*, pp. 33-40.

The Progressive Knowing of Moral Values

Another important point to examine is what anthropology has to say about the progress of mankind in moral knowledge. The reasons for entering into this topic will appear shortly. For the present note that we have already established two necessary presuppositions for a discussion of this kind. It was necessary first to present a refutation of ethical relativism because obviously if all ethical values are relative to their cultures and their cultures themselves are subject to change there can be no criteria to determine moral progress or regression. Secondly, the establishment of some uniformity of human nature was necessary for a like reason. For if human nature were " purely plastic," there would be no reason why it would be better for it to be one way rather than any other way.

The idea of progress itself is a rather new idea in human history. Most of mankind throughout most of history has looked upon the world as essentially static. When the idea of change entered into one's conception of the world, it was usually looked upon in terms of a decline from a former golden age. Only in the eighteenth century did the notion of progress become a doctrine. In the nineteenth century it received great reinforcement from the Darwinian theory of evolution. While some modification of the theory of progress appears in the twentieth century (even doubt in some areas), it is, nevertheless, still a theory that is very much with us today.[171]

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[169] Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 334.

[170] " In brief, all cultural phenomena are composed of two disparate elements, namely, the element of nature, conceived in physical, biological, psychological, or social terms, and the element of human creativity and choice. There are purely natural phenomena which are conceived through themselves alone. All cultural phenomena are natural phenomena modified by human effort and interaction." *Ibid.*

In treating of the way in which moral values are known we might begin with Bidney's observation that the whole problem of moral values is treated by the ethical relativists as if only two alternatives existed: either one must accept a doctrine of fixed absolute values or a doctrine of complete ethical relativism. He suggests a third possibility-the *progressive knowing of moral values.* And he does it on the epistemological principle that there exists a reality which is independent of our thought and to which our ideas progressively conform in coming to know reality. For he regards moral reality as being in this respect the same as any other reality that we seek to know.[172] Amplifying further his position that man's knowledge of moral values is inherently progressive, Bidney offers with approbation the following quotation from Immanuel Kant: ". . . in man those mature faculties which aim at the use of reason shall be fully developed in the species, not in the individual .... "[173] And he comments as follows: "That is, man has a capacity for reason which is historically developed in the history of human society but not in the experience of the individual, since the life of the individual is far too short to achieve complete rationality."[174]

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[171] Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p.

[172] "Reality as an ontological existent independent of man is an absolute object to which our ideas progressively conform in the course of our quest for knowledge by scientific methods." Bidney, " Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism," p. 68; *Theoretical Anthropology,* pp. St. Thomas Aquinas expresses this same idea when he remarks: "... quia humanae rationi naturale esse videtur ut gradatim ab imperfecto ad perfectum perveniat. Unde videmus in scientiis speculativis quod qui primo philosophati sunt, quaedam imperfecta tradiderunt, quae postmodum per posteriores sunt magis perfecta. Ita etiam est in operabilibus. Nam primi qui intenderunt invenire aliquid utile communitatis hominum, non valentes omnia ex seipsis considerare, instituerunt quaedam imperfecta in multis deficientia; quae posteriores mutaverunt, instituentes aliqua quae in paucioribus deficere possent a communi utilitate." I-II, 97, 1, c.; A leading contemporary thomist, J. Maritain, also agrees with the position of Bidney as the following quotations illustrate: "In other words, our knowledge of moral laws is progressive in nature. The sense of duty and obligation was always present, but the explicit knowledge of the various norms of natural law grows with time ... Also, we may think that the knowledge of the particular precepts- of natural law in all of their precise aspects and requirements will continue to grow until the end of human history." J. Maritain, *On the Philosophy of History,* ed. J. Evans (New York, 1957) p. 105; "That progress of moral conscience is indeed the most unquestionable instance of progress in humanity." *Man and the State,* p. 94.

A point that the anthropologists are careful to make clear is that the moral progress they have in mind is progress in moral enlightenment-not progress in moral goodness i.e., in the conformity to moral values already accepted. In respect to this latter issue they doubt that there is much variation from one generation to the next. Thus Macbeath remarks:

> Moral goodness consists in loyality to the operative or recognized ideal, whatever the content of this ideal may be, and, therefore, it does not change. But the content of the ideal itself changes. It may be more or less enlightened, richer and more comprehensive or narrower and more circumscribed, its parts more or less consistent, its provision for the needs of human nature more or less adequate. Therefore the acts in which moral goodness manifests itself and the ends which the morally good man pursues change.[175]

Though many twentieth-century anthropologists will admit that a kind of progress in moral knowledge has taken place in the course of human history, the nineteenth-century doctrine of a necessary, unilinear progress is in the twentieth century strictly taboo. This is due largely to the great influence of Boas, who in reacting to the doctrine of unilinear evolution of Tyler, Frazer, and others came to lay stress on both the fact of the historical relatedness of cultures and on the great need for a thorough empirical examination of singular cultures prior to any comparative study of them. The kind of progress of which many contemporary anthropologists and those closely associated with anthropology will admit is a slow, uneven, halting kind of progress: a kind of progress that is much more in line with the human way of doing things.[176] Thus Kluckhohn remarks: "If one defines progress as the gradual enrichment of human ideas and subjects, there can be no question that the potential resources of human culture in general and of most individual cultures have steadily increased."[177] And he quotes Childe as follows: "Progress is real if discontinuous. The upward curve resolves itself into a series of troughs and crests. But in those domains that archaeology as well as written history can survey, no trough ever declines to the low level of the preceding one, each crest outtops its last precursor."[178] Redfield gives us a clear statement of the matter when he remarks: "The standards as to the good have changed with history. The moral canon tends to mature. The change is far from steady, and the future course of the ethical judgment is not, it seems to me, assured to us. But in this sense-that on the whole the human race has come to develop a more decent and measure of goodness-there has been a transformation of ethical judgment which makes us look at noncivilized peoples, not as equals, but as people on a different level of human experience."[179]

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[173] Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p.

[174] *Ibid.;* cf. Kroeber, *Anthropolo[J'1J,* p. 301; Redfield, *Primitive World,* p. 161.

[175] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 435; cf. Brinton, *op. cit.,* p. 436.

[176] " --- the kind of change the Victorians labeled as ' Progress ' is more uneven and jerky, more subject to lapses or 'decadence,' slower, and much more unpredictable, than the Victorians thought." Brinton, *Ibid.,* p. 435; Murdock, *Social Structure,* pp. XIII-XIV; Kroeber, *Anthropology,* pp. 6-7.

[177] Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. *55.*

[178] V. Childe, *Man Mak·es Himself* (London, 1936) quoted in Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. *55.*

[179] Redfield, *Primitive World,* p. 163; "To ground human values in some account of human nature and the human situation need not involve overlooking the possible development of human nature and possible changes of quality in the human situation ... The full understanding of what is discovered as a new value may come only in terms of seeing it in terms of man's needs and problems in a fuller setting; but recognizing such a value may itself bring a refinement in the conception of these needs and problems." A Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. *295-296;* " I spoke of this process as if individuals or groups of individuals arrived at their conception of the good life as the result of the slow and painful process which has been called the dialectic of experience, that is, the process by which men arrive, as the result of trial and error, through failure and disappointment and partial

Bidney has given us perhaps the most extended exposition of a theory of the progressive knowing of moral values. He raises the following question, "If culture is a direct, necessary expression of human nature, how is one to explain the evolution of culture patterns in time?" [180] He replies by stating that the only possible solution to this problem is to be found in the admission that "human nature, like culture, evolves or unfolds in time." [181] Thus while man's fundamental natural potentialities have been and will continue to remain the same throughout time, the actualization of these same potentialities takes place and must of necessity take place in time. For human nature exists in time. Therefore, an active polarity exists between human nature and culture. For it is in virtue of human nature's attempts at self-cultivation that culture is produced. But it is the cumulative effect of all that culture has preserved of human nature's attempts at self-cultivation that reacts on human nature and stimulates it to further development. This theory explains both the unity and diversity of actual concrete enculturated human nature, that is, human nature in the only way in which we find it. Unity is explained by the admission that human potentialities are basically the same in all men. Diversity is explained by the fact that different cultural patterns encourage or discourage, as the case may be, development of different human potentialities. [182]

In treating the progressive knowing of moral values one might wonder what criterion should be used to determine whether or not such progress has actually taken place. The reply to this question begins with the observation that man is

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success, at their idea of what will satisfy their nature and its needs. But while I believe this is what has happened in the history of the race, it certainly has not happened in the experience of any man known to history or anthropology." Macbeath, *op. cit.*, p. 67; cf. Von Fritz, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-118; Casserley, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68; Bidney, "The Concept of Value in Modern Anthropology," p. 698; "Cultural Relativism and Cultural Absolutism," p. 68; Kluckhohn, Ethical Realitivity," pp. 675-676; Krutch, *op. cit.*, p. Hl; Malinowski, *op. cit.*, p. 16, p. 144; Montagu, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

[180] Bidney, *Theoretical Anthropology,* p. 76.

[181] *Ibid.*

[182] *Ibid.*, pp. 81-84, p. 419, pp. 431-432, p. 466.

a creature of needs-physical e. g., economic, environmental, physiological, reproductive, etc.; spiritual e. g., knowledge, love, aesthetic experience, freedom, etc.; and social e. g., equality, acceptance, concern for the welfare of others. But (and this is the important point) man is not simply a haphazard aggregate of needs; he is a self-conscious unity. What has to be satisfied is not simply a chaos of isolated needs but a person. Consequently the satisfaction of the needs themselves can only take place to the degree that each assumes its proper role as a part of a well-ordered structure which has as its purpose the satisfaction or realization of the self as a whole. Self-realization in and through this ideal structure is then the end of man and the degree to which a particular culture realizes this ideal will mark the degree to which it has been successful precisely as an experiment in living.[183]

Anthropologists suggest a number of reasons, apart from epistemological necessity, which help to account for the progress of moral knowledge. Redfield mentions cross-cultural communication [184] and Macbeath points to the rise of great moral teachers.[185] Kroeber and Linton observe that the rise of the higher religions gave a great impetus to moral progress both by their de-emphasis of bloody sacrifice and their concern with the whole of humanity.[186] Redfield points out that with the advance of the technical order the moral order also tends to advance in order to fill the gap that separates it from the new technical order.[187] Thus with the advances made in transport'lltion and communication as well as in man's power to destroy

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[188] "Now none of the ways of life which result from the efforts of different peoples to embody the moral ideal is entirely adequate. The different patterns of behavior which constitute them are never entirely consistent and the provision which they make for the different needs of human nature are never entirely adequate. Therefore, the formal ideal, of which at best they are only imperfect expressions, stands over against them as the critic of their imperfections and a challenge to further progress." Macbeath, *op. cit.*, pp. 414-415, cf. p. *59*, p. 64, p. 78.

[184] Redfield, *Primitive World,* pp. 82-83.

[185] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* pp. 438-440.

[186] Kroeber, *Anthropology,* pp. 310-313; Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," p. 158.

[187] Redfield, *Primitive World,* pp. 74-77.

himself we witness the appearance of the United Nations. Redfield also points out that the advent of civilization itself was decisive in regard to moral progress. For here new conflicts arose that demanded new moral solutions. Thus the purpose of education in primitive society was to reproduce the current mode of life. Its purpose in civilized society is to change society itself.[188]

Finally, it might be asked what examples the anthropologists would offer as proof that moral progress has actually taken place. Anthropological literature contains quite a number of them. Boas, Linton, the Edels, and Macbeath speak of the advance that was made when the notion of humanity was extended beyond the members of the in-group to include all men.[189] In line with the recognition of man's common humanity one finds such corollaries as the abolition of slavery;[190] the continuing struggle for human equality;[191] the rise of the position of woman;[192] the rise of internationalism; and the conscious fight against poverty, disease, and ignorance for the benefit of all members of the human race.[193] Kroeber, Duncker, and Macbeath point out the deepening recognition of the individual as a person and not just a member of a group.[194] Kroeber, in fact, uses as a characteristic distinguishing human from animal societies the fact that in animal societies the individual is absolutely sacrificed to the community[195] and Duncker notes that among primitives the individual tends to be considered in his role as a "limb of the group" rather than a person in his own right.[196] Again, in line with this recognition we find increasing opposition to totalitarian states,[197] the elimination of torture as a judicial procedure, beatings as a legal punishment, execution with torture, and slaughter of war prisoners/[98] and, finally, an increasing emphasis on the primary value of interior morality.[199]

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[188] *Ibid.,* p. 83, p. 1£0.

[189] Boas, "Anthropology," p. 84; Linton, "The Problem of Universal Values," pp. 157-158; M. Edel and A. Edel, *op. cit.,* pp. 88-93; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* pp. 357-358.

[100] Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. *55;* Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p. 801.

[10,] " --- Western Roman legal universalism, with its thesis that all men, regardless of family, color, race, or religion, are equal under the law. This is something novel in the cultures of the world." F. Northrop, "Cultural Values," in *Anthropology Today,* ed. A. Kroeber (Chicago, 1958) p. 676; Brinton, *op. cit.,* p. 437; Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* p. *55;* A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 18.

[102] Kluckhohn, *Ibid.*

[193] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 18, pp. 316-317; Krutch, *op. cit.,* p. *5.*

[194] Kroeber, *Anthropology,* pp. 38-40; Duncker, *op. cit.,* p. 43; Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 445.

[195] Kroeber, *Ibid.*

Social Engineering

The term, social engineering, appears frequently in the literature of contemporary anthropology. In such a conception we see a fundamental value that anthropology holds for ethics. It is the important contribution that anthropology has to make toward the construction of future ethics. For if we take into account that all men seek the fulfillment of their needs and desires in a unified structure consistent with their nature as persons, that virtually all of man's needs and desires in some way require society for their fulfillment and, finally, that societies themselves are but so many attempts or experiments at the concretization of the ideal structure just mentioned, then the analytic study, exposition, and subsequent synthesis of the best elements of all these experiments could lead to a society of the future governed according to the most beneficial principles discovered up to that time. Such a society itself, to be sure, would be far from perfect nor would it be able to lay aside its nature of also being an experiment. For the actual or concrete realization of the ideal structure appears to be that which is never attained but is only indefinitely approached. The idea of consciously planning a society rather than just "letting it happen" has some dangers as well as some great possibilities.[200] But perhaps this "either-or" situation must

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[106] Duncker, *op. cit.,* p. 48.

[167] A. Edel, *op. cit.,* p. 18.

[108] Kroeber, *Anthropology,* p. 801.

[169] Macbeath, *op. cit.,* p. 444.

[200] "No society has yet attempted a self-conscious direction of the process by which its new normalities are created in the next generation. Dewey has pointed

always be faced in order to advance-and it seems to be a fundamental tendency in human nature to advance or " to die trying" as the aphorism goes. Benedict suggests one of the values inherent in this approach. She remarks that future societies by becoming aware of their non-absolute character, by becoming aware that they themselves are simply experiments in living or attempts at realizing the ideal structure for man, will tend to make more allowances for individual differences or deviations from the cultural pattern as certain societies have done in the past with no apparent detriment either to their existence or functioning. [201] She concludes her discussion of this subject with the following observation: "Tradition is as neurotic as any patient; its overgrown fear of deviation from its fortuitous standards conforms to all the usual definitions of the psychopathic." [202]

In answer to a frequent objection against any undertaking of this sort Kluckhohn submits Edwin Embree's penetrating refutation of that objection:

> Many people think it visionary to try to improve our own lives and relationships. They feel they have closed the whole subject with " You can't change human nature."
>
> Well, we haven't changed the nature of the physical universe, but by understanding it we have turned it in myriad ways to our service and our convenience. We didn't set aside the force of gravity when we learned to fly. We didn't have to amend the laws of stress and strain, we only had to understand them, in order to build bridges and skyscrapers or to drive engines a hundred miles an hour. We didn't change the climate, yet by central heating we make ourselves comfortable through the coldest winters and by air-cooling devices we are beginning to have equal comfort in the hottest summers. We didn't alter the laws of biology to breed fleet

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out how possible and yet how drastic such social engineering would be. For some traditional arrangements it is obvious that very high prices are paid, reckoned in terms of human suffering and frustration. If these arrangements presented themselves to us merely as arrangements and not as categorical imperatives, our reasonable course would be to adapt them by whatever means to rationally selected goals." Benedict, *op. cit.*, p. 251.

[201] *Ibid.*, pp. 251-252.

[202] *Ibid.*, p. *252.*

horses and fat hogs, to grow corn and wheat of far finer quality than anything known in a wild state, even to devise such serviceable hybrids as mules and grapefruit.

So with human nature it is not a matter of " changing " the fundamental drives and instincts; it is simply a matter of understanding these forces and turning them to more constructive and wholesome channels than the strifes and frustrations that make up so much of life, even in the midst of our material plenty.[203]

Conclusion

We have pointed out several values that a knowledge of anthropology holds for the ethician. First of all, such knowledge may aid him in deciding what course of action is to be taken in certain cases. For by revealing to him the relative successes and failures of particular kinds of societies and social institutions, he is given more particular guides to human action. Secondly, anthropological knowledge places human nature in its proper perspective. Through it the ethician is made aware of the fact that all existing human nature is enculturated, and yet, at the same time, anthropology, far from abandoning the ethician to a complete agnosticism in regard to human nature, provides him with the means of determining, at least to some degree, what is proper to human nature and what derives from culture. Finally, an ethician who is constantly in touch with anthropology becomes highly sensitive to the ethnocentric nature of many of his own moral judgments as well as those of others about him, and he is thus led to see that judgments can rarely be understood apart from their cultural contexts.

We have also examined the position of anthropological, ethical relativity, and we have seen the contradictions that lie at the heart of this position-especially when it attempts to assume values of its own. Moreover, we have seen that its claim of being " scientifically established" is, in fact, unsubstantiated. As a result, the position and claims of the anthro-

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[208] E. Embree, "Living Together," a pamphlet from the Institute for Psychoanalysis (Chicago, 1941) quoted in Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man,* pp.

pological, ethical relativist present no real obstruction to the use of anthropology by the ethician.

At the outset of this article we indicated the teleological nature of its ethical assumptions. Later, when looking for a criterion in the light of which the progressive knowing of moral values might be judged, we pointed to the fact that the very structure of man reveals him to be a creature of certain fundamental needs. This inherent connection between structure and finality or between formal and final causality is precisely what thomist ethics has always recognized. There are certain *ends* toward which man tends and which he *ought* to pursue simply because of *what* he is-and he is first and foremost a person. It is, therefore, clear that thomist ethics provides a context particularly adapted to the incorporation of ethically meaningful anthropological data.

Perhaps the most fruitful suggestion of this article will prove to be that of the progressive knowing of moral values. Herein lies the solution to the absolutist-relativist dichotomy in the field of ethics. For this position, which considers our knowledge of moral values to be inherently progressive, is seen to include both structure and process, thereby preserving the respective intuitions of both the absolutist and the relativist while at the same time discarding the unreal " absolutes " of each. As a result, the way to the future lies open to a progressively newer and deeper ethics based upon the ever-increasing, scientifically refined experience of mankind. This future and especially the possibilities which anthropology holds for a future science of ethics Kluckhohn refers to when he remarks:

> Anthropology is no longer just the science of the long-ago and far-away. Its very perspective is uniquely valuable in investigating the nature and causes of human conflict and in devising means for its reduction. Its all-embracing character gives anthropology a strategic position for determining what factors will create a world community of distinct cultures and hold it together against disruption. It has methods for revealing the principles that undergird each culture, for deciding to what extent a culture possesses people. It is singularly emancipated from the sway of the locally accepted. When asked how he happened to discover relativity, Einstein re-

plied, " by challenging an axiom." As a consequence of their cross-cultural research anthropologists are freer to disbelieve something that appears, even to their fellow scientists of the same culture, necessarily true. In the present stage of world history the apparently unbridgeable gap between several powerful and competing ways of life can be surmounted only by those who can constructively doubt the traditionally

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••• Kluckhohn, *Ibid.*, pp. 218-219.

THOMISM AND METAETHICS

I

IN his contribution to *An Etienne Gilson Tribute,* Vernon **J.** Bourke suggests that there is "a possibility that metaethics could be associated with Thomistic ethics." He asks this question: " Is there room and need for an overview of the ethics of Thomism, analogous to the sort of thing that analysts do in metaethics? "[1] He suggests that there is such a need and that the distinction between " writing and thinking *about* ethics, and working out ethical problems" is an important one. Contemporary analysts have described this distinction as that between normative ethics and metaethics. A normative ethic is an actual moral code or system of morality, and normative ethics include the principles of a moral system, the actual making of moral judgments or decisions, and the attempt to justify or support such judgments. For example, the judgment that a given individual should keep a promise or the general maxim that promises should be kept would be instances of moral judgments and these, as well as the attempt to justify them by supporting data, would be classified under normative ethics. Normative ethics would also include other kinds of activities such as preaching, advising, and moralizing. A metaethical statement, on the other hand, is a statement about the nature, uses, or meaning of moral judgments, moral concepts, and moral reasoning. Take these examples: "Moral judgments are expressions of emotion." "Moral judgments are autobiographical statements." "Moral judgments are cognitive and refer to non-natural properties." These statements are all statements about the meaning or nature of moral judgments. They are not themselves moral claims or attempts to justify moral claims. Although there are borderline cases of judgments which are difficult to classify as ethical or metaethical[2] in general the distinction is a reasonably clear one.

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[1] Vernon **J.** Bourke, "Metaethics and Thomism," in *An Etienne Gilson Tribute,* edited by Charles **J.** O'Neil, Marquette University Press, 1959, p.

Although Professor Bourke is primarily concerned with the effect or relation of metaethics on Thomistic moral philosophy and does not pretend to set forth a metaethical analysis of Thomistic ethics, he does to some extent perform metaethical analysis. He observes, for example, that the Thomist views ethics as a demonstrative science, although the degree of precision in ethics is less than that of some other parts of philosophy or science. He suggests that it is " a question whether Thomistic ethics should be regarded merely as a demonstrative science. Perhaps it is also a wisdom." [3]

Note that Professor Bourke is talking *about* ethics. He is not prescribing conduct or action, making moral judgments, or attempting to justify such judgments. He is talking *about* the nature of moral reasoning. In talking about moral reasoning (which is not the same thing as to reason morally) he introduces a distinction between ethical reasoning viewed as a " wisdom " and ethical reasoning viewed as demonstration or a " sort of syllogistic." Moral reasoning *may* be viewed as demonstrative, the conclusions of ethical argumentation being logically coercive. Moral reasoning may also be viewed, to use Bourke's works, as a "wisdom," in which case presumably the conclusions of ethical argumentation would not be logically coercive. Or ethical reasoning may be viewed as a combination of these, which is, I think, Bourke's suggestion.

What we want to make clear is that Professor Bourke is doing metaethics when he talks about the nature of moral reasoning and that one of the fundamental problems for the metaethicist in Thomism is that of analyzing and clarifying the nature of moral reasoning in the philosophy of Thomism. In this paper we will present at least a partial metaethical analysis of Thomistic moral philosophy. This will involve an analysis of the nature and meaning of moral judgments and the nature of moral reasoning in Thomism. (Of course, the questions and issues raised by the metaethicist are not confined to any particular system of ethics such as that found in Thomism but apply to any and all ethical systems or moral discourse.) I do not pretend that this will be a complete and adequate analysis. Such a task would be beyond the scope of this paper. However, a number of aspects of Thomistic ethics will be analyzed to some extent and this will constitute at least a partial metaethical analysis of Thomistic ethics.

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[2] See Kai Nielsen, "Speaking of Morals," *The Centennial Review,* vol. II, No. 4, Fall, 1958, for a discussion of such borderline cases.

[3] Bourke, *op. cit.,* p. 24.

II

First, let us address ourselves to the question of the nature or meaning of moral judgments or ethical statements themselves. Bourke correctly observes that a number of contemporary philosophers engaged in metaethical analysis assert that ethical judgments are non-cognitive or emotive. Moral judgments do not assert anything that can be true or false. They only *express* one's emotion or feeling and persuade or exhort others to adopt the same moral attitude that the speaker has. For the emotivist, moral judgments do not even *state* that one has certain feelings. To maintain that they do would make one a cognitivist-and a subjectivist on the metaethical plane-for moral judgments would be autobiographical statements verifiable by reference to autobiographical data (whereas the contention of the emotivist is that moral judgments are not verifiable at all) . Ayer and other emotivists attempt to draw a sharp line between the metaethic of emotivism and the metaethic of subjectivism. [4]

Now it is clear that the Thomistic analysis of the meaning of moral judgments will not agree completely with that of the subjectivist or the emotivist. *In a sense* the Thomist agrees with the subjectivist, for both the Thomist and the subjectivist maintain that moral judgments are cognitive. As Bourke notes, "the Thomistic ethician seems to assume that ethics is a purely cognitive discipline." However, the Thomist and subjectivist differ on what moral judgments assert, the former maintaining that they assert something about the objective world whereas the latter maintains that they assert something about the subject, namely, that he has certain feelings or attitudes. It is obvious, since the Thomist maintains that moral judgments assert something about the objective world, that the Thomistic position differs radically from the meta-ethic of emotivism. Does the Thomist differ *completely* from the emotivist position? I think not. Bourke himself notes that the non-cognitivists may be "partly right." Ethical conclusions are not of the same character as those of mathematics or physics, for in ethical reasoning a strong attempt is made to influence one's conduct. To this extent the emotivist is correct. Moral judgments are not "merely abstract or speculative truths." They also have emotive, exhortative and persuasive force. Bourke would agree (and the Thomist would agree) that moral judgments express emotion, or, in the language of the Thomist, moral judgments have an affective-appetitive character. But Bourke and the Thomist would also insist that " there is something wrong with denying all cognitive meaning to ethical sentences." Furthermore, to insist that moral judgments are cognitive, as the Thomist does, "does not mean that we should ignore the affective-appetitive character of these utterances." [5] Bourke's view (and the Thomistic view) is that moral judgments have both cognitive and non-cognitive components. The emotivist analysis is incorrect in denying any cognitive component. On the other hand "it must be admitted that Thomistic ethicians often handle value judgments as if they were *nothing but* truths of fact," [6] and they too, Bourke implies, are mistaken. Bourke's view is that ethical statements do have objective import or alia-reference but they "are not as directly and immediately verifiable as factual assertions." [7] Given these remarks it is clear what Bourke or any Thomistic metaethicist must do. He must make perfectly clear the Thomistic analysis of ethical judgments by specifying the sense in which ethical judgments are referential and have objective import (cognitive meaning) and the sense in which they have an "affective-appetitive character" (non-cognitive or emotive meaning).

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[4] A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic,* New York, 1946, p. 109.

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[5] Bourke, *op. cit.,* p. 26.

[6] *Ibid.,* p. 26; my italics.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 27.

Bourke himself is opposed to the cognitive analysis of moral judgments set forth by the ethical intuitionist, and he objects to the interpretation that "the concept of intuition, by which moral values are apprehended as objective realities ... is a distinctive feature of Thomistic moral philosophy." [8] To suggest that all we have to do is "go around intuiting real values is a parody on the thought of Thomas Aquinas." But if the Thomistic metaethic is not the intuitionist version of cognitivism, then precisely what is it? Bourke does not make this clear and we must now attempt to specify more clearly the type of cognitive metaethic to which the Thomist adheres. In doing this we will also present (as we indicated that we would earlier) a metaethical analysis of the nature of moral reasoning in the philosophy of Thomism. These two issues 1) the nature of moral judgments, and 2) the nature of moral reasoning, although distinct, cannot be separated by the metaethicist. In fact there seems to be a relation of logical entailment between one's answer to "1" and one's answer to "2." It is clear, for example, that if moral judgments are interpreted as *puTely* emotive, then moral reasoning cannot be viewed as a process of demonstration but rather simply as an attempt to persuade. For on the emotivist view, moral judgments are not *statements* or *propositions-the* sort of thing that can be demonstrated. They are simply occurrences, expressions of emotion.

Now there are a number of different kinds of normative concepts and normative judgments in Thomistic ethics. There are at least the concepts of" good,"" right,"" materially good," "morally good,"" morally obligatory,"" objectively right," and the various normative judgments in which these normative concepts occur. Of these concepts "good" and "right" and the judgments in which they occur are the more basic or fundamental ones in Thomistic ethics. Thomistic moral philosophy, then, is complicated by the fact that a number of normative concepts and distinctions are employed and it is further complicated by the fact that these different normative judgments involve reference to a multiplicity of factors including human intentions or motives, consequences, the beatific vision, "right reason," the "mean" between extremes, natural law, natural rights, "essential human nature," God's law, and human law. The task of the metaethicist is that of analyzing moral judgments and moral reasoning in Thomistic moral discourse. This involves not only a classification of the different kinds or normative judgments within the Thomistic scheme, but also an analysis of the meaning and the interrelationships of at least the moral concepts noted above and those factors (natural law, natural rights, consequences, etc.) to which moral judgments refer.

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[8] *Ibid.;* Bourke cites Gerard Esser, S. V. D., "Intuition in Tho!".istic Moral Philosophy," *PToc. Amer. Cxth. Philos. Assoc.,* XXXI (1957), p. 176, as maintaining this view.

We have suggested that" good" is the basic normative term in Thomism, and many philosophers have recognized that Thomistic ethics is eudaemonistic and teleological. Thomas places Aristotle's eudaemonism and teleology within a Christian setting so that "happiness" and the "end of man" are given somewhat different meanings than those specified by Aristotle. Although both Thomas and Aristotle emphasize the perfection of man as a rational being, Thomas views this perfection and man's real happiness as the vision of God-attainable only in the next life. No matter how the "good" is defined, however, it is clear that Thomistic moral philosophy is basically teleological. As Copleston puts it, " the idea of the good is paramount" for the Thomist.[9] What is meant by the concept of the "good" being paramount is that the concept of a " right" act derives its meaning from the relationship of that act to the "good." What makes an act morally right is the fact that it is a means to the attainment of the good (as defined by the Thomist) . This means, it seems to me, that *beatitudo* or the vision of God is that which has intrinsic worth or intrinsic value, whereas morally right acts have extrinsic or instrumental value, to use some distinctions employed by ethicists. Morally right acts derive their value from their relation to man's end or good. Thus one contribution towards clarity (and clarity is one of the basic concerns of the metaethicist) in regard to Thomistic moral philosophy is the specification of the relationship between the two fundamental moral notions of "the good" and "the right."

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[9] F. C. Copleston, *Aquinas* (Pelican Book), London, *1955,* p. 198.

The specification of this relationship is also of fundamental use in setting forth the cognitive aspects of moral judgment in Thomism. At least part of the meaning of the claim that a given act is morally right is that that act will produce or will probably produce the good for man. Assuming that "the good for man " is given some clear meaning by the Thomist (we will see that there are difficulties in this regard) , then it would appear that at least in part moral judgments would be properly analyzed as descriptive, factual claims. To use the language of some metaethicists, the Thomist may turn out to *be* a" value reductionist "-one who translates or reduces all moral judgments to purely descriptive, factual claims. Note that I say that the Thomist *may* turn out to be a value-reductionist. Although there is some evidence for this claim, the fact that so many factors are involved in the Thomistic position (at least the seven factors enumerated above) makes it difficult to substantiate this claim. The fact that for the Thomist moral judgments involve in the last analysis a reference to "natural law" or" God's law" *may* further support the claim that Thomistic ethics is value reductionistic. That an act is right may be translated to mean that it is an instance of or that it conforms to "natural law" or" God's law" (the presumption being that acts which conform to natural law or God's law are conducive to or are a means to man's final end or good) , and the claim that an act conforms to natural law or God's law may be interpreted as a descriptive factual claim, especially if natural law for the Thomist is, as Meyer states, "an expression of the objective essential relations in things." [10] We have not as yet analyzed the meaning of "natural law" or "God's law" (certainly a task for the metaethicist) so that the meaning of the claim that an act conforms to natural law or God's law is not clear. However if it is made clear and interpreted as a factual claim (we will note later that this interpretation is challenged by some philosophers), then this cognitive interpretation of moral judgments is compatible with the further Thomistic claim that ethics is a demonstrative science. Certainly the metaethicist must analyze and clarify the phrase " demonstrative science," but it is at least clear that one must have *statements* or propositions, not *expressions* of emotion, before one could speak of a thing as a "demonstration" or a "science."

III

Without further specifying at this time what is to be meant by conforming to natural law or God's law, let us turn to an examination of the nature of moral reasoning for the Thomist. At least in part the Thomist sets up what appears to be the deductive model for moral reasoning. As Copleston puts it, "the natural moral law in its totality therefore consists of a multiplicity of precepts of varying degrees of generality. But at the same time all these precepts are virtually contained in the fundamental precept that good is to be pursued and evil avoided." [11] Presumably moral precepts with less generality can be deduced from those with more generali.ty. To use one of Thomas' own examples, from the precept that the species should be propagated and children educated, one can derive the precept of monogamy on the ground that this precept is required for the proper care and upbringing of children. And all moral precepts are in some sense contained in the principle that good is to be pursued and evil avoided (principle of synderesis) .

[10] Hans Meyer, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,* St. Louis, 1945, p. 479.

[11] Copleston, *op. cit.,* p. '218.

The problem for the metaethicist here is the meaning of "deduce" and "derive" as used by the Thomist. Is logical deduction what is meant? Surely, if ethics is to be viewed as a " demonstrative science," then logical deduction must be what the Thomist means. Bourke indicates that this is the case in his reference to the theory of proof originating in Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* which most Thomists use. But if logical deduction is what is meant, then to refer to Thomas' own example, can we logically deduce the precept of monogamy from the precept that the species should be propagated and children educated? Monogamy as a practice may be a means to the attainment of species propagation and proper child care and education. And there are many other means and practices equally conducive to these ends. But I fail to see the relation of logical entailment between the precept of propagation and child care and the precept of monogamy. Furthermore, as Copleston notes, all moral precepts for the Thomist are " virtually contained in the fundamental precept (the principle of synderesis) that good is to be pursued and evil avoided." But what is meant by "virtually contained?" Again, is what is meant logical entailment? Bourke would say no. He states: "Kant's rule (principle of universalizability) endeavors to offer a way in which one can tell what acts are good. St. Thomas' rule does not; it tells you to do them, when they are good, not to do them, when they are evil. This indicates the futility of trying to make a rationalistic deduction of specific moral duties from the principle of synderesis." [12] Bourke, I think, interprets Thomas correctly on this point. But if no rationalistic deduction of moral duties can be inferred from the principle o£ synderesis, then in what sense are the moral rules of varying generality "virtually contained" in that principle? Copleston also suggests that we cannot deduce specific rules or duties from the principle of synderesis. He states that "the word 'deduction' can be very misleading; and what Aquinas actually says is that other precepts of the natural law are' founded on' or 'based on' the precept that good is to be done and evil avoided. The concrete good for man can be known only by reflection on human nature as known in experience."[13]

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[12] Bourke, *op. cit.,* p. 27.

We might note that Copleston, in talking about the nature of moral reasoning in Thomistic moral philosophy, is doing metaethics. He is certainly correct that the term "deduction" can be used in misleading ways. But the term "founded on" and "based on" which Copleston suggests that we substitute for "deduction" in Thomistic moral philosophy are at least as ambiguously used as the term "deduction." They too, then, require considerable analysis and explication. In fact, all the terms used by the Thomist in describing moral reasoning require metaethical analysis. Thomas himself, for example, says that "every human law has the nature of law in so far as it is derived from the law of nature. If in any case it is incompatible with the natural law, it will not be law, but a perversion of law."[14] Aside from the need for complete analysis of the notion of "natural law," it is clear that one must analyze the notions of" derive," "incompatible," and "perversion" in order to be clear about the nature of moral reasoning in Thomism. Certainly many Thomists consider the entire Decalogue as conclusions derived from first principles of natural law and possessive of the same immutability as natural law. The natural law itself is viewed as being founded[15] on the transcendent eternal law of God. It is the task of the metaethicist to analyze these claims, to find out what is meant by the claim that "natural law is *founded* on divine law," to find out what is meant when it is said that" the Decalogue is *derived from* first principles," or that the rules of morality are *"virtually contained* " within the principle of synderesis. If logical deduction is not intended, then the meaning of the claim that ethics is a "demonstrative science" must be radically altered.

Although the Thomist sets up the model for moral reasoning and speaks of remote and direct derivations of norms from naturallaw/[6] he fails to show that any specific norms are actually logical entailments of other norms. There is also the further problem of specifying the manner in which experience or empirical data is related to moral reasoning for the Thomist. Copleston states that for the Thomist "the concrete good for man can be known only by reflecting on human nature as known in experience." But this appeal to experience can mean several different things. It could mean that experience teaches one what sort of consequences follow from certain sorts of acts or what means are conducive to certain ends. This kind of empirical data could well be incorporated into the premises of a moral argument, and if this is what is intended by the appeal to experience, the metaethicist must show how this data fits into moral reasoning. Copleston specifically states, however, that the good for man can be known by" reflecting on human nature as known in experience." The Thomistic contention, here, I think, is that natural law (moral rules governing human conduct) can be discovered by examining human nature. Now a number of questions arise here. Is this process of discovery empirical? Do we infer these rules by watching human beings and their behavior? And if this is what is meant, then surely the problems centering around the "is"-" ought" dichotomy arise. Can we infer (Is it logically permissible?) normative conclusions from purely descriptive premises? And if this kind of inference is not involved, then is the notion of "human nature" itself normative-not merely descriptive? What of the Thomistic view that there is an" essential human nature?" What is meant by this claim and is there such a thing?

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[13] Copleston, *op. cit.,* p. 224.

[14] *Summa Theologica,* Ia, Ilae, 9.5, 2.

[15] Copleston, *op. cit.,* p. 214.

These questions are all fundamental ones which the metaethicist in Thomism must ask and answer. All of them involve the two fundamental points of metaethical analysis, the nature of moral judgments and the nature of moral reasoning. A complete analysis of these issues would go well beyond the scope of this paper. I would, however, like to enumerate and

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[16] See Meyer, *op. cit.*, p. *60i.*

briefly discuss at least seven issues in Thomistic ethics which require, it seems to me, metaethical analysis. It is not intended that these seven issues are exhaustive. This brief account could be used as a point of reference for a more detailed analysis.

IV

(1) *The Principle of Synderesis.*

Specification of the nature and status of the principle of synderesis ("good is to be pursued, evil avoided") is a task for the metaethicist. Presumably this principle plays an important role in Thomistic ethics. Although the Thomist maintains that no specific duties can be rationally deduced from this principle, nonetheless he claims[17] that all moral precepts are "virtually contained" in this principle. The meaning of this claim and the meaning of the principle itself must be analyzed by the metaethicist. We have already seen the difficulties surrounding the meaning of the phrase "virtually contain." There are also difficulties centering around the meaning of the principle of synderesis itself. Some philosophers, for example, would claim that the sentence "good is to be pursued, evil avoided" turns out on analysis to be the tautology that "we ought to do that which we ought to do, and we ought not to do that which we ought not to do." The Thomist sometimes speaks of the principle as a "habit"[18] or as an "instinct."[19] This leads one to interpret the principle as a psychological generalization similar to the principle of psychological hedonism, the thesis that human beings always pursue that which they consider good and avoid that which they consider evil. On this interpretation the principle of synderesis is not even normative but rather descriptive of man's psychology. Furthermore, on this interpretation the relationship of this principle to morality or moral rules requires elucidation (the relation of "is" to "ought").

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[17] See Copleston, *op. cit.,* p. 218.

[18] See Bourke, *op. cit.,* p. 27.

[10] See Copleston, *op. cit.,* p. 223.

(2) *The meaning of" good" in Thomistic ethics.*

We have noted that Thomistic ethics is teleological and we have seen that man's final good-that which realizes his potentialities in the highest degree-is *beatitudo,* vision of God or "possession " of God. Since the concept of "good" is paramount, as Copleston states, in Thomistic ethics, a morally right act being defined as an act which is a means *to* the attainment of the "good," it is crucially important that the meaning of "good" be clear. The task for the metaethicist is to make this concept (and judgments in which it occurs) clear if possible, and if not, to show the vagueness and ambiguity of it. In the ethics of Thomism, it seems to me, there is a serious problem with the concept of "good," for the Thomist maintains that man's supreme or final end or good can be known only through revelation. To many philosophers the appeal to revelation as a means of *knowing* is objectionable, but a more fundamental objection is that the *meaning* of man's final *good-beatitudo-* is not made clear by the Thomist. What does it mean to be "in possession of God?" Are there any ways of testing for this state of affairs? Although the Thomist maintains that we can have some knowledge of the good for man without revelation, man's final good can really only accrue in the next life. This introduces a serious problem concerning the meaning of the concept " good " (some philosophers would suggest that there is no way in principle of testing for this state of affairs) and equally serious difficulties for the concept of a "right act," since the latter is defined as an act which is conducive to man's good.

(3) *Analysis of "natural law" and "natural rights."*

The notions of divine or eternal law, natural law, and natural rights are very important in Thomistic ethical and political philosophy. We have seen that in some sense natural law is "founded upon" divine law, and it is also the case that natural rights are "founded upon" natural law. We have already noted the difficulties centering around these relationships and the notions of "founded upon," "based on," and " derived from." But there is an even more fundamental problem with the meaning of the phrases "divine law," "natural law," and "natural rights." The Thomist views natural law as ontological in character. It is "the complexus of tendencies towards ends and inclinations to actions which are based on the constant essences of things. By these inclinations each thing fulfills its own purposes and establishes the order in the things of nature."[20] The natural law includes all the prescriptions required to fulfill the essence of human nature and man's ultimate end. Natural law has objective and universal validity.

Now the analyst or metaethicist has a number of questions to ask about the claim that there is a natural law or laws. What kind of claim is it that these are natural laws? Is it empirical? And if so, what is the data which supports the existence of moral laws. Furthermore, men have certain natural rights because there is natural law. What are these rights and is it an empirical claim that we have them? One philosopher says that "propositions about natural law and natural rights are not generalizations from experience nor deductions from observed facts subsequently confirmed by experience."[21] MacDonald's position is that "the theory of natural law and natural rights confounds reason with right and both with matter of fact and existence."[22] Another way of putting this is that the natural law theorists confuse analytic and synthetic propositions in their view. They attempt to extract natural moral laws from *essential* human nature. But essential human nature is that which is expressed in the definition of "human being" and the natural laws would be simply analytic entailments of this definition. However, " by logical fusion of the characteristics of two different types of proposition, statements about natural rights tended in this theory to be represented as state-

[20] Meyer, *op.* cit., p. 464.

[21] Margaret MacDonald, "Natural Rights," in *Knowledge and Value,* edited by Elmer Sprague and Paul Taylor, New York, 1959, p. 6·t6. Reprinted from *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* 1947-48.

''Ibid.

ments of necessary natural fact." [23] MacDonald further contends that 1) "men do not share a fixed nature, nor, therefore, are there any ends which they must necessarily pursue in fulfillment of such nature"; [24] 2) "standards are determined by human choice, not set by nature independently of men"; [25] 3) the reason "natural rights" were considered to exist independently of organized society was " in order to emphasize their basic or fundamental character. For words like freedom, equality, security, represented for the defenders of natural rights what they considered to be the fundamental moral and social values which should be or should continue to be realized in any society fit for intelligent and responsible citizens .... In short, ' natural rights ' are the conditions of a good society"; [26] 4) assertions about natural rights are value utterances and value utterances are not analytic or synthetic propositions but " records of decisions." " To assert that ' freedom is better than slavery' or 'all men are of equal worth' is not to state a fact but to *choose a side.* **It** announces,' This *is where I stand.'";* [27] and 5) "there are no certainties in the field of values. For there are no true or false beliefs about values, but only better or worse decisions and choices." [28]

The above are some conclusions drawn by an analyst or metaethicist from a study of the doctrine of natural law and natural rights. I do not pretend that the summary is exhaustive, nor do I intend to express agreement with her conclusions. I simply want to point out the need for metaethical analysis of the doctrine of natural law and natural rights in Thomistic moral philosophy and the farreaching implications that such an analysis might have. **It** is clear, for example, that if a Thomist would accept Professor MacDonald's analysis, then the notion that natural law has "objective and universal validity " must be radically altered. Of course, if one accepted Professor MacDonald's analysis, then one would cease to be a Thomist.

•• *Ibid.,* p. 644.

•• *Ibid.,* p. 649.

•• *Ibid.,* p. 650.

•• *Ibid.,* p. 65!!-3.

[27] *Ibid.,* p. 654.

•• *Ibid.,* p. 658.

(4) *The role of reason and the relation of fact and value.*

We have noted the problems centering around the deductive model of moral reasoning used by the Thomist. We have also noted that the Thomist appeals to experience as a factor in moral reasoning. The task of the metaethicist is to clarify the roles of "experience," "deduction" and "reason" in the Thomist moral philosophy. The Thomist claims that" reason" has many roles in relation to ethics. Apparently it cannot only inform us of the means to an end but it can discover and direct man to what is " objectively good." Taking an example from Copleston, "both the burglar and the seducer can be said to be acting ' rationally' if they take the appropriate means to the fulfillment of their respective purposes. But since neither burglary nor seduction is compatible with the attainment of the objective good for man, the activities of the burglar and the seducer are not in accordance with 'right reason.' If it is said that moral conduct is rational conduct, what is meant is that it is conduct in accordance with right reason, reason apprehending the objective good for man and dictating the means to its attainment."[29] One can act rationally, then, without acting in accordance with "right reason." Reason, then, has at least the functions of 1) informing us of the means to certain ends (the sense in which both the burglar and seducer act rationally) , 2) informing us of the proper or *right means* to certain ends, and 3) providing knowledge of the natural law or the *proper ends* or goals of man. The appeal to "right reason" involves a reference to reason apprehending and following the natural law. If reason can perform these functions (and perhaps others), then it would appear that for the Thomist rational argument could resolve or settle any ethical dispute-as long as the disputants agreed to proceed rationally. This view, however, has been seriously challenged by many contemporary metaethicists. It is claimed by A. J. Ayer, Paul Edwards, Charles Stevenson, H. Feigl[30] and others who have investigated the role of reason and rational argument in ethical disputes that reason has an important but a *limited* role. The use of reason can make ethical disputants aware of the facts involved in the circumstances, including various means that can be used to attain certain ends. And to the extent that ethical disagreement is based upon differences in awareness of the facts in the circumstances, then it is probable that the disagreement can be rationally resolved. But if the ethical disagreement is not rooted in factual disagreement or " disagreement in belief," as Stevenson would put it, but rather in "disagreement in attitude" or fundamental normative differences, then resolvement is possible only through persuasion, compromise, or perhaps even abuse or force. Reason (these analysts argue) cannot justify certain ethical norms as correct ones as opposed to others.

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[29] Copleston, *op. cit.,* p. 205.

[30] See A. J .Ayer, *Language, Truth, and Logic,* New York, 1946; Paul Edwards,

Now this is a very serious challenge to the claim of the Thomist that reason (with the exception of the need for revelation at a certain point) has an almost unrestricted role in resolving ethical disputes. Certainly the Thomist allows that many men will not proceed rationally, but if they do, the Thomistic position is that reason can resolve ethical disputes, even those rooted in disagreements on fundamental norms-for reason can discover the *correct* norms. It seems to me to be a very crucial issue on the metaethicallevel that the Thomist analyze, explicate, and support his position on the role of reason in ethics. This would also involve saying something about the relation of "is" to "ought" and perhaps something about the relationship between ethics and epistemology.

(5) *The meaning of "contradicting nature."*

Another point requiring metaethical analysis in the ethics of Thomism can be shown by drawing a parallel with Kantian ethics. In Kantian ethics the notion of "consistency" and

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The Logic of Moral Discourse, Glencoe, Illinois, 1955; Charles Stevenson, *Ethics and Language,* New Haven, 1944; Herbert Feigl, "Validation and Vindication: An Analysis of the Nature and Limits of Ethical Arguments," in *Readings in Ethical Theory,* edited by John Hospers and Wilfred Sellars, New York, 1952.

" contradiction" play a key role in the basic moral principle, the principle of universalizability. Kant tells us that we must be able to *consistently* will that the maxim of one's action be a universal law if one's act is to be moral. He further speaks of certain acts or maxims of action *contradicting* or violating nature. An important problem for the metaethicist in Kantian ethics is to make clear the meaning of Kant's use of the notions of "consistency " and " contradiction." Only when this is done can the basic principle of Kantian ethics-the principle of universalizability-itself be clear. Kant himself sometimes can be interpreted as using "contradiction" in the formal logical sense, sometimes not.

Now there is a similar problem in Thomistic ethics. The Thomist speaks of "reason seeing the irrationality " of certain actions, meaning by this that reason sees that certain actions or maxims of action " contradict" nature or a "natural impulse implanted by God." [31] The problem for the metaethicist here, as in Kantian ethics, is to find out the meaning of " contradicting nature." Is formal contradiction intended? Or is the term being used in a much looser sense? A similar problem arises when the Thomist says that " God would deny Himself if He were to relinquish His order of justice." [32] What does the term " deny " mean in this claim?

(6) *Analysis of the relationship of fundamental moral concepts-good, right, obligatory, etc.*

We noted earlier that "good" is the fundamental normative term for the Thomist and the term " right" derives its meaning from its relationship to "good." A right act is an act which is conducive to man's good. Now in fact there is an entire host of normative concepts or phrases in Thomistic ethics which require analysis by the metaethicist not only concerning their meaning but also concerning their interrelationships with one another. For example, an act may be "materially good" without being "morally good." In fact a "materially good" act may be a "morally bad" act. Furthermore a "morally good" act need not be a "morally obligatory" act, although it may be. It is also possible for one to do that act which is "objectively right" and yet act immorally in doing it. The metaethicist, in giving an analysis of the meaning and relationship of these normative concepts would introduce a great deal of clarity.

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[31] Copleston, *op. mt.*, p. !US.

•• Meyer, *op. mt.*, p. 494.

(7) *Classification of different kinds of statements and claims found in moral philosophy.*

Another contribution which the metaethicist can make concerning Thomistic moral philosophy or any system of ethics is that of providing a scheme of classification for the various kinds of statements and claims found in moral discourse. Very important in this classification scheme would be the distinction between ethical statements and metaethical statements. But many other kinds of statements or activities take place in moral discourse and it is important to be able to distinguish the differences between these various kinds of statements and activities. Aside from 1) the making of actual moral decisions or utterances and 2) the making of statements about the logic and meaning of moral utterances (metaethical statements), one finds 3) empirical statements about the means to attain the good life, 4) descriptions and explanations of moral experience, 5) a great deal of preaching and advising, and 6) the attempt to justify or validate moral ideas and practices. There are probably other kinds of statements and activities found in discourse, and I do not pretend that the above is an adequate classificatory scheme. But the importance of having such a scheme should now be clear. Such a scheme would enable one to discern and classify the kind of claim being made and ascertain the kind of evidence, if any, relevant to it. For example, if one claims that certain means will produce certain ends, we know this is an empirical claim verifiable or falsifiable by the use of the scientific method. But if one is preaching or advising, the scientific method is not relevant in the same sense.

A different kind of data would also be relevant to a description or explanation of moral experience than that relevant to determining means-ends relationships. Certainly the kind of data relevant to a metaethical claim would be different from that relevant to an ethical claim. Our point is that if one is able to classify the kind of claim being made in moral discourse, one can determine the kind of data relevant to it, if any, and thereby avoid a great deal of confusion which might (and does) accure without such a classificatory scheme.

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Let me repeat that I do not claim that the seven areas designated above are the only ones requiring metaethical analysis in Thomistic moral philosophy (or in any moral philosophy) . I would argue, however, that they are key points for analysis. Let me also say I have not attempted to set forth a complete metaethical analysis of Thomistic moral philosophy. That is far too large a task for one paper. However, I do think that our discussion about the nature of moral judgments and of moral reasoning along with our brief discussion of the seven factors enumerated above constitute in part a metaethical analysis of Thomistic moral philosophy. Each of the seven factors enumerated (as well as others) requires much more analysis and detail.

Without introducing a meta-metaethical level of discussion, I would like to close by suggesting another issue which requires careful analysis. That issue is the relationship between metaethical theories and normative ethics. I have addressed myself to this issue in some detail elsewhere [33] and I refer the reader to that essay. I will make only one or two observations. A number of contemporary metaethicists claim that metaethical theories are morally neutral. This may well be the case in the sense that a given metaethic does not entail any particular normative views or judgments. For example the metaethic of emotivism-the view that moral judgments are non-cognitive expressions of emotion-does not commit one or entail any moral view such as euthanasia or trial marriage. However, there are other relationships between metaethical views and normative ethics which might well affect the moral life. The metaethic of emotivism, for example, changes our conception of what we are doing when we make moral judgments and our view of justification in ethics. As Frederick Olafson[34] puts it, acceptance of the emotive metaethic makes one feel that rational principles are not operative for morals and that one's moral judgments are non-logical acts of preference. The case can be put, I think, even stronger than that stated by Olafson. It appears that one's metaethical account of the meaning of ethical terms and statements actually logically entails a particular account of moral justification. Take the metaethic of subjectivism which views the meaning of ethical statements as autobiographical statements of approval or disapproval. This metaethic would entail a particular account of moral justification, namely, that the only data relevant to the justification of moral judgments are the autobiographical facts of personal approval or disapproval. Or take the metaethic of emotivism. This metaethic views ethical judgments as non-cognitive expressions of emotion and such a view certainly logically entails that moral judgments cannot be justified as true or false since moral judgments do not *assert* anything. For those who adopt the metaethic of emotivism, if there is disagreement in moral attitude between two disputants who agree on the facts of the case, there is no method of resolvement beside persuasion, compromise, or abuse. On the emotivist scheme, all the reasons relevant to a *purely* moral disagreement (as opposed *to* a disagreement in belief) are persuasive reasons, for, as Ayer puts it, moral principles have "no objective validity." Thus one analytic entailment of the emotivist metaethic is that all ethically relevant reasons are persuasive reasons. Without noting other metaethical theories, our point should be clear: The manner

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[33] See W. T. Blackstone, "Are Metaethical Theories Normatively Neutral?," *The Australasian Journal of Philosophy,* vol. 39, no. 1, 1961, pp. 65-74.

"'Frederick Olafson, " Metaethics and the Moral Life," *Philosophical Review,* vol. *65,* 1956.

in which one is to justify moral judgments depends logically upon what those judgments are interpreted as meaning.

The point we wished to make is that there are important relations between metaethics and normative ethics, and since there are a number of different metaethical theories (subjectivism, emotivism, objectivism, etc.) , then the question arises as to which metaethic is correct. What are the criteria or tests whereby it can be shown that a given metaethic is correct and others incorrect? [35] This question would certainly involve the Thomistic moral philosopher. The Thomistic metaethic is a type of cognitivism and objectivism, and the Thomist must, if he is to be consistent with his emphasis upon the role of reason, show that his metaethic is the correct one. Not only is there need then, for a metaethical analysis of Thomistic moral philosophy, there is also need for a discussion of the validity and criteria for the validity of metaethical theories themselves.

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[35] See W. T. Blackstone, *op. cit.*, for *some* discussion of this issue.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Geography of Intellect. By NATHANIEL WEYL and STEFAN PossoNY. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1963. Pp. xiii and with index. $7.95.

This is a book which you open with a sense of excited anticipation, which gradually becomes flawed with bits of dismay, and finally succumbs to a sense of disappointment. On reflection, you might find that your original anticipations were not wholly frustrated, but no amount of reflection will dispel the feeling of having been let down in some sense, and let down in a way you would not have originally expected.

The subject of the study, *The Geography of Intellect,* is almost bound to exert a fascination on anyone who is educated enough to know even a little of the world's history. We all know that there are differences in men's intelligence, and that at some times and in some places, some people have shown more communal intelligence than others. But what is the explanation for those sudden extraordinary leaps and crests of intellectual brilliance which have won everlasting glory for a small town in Greece, or a medieval city on the Italian peninsula, or for a race or a class of people, who through their genius have contributed to human weal all out of proportion to their numbers? What lies behind Athens in the fifth century B. C. and Florence in the fifteenth A. D., and the intellectual superiority of the Jews and the Scots, and the dominant role of the Brahmins? Again, why are there people alive today, ignorant, poverty-stricken and dejected, and incomprehensibly living in the ruins of a splendid civilization their ancestors created? What happened to these people in the interim? The authors propose to answer such questions as these, and many more, with the best evidence and reasoning modern science and scholarship can afford, and to a degree they do so. But in the course of the book, so much data is admitted which is at best shaky and sometimes downright misleading, and so much energy is spent pleading a special case, to the detriment of perfect objectivity, that the reader begins to feel himself unfairly imposed upon.

On the matter of data, it would be impossible to list all the questionable citations, but a few may be mentioned as examples. On page 57, correlations between intelligence and brain capacity and shape are given, as positive, from .08 to .34. The authors grant that these are small, but in fact they are statistically insignificant. On page 91 they cite a tabulation from a report which, they note themselves, does not identify its references and is slovenly! In both these cases, the materials cited favor one of their special pleadings. On page llS, they give statistics from a report which, they again note, has been criticized for misquoting material and relying on secondary, inaccurate and valueless work. If this is so, why use it? On pages 124-H?5, they use population figures for European nations computed in 1600 A. D. as a basis for calculations of intelligence ratios for these countries from llOO to 1400 A. D., assuming the relative distributions would not have changed much. This seems like a large assumption. In the section on 'Genius after the Reformation ' (p. 128 f.), they use statistics based only on scientists and composers of high rank, as if genius could not be found among poets, dramatists, statesmen, lawyers, diplomats, theologians, engineers, military men, etc., or as if the figures which might be derived from weighing in these lines of endeavor would not change the picture noticeably. In discussing ethnic differences in I. Q. (pp. 159-160), the authors lean on tests taken in the 1920's and 1930's, when the cultural factors influencing the results were not yet clearly appreciated. Later (pp. 176-177), they use results of I. Q. tests in which the differences of social and economic environment were ironed out, but for groups which have radically different motivations; these results are intended to represent purely ethnic differences. Scientific reporting of this sort tends to shake a reader's confidence.

Throughout the book the authors are building up a case for a position which has a strong grip on their feelings. It is a position, moreover, supported by a practically conclusive array of evidence. In essence, Weyl and Possony hold that there are innate racial differences of psychic as well as physical endowments, and that some races are demonstrably abler than others. Moreover, within a race, there are differences of endowments which spread out over a wide range. Now the great advances of civilization are the work of the endowed elite, all other conditions operating favorably, and all men have benefited immeasurably from their labors. An elite, however, whether of race or class, can be dissipated and frustrated by genetically unsound reproductive patterns. The future progress of mankind depends therefore on conserving and enhancing the gene pools of the highly gifted, and insofar as policies can be constructed to influence such a delicate matter, they should be shaped towards building up the genetically superior lines of men.

This line of argumentation is eminently reasonable and based on the solidest kind of evidence. Nevertheless, it by no means enjoys widespread acceptance nowadays, principally because it seems to run counter to deep and strong sociological and political currents. The twentieth century is the century of the rights of man and the rights especially of the underdog. This is the era of the enfranchisement of everyman, the glorification of the common man and wholesale assistance to the underprivileged. These are worthy goals and goals passionately espoused by many men and women of high intelligence and character. But to make progress in realizing these ends, against the resistances of custom, prejudice and privilege, many protagonists of the common man have felt that it was necessary to deny the existence of inborn racial and even individual differences. They have felt that equality of rights and opportunities must imply equality of native talent; that assertions of innate differences leads inevitably to social injustices. This is not necessarily true, of course, but, in fact, prejudice and privilege have bolstered their positions by racist doctrines.

We have a real dilemma, therefore. The facts of the matter lead to the conclusion that there are racial differences, and the realities of history indicate that mankind would do well to enhance them. But the contemporary struggles for social justice are so bitter that this position, however true, gives ammunition to the cause for discrimination and inequity. Weyl and Possony report that some scientists have even suppressed data which showed inborn differences and engaged in covert and overt persecution of colleagues who proposed theories of racial differences. Neverthless, I believe the authors would have been far more effective for their own views if they themselves had adhered rigorously to the best available data, and only the best, and themselves kept a temperate tone in presenting their case. Towards the end of the book, their feelings become more and more evident, as they begin to resort to sneers and vituperation to overcome their opponents. They do not seem ready always to grant the sincerity of proponents of racial equality, nor have they answered the practical question concerning the effect their book will have in the present situation. Some races, for example, the Negroes in the United States, are facing problems of enormous dimensions in their fight for equal rights. Racists will use the Weyl-Possony book to support their position, and the authors' bias against the Melanoids is going to give them unnecessary advantages.

In spite of the defects outlined above, *The Geography of Intellect* has many fine points to recommend it. It does line up in a rather impressive way the various factors which have gone into the formation and destruction of elite classes and races, and in many instances seems to have arrived at all the major keys to given situations. Some of the factors are those which would have been expected-temperate or cold climate, productivity high enough to support a leisured class, and rewards for intellectual endeavor favor increase of talent; wars and revolutions which destroy the gifted, and unwillingness of the elite to bear family responsibilities disfavor it. But there are also factors which might never have been suspected-the influence of electric storms on intelligence and talent, the influence of lead poisoning on the Roman aristocracy are examples of less known factors which have had some importance in the history of intellect. In all instances, the authors have been particularly careful to show how the factors at work have managed to modify the genetic balances in the populations under consideration. They have done an especially excellent study on the causes for the intellectual superiority of the Jewish people. They have not, however, been especially generous to the cause of religion. They aver that a drought was the principal cause of the spiritual triumph of Christianity (p. *65)* . Christianity is designated simply as an Oriental religion-a matter of argument from several points of view (p. 111). To use the term ' idle, masochistic monasticism of the Egyptian Christians' suggests either no acquaintance with the original sources of our knowledge about the Fathers of the Desert, or some unusual usage of the words 'idle' and 'masochistic' (p. 1H!). That there is an inverse correlation between clerical celibacy and enlightenment is acceptable only if eugenics is taken as a value superior to Christian spirituality (p. 139). And finally, it is annoying to find theological opinions_:_" This was perhaps theologically dubious since the Gospels had declared that Christ's death was foreordained and the will of God "-in a sociological line of reasoning (p. 115).

On the whole, then, *The Geography of Intellect* has many rewarding pages and many irritants and many real disappointments. As an early essay into a broad area of enquiry, it has a good deal to recommend itself. Subsequent workings of the materials should precise and expand our understanding of the relations of intelligence to time and place, race and class, climate and food and the rest. Further studies would perhaps benefit from a full and precise description of what is meant by intellect and the ways intellect can operate differently at different levels.

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Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God. By E. ScHILLEBEECKX, 0. P. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1963. Pp. $4.50.

The Church and the Sacraments. By K. RAHNER (#9 in the series Quaestiones Disputatae). New York: Herder and Herder, 1963. Pp, 117.

The recent appearance of Schillebeeckx's *Christ the Sacrament of the Encounter with God* and Rahner's *The Church and the Sacraments* provides an extremely interesting opportunity to see two of the top theologians in the contemporary Church discussing from slightly different points of view the relationship of Church and Sacrament. For a professional theologian it is in a sense even more interesting to see each of these two great theologians, fully aware of the present day developments in the Church's theological life, dialoguing with the achievements of past theologians in the areas of Sacramental theology and ecclesiology.

Schillebeeckx's book, in particular, points to the fact that the faith life of the Church and its theological development proceed by way of cumulative or organic growth rather than by an abandonment of one position to adopt something new. It is really quite instructive to examine the way in which the old insights and the " structural " approach to the study of Church and Sacramental life are transformed by the new orientation which has come from biblical studies and the liturgical revival. The same thing is true of Rahner's essay, though the fact that it is a much shorter treatment means that he has not entered into as detailed a reanalysis of Sacramental theology as has Schillebeeckx. No one could accuse either of these two theologians of being out-moded or mired in problems or solutions of the past, yet both of them have managed to treat in a new fashion all the standard questions classically handled in Sacramental theology.

For one who is interested in the present day pertinence of the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, Schillebeeckx's book is particularly illuminating. Many of the insights which one associates with present-day biblical theology are utilized to form a synthesis with the theological principles of St. Thomas Aquinas. Drawing as it does from the tradition of Dominican theology, it is not surprising that Schillebeeckx's theological approach is very radically Thomist, but in the best sense of that term. His mastery of the internal structure and basic insights of the theology of St. Thomas makes it possible for him to introduce profound theological synthesis into some of the insights derived from present-day research.

Taken together these two books provide us with an excellent structural basis for approaching the new avenues of study in the theology of Sacrament and Church. They only touch upon the great task which faces us of exploring the Christian anthropology contained in the sacramental nature of Christianity and, more specifically, the supernatural dimension of symbolism as it occurs in the Church's life. However the orientations they have provided for a synthesis of all the myriad data now impinging on theology will be invaluable as a guide for the creative theologian. What they have done, and it is a most important contribution, is to build a bridge between the historic gains already achieved in the area of sacramental theology and the new developments which lie ahead of us.

Both books contribute key insights to something which has been much discussed in the past couple of decades though not always with clarity: the ecclesial dimension of Sacrament. At a time when many authors are referring to the community aspects of Christianity, when it is pastorally important to explain the way in which Sacraments express the living reality of adherence to Christianity, it is important that clear theological explanations of the link between Sacrament and Church be provided Certainly, after the appearance of these two books no one could say that we are without the direction we need in this particular area.

Schillebeeckx's book with its clear connection of the mystery of sacramentality as found in Christ himself, the Church, and the Sacramental ritual has done a pioneering task in showing the intrinsic unity of the sacramental principle of Christian life. Taken together the two books point out quite clearly the inadequacy of our standard divisions of dogmatic theology. It becomes quite obvious that one cannot discuss the actual historical reality of the Incarnation apart from examining the mystery of the Church and its expression in Sacramental act; nor can one discuss either of the latter two points in separation from the entire mystery of Christ. Though neither of the authors emphasizes the point in his book, we can rather readily draw the conclusion that new structurization of our theological investigation is demanded because of the way in which theological insight is taking place at the present time in the Church.

On the surface the two books strike one as being very much alike. They are both very cognizant of the heritage of tradition which must be woven into any valid rethinking of faith. Both are a masterly utilization of the thought and insights of St. Thomas Aquinas' theology. Both are drawing heavily and with great theological acumen from the scholarly acquisitions in the area of biblical theology and Sacramental theology. In a sense both are taking the same position with regard to the close unity of Incarnation and Church and Sacrament and the only difference between them to which either book explicitly alludes has to do with the interpretation of the Sacrament of Confirmation-and on this point Schillebeechx's criticism of Rahner seems to overlook the nuances that Rahner introduces into his distinction between Baptism and Confirmation.

However, under the apparent similarity there does seem to be a rather important difference of point of view. Schillebeeckx's approach, with all its utilization of more contemporary understandings and language, tends to be more controlled by the older structures and questions. Though it is not said by way of criticism, his book is in many respects a more traditional approach, an excellent example of the way in which a fundamentally Thomist point of view is capable of gathering into itself the finest of the more recent theological insights. Actually, this is one of the great values of the book: it is a living proof that one need not jettison the great insights of scholastic theology in order to come to grips with modern problems and modern points of view. On the other hand, Rahner's essay represents an approach to the standard questions from a mentality that is much more characteristic of the present-day intellectual world. Whereas Schillebeeckx in a sense absorbs the old into the new.

Perhaps the place in the two books where this underlying difference is most apparent is in their discussion of presence-a question which obviously is central to both works. Schillebeeckx is obviously very aware of the importance of this notion and his treatment of it is very clear and incisive, yet (as evidenced on page 61) he approaches an understanding of presence from the point of view of St. Thomas' analysis of causality, thus immediately classifying and delimiting the basic reality of presence.

Rahner, on the other hand, grounds his whole treatment on the notion of divine presence in human history, and allows this notion to re-evaluate the ordinary causal analysis of the Church's life and Sacramental expression. To this extent it would seem that there is greater amplitude in Rahner's treatment, greater possibility of opening up new avenues of insight.

Pointing to the difference of approach is not intended to indicate the superiority of either contribution but rather to highlight a tension which exists and must always exist in really creative theological endeavor. For this very reason the simultaneous appearance of these two first-rate examples of theological thought marks a major contribution to our present day development of theology.

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Greek Myths and Christian Mysteries. By HuGO RAHNER. New York: Harper & Row, 1963. Pp. xxii + 399. $10.00.

It was surely not outside the intention of the author of this fascinating work to contribute to a subsidiary, yet radical, debate going on among Christian scholars on the subject of the tension between hebraic and hellenic modes of thought, of the roles they have played in the formulation of Christian doctrine and Christian culture, of their usefulness in the contemporary renewal of the Catholic Church.

Champions of the hebraic modes of thought disdainfully dismiss the hellenic modes by reducing them to Plato, and even then, to the weaknesses of his thought, as though the Christian Fathers had been completely unaware of these. Is it with these men in mind that Fr. Rahner writes: "The eighteenth century was guilty of a disastrous misunderstanding of the nature of Greek piety when it projected its own ' enlightenment ' into the Greek soul. Such *illuminati,* for whom every kind of mysticism, everything that is dark and sinful, everything that expresses a yearning for redemption, is ' an alien drop in Greek blood,' are even today not wholly out of supply. Yet if they were right how could we explain the hidden longing in myth and mystery? How could we even grasp the secret meanings behind the Odyssey? " (p. xx).

Indirectly, Fr. Rahner pays tribute also to the role of the rational elements in Greek thought in the formation of Christian doctrine and culture, when he stresses the point that the Church freely employed the Greek myths and mysteries only after she was in firm possession of her own teaching. It was the reflective and rational modes of Greek thought that were used by her to come into this possession. (Coincidentally, Lucien Legrand, in an article entitled: "Creation as a Cosmic Victory of Yahweh," digested in *Theology Digest,* XI, 3, 154-158, makes the same point in regard to the freer use of mythical elements in the later books of the O. T. These were the books that also betray the influence of hellenic modes of thought.)

Fr. Rahner's direct concern is with the religious modes of Greek thought and the rich part they played in the expression of Christian thought. He expresses it so finely and so pointedly for our day: " What is here contained is a gift to that living round-table, made up of men who believe that our Western civilization has broken down only in order that it may be born anew, to the *Eranos* of those who dimly perceive the truth, as did Plato in his immortal seventh letter, and can behold the kingdom of eternity through the ruins. These are the men who know the comforting law of the spirit, that the demon in man is only permitted to tear down so that the angel in man with faltering hand may trace out the sources of new life. Palaces only collapse so that treasures may be laid bare; idols begin to rock, but only so that altars may be freed upon which a purified spirit may sacrifice" (p. xiii) .

The unity of this work is a testimony to the power of thought and purpose of the author. All the material has appeared elsewhere; yet the method is always uniform: a brief, yet adequate, presentation of the origin of the myth or mystery; its development as the expression of the highest religious aspirations of the Greek people; its transformation, in the light of revelation, into a powerful vehicle of Christian religious experience.

It almost seems as though every sentence builds up in the reader the ruling purpose of the author " to show forth with what gay freedom of spirit the Greek Christian, in the forming and interpretation of his own mysteries, laid hands upon the treasures of the past so that he might lay them upon his own altar. All the lamps of Greece, so he boldly believed, burn for the sun which is Christ" (p. xix) .

There are three main parts to the work. Significantly, the first is called simply, *Mysterion.* The first chapter is a magnificent presentation of the notion of the mysteries as found in their late Greek development and of the mystery which is Christianity. The uniqueness of the Christian mystery is strongly emphasized; its capacity for assimilation is also stressed. In illustration the author chooses the mystery of the Cross, the mystery of Baptism, and the Christian mystery of Sun and Moon. This latter mystery is intimately linked with the liturgical year, as is evidenced from the chapter titles: "the Easter Sun" and "the Christmas Sun." In a parallel consideration of " the Christmas Moon " and " the Easter Moon," the author is able to bring out the deep reverence of fourth and fifth century Christians for Mary and the Church. There is important evidence here for the doctrinal development in the Church with regard to Mary and the Church herself.

The second part is entitled: *The 'Healing of the Soul.* This contains an absorbing study of the symbolism of moly, the soul-healing herb of Hermes and mandragora, the everlasting root of man. Especially in the Christian handling of the latter, do we find evidence of the profound conviction on the part of the Church that the healing of man, his justification, is not merely an extrinsic declaration of non-guilt, but a profound transformation of the whole man. Yet there is a vivid awareness of the depths of sinfulness and corruption that will be overcome only at the final transfiguration.

Holy Homer is the title of the final part. It is a delight to read. Especially the incident of Odysseus and the Sirens. He and his crew sailed past them unharmed because he plugged the ears of the crewmen with wax and had himself securely tied to the mast. A Christian application of this is found in Hippolytus, " and, as in the Clementine defence of humanism, Odyesseus, who ' in full knowledge approached close to death,' is held up as a model of conduct. The prudent hero, tied of his own free will to the mast . . . (which, of course, is the Cross) ... is the exemplar of the spiritually mature Christian who concerns himself with the doctrine of the heretics without endangering his soul, hearing but not following " (p. 363). However, simple souls are advised still to stuff their ears. How many simple souls are there left in the Church today?

The translator, Brian Battershaw, is to be congratulated for a very vigorous English version. Many readers will also be grateful for his thoughtfulness in furnishing translations for all the German books, periodicals and articles quoted in the footnotes. He did not indicate those that had been translated into English. There is an index and eleven excellent illustrations.

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Worship in Scripture and Tradition. Edited by MASSEY H. SHEPHERD, JR. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963. Pp. 178. $4.50.

The shift in relationships among various Christian thinkers from cold coexistence to cordial cooperation has resulted mainly from ecumenical efforts, but the effect of the new state of affairs is that many theological questions have to be probed afresh by both Catholic and Protestants alike. Catholic efforts to rethink the theological problems of the liturgy over the past sixty years have climaxed in the recent Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. Protestant efforts along the same lines, though more recent and elementary, are reflected in *Worship in Scripture and Tradition.* A collection of essays by members of the North American Theological Commission on Worship of Faith and Order, the volume includes studies prepared during the years 1954 through Protestant scholars, especially in Europe, have for some time concerned themselves with the evolution of Christian worship, but the present collection of studies indicates concern for the underlying theological content of worship as it developed in the Bible and in the early Church tradition. Of special interest is the essay by J. Coert Rylaarsdam of the University of Chicago. Recognizing many insights of lasting value in the Old Testament worship, R. points out also the defect of Jewish cult in its inability to accomplish a complete acknowledgment of God on the part of man. Communion between Creator and creature is restored only through Christ who established the liturgy of the New Law as the instrument through which He would transmit the effects of His redemptive death and resurrection to all men. Writing in the same vein, the other authors too set forth constructive reevaluations of what they believe to be of primary importance for a liturgical renewal among Christians and for their reunion in the one Church as the Body of Christ. In short, the book is a worthwhile contribution of Protestant biblical and liturgical theology to the contemporary ecumenical dialogue.

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