

GOD IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

An Essay in Natural Theology

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## PREFACE

Not only is it pretentious to write on such a grand topic as I have in this paper, it is more pretentious to write a preface to it. The first pretention is justified, if at all, in the doing of it; as Royce said, "It is pretentious to wrestle with angels; but there are some blessings that you cannot win in any other way." As for the second pretention, it is necessitated by the fact that I am so close to the writings and people who have influenced me that I probably do not recognize their extent in this or give them proper credit in references.

As to writers, aside from the accepted classics, I have learned most from Charles Peirce and Paul Tillich, the former in metaphysics and theory of experience, the latter in Christian theology. Two of my teachers have noticable but largely unacknowledged marks in the present paper. Professor Richard Bernstein, an ardent disciple of Peirce, not only formed much of my thought on experience and metaphysics but also appears as the "secular philosopher" at whom my entire argument is directed and whom it is intended to convince.

The greatest debt, however, is to Professor John E. Smith whose own position and mode of argument I so closely follow on many points that I scarcely am aware of doing so. Not only is his major book on my topic still in the writing but even were it there for me to refer to, I would suspect my objectivity in assessing our differences. Whatever the case, with no modesty on my part I admit the good points in what follows to be his and the bad ones my own.



## INTRODUCTION

Natural theology is a discipline with many forms and little definition in its history; to maintain itself in the present day it must continually defend its legitimacy on two fronts. So-called secular philosophy on the one hand deems it the unnatural son of a super-natural piety and a fear of being unscientific, and kerygmatic theology on the other calls it the black sheep who pawns the family treasures, i.e. the revealed dogma, for the ante at secularly more respectable tables. Unsympathetic philosophy tries to reduce natural theology to natural religion, for which there is no evidence, it says, and can therefore be discarded without compunction. Kerygmatic theology, the position which holds that at a certain time long past man's salvation was given him in the canon in a perfect form without need of interpretation, says that natural theology can only make things worse and is therefore not only unnecessary but harmful as well.

Against the criticisms of secular philosophy I first insist on this rule: the defenders of a position have the right to define it, and the attackers must abide by their definition. Critics may ultimately decide that there can be nothing like the position as defined, and this would constitute a valid refutation. But it is offensively arrogant and dishonest to claim that the adherents of a position are false to it if they do not maintain some simple-minded version notable for its comprehensibility to weak minds and small children and for its easy refutation by hard-headed scientific types. When I discount then the old notion of religion as an escape from the fires of hell, or the conceptions of God, salvation and immortality to be found in nineteenth century Sunday School tracts (which unfortunately are often used today), let no cry be raised that I abandon



the Christian position or that my arguments fall if these simple-minded doctrines fall. There is no validity in saying that if some Christians are unsophisticated, Christian theology is unsophisticated.

Against those who argue that natural theology should be natural religion, and that the latter means "no revelation," I say that natural religion, so defined, is indeed impossible. The attempt is sometimes made to derive the essentials of religion, e.g., God and man's relation to him, from the natural world without special understanding achieved at certain important historical times. Historical revelation can be viewed as the disclosure to man of certain elements of understanding through an historical situation that he would not have understood otherwise. The prophets of the Old Testament delivered us a new understanding of justice, and the life and death of Jesus gave rise to a new understanding of man, God and love. The ideas by which we understand man's "natural religiousness" were derived from historical circumstances, and they cannot be severed from their history with impunity. Because man exists in both nature and history, he cannot understand one without the other or even separate them cleanly. Ideas have historical determination, but without a natural reference they are irrelevant. Nature can be understood, but only through history.

Against the kerygmatic theologians who claim that natural theology distorts and perverts revelation in its purity, I say that such purity is impossible, and even if it were not impossible Christians would still be under the obligation to express it in terms understandable to those who could not grasp its original expression either because of prejudice or sheer distance in culture. To suppose that any truth, revealed or otherwise, can stand not in need of interpretation is naive. If a truth be presented to a man in a fashion that he can accept or reject, the terms in which he accepts



or rejects mediate between him and the truth. Moreover, the truth cannot be couched in terms which have no meaning whatsoever outside the context of the revealed statement (a precise proof of this is near the beginning of Chap. III), for if it were, it could never have been understood in the first place. It is foolish to think that Christian theology can get along without terms defined in a philosophical setting (note the Hegelian background of Karl Barth), and it is dogmatic in the bad sense to claim without discursive argument that one's own interpretation of the ambiguous, indeed contradictory, scriptures is the only one possible. If we are not to establish the truth of revelation by fiat, by an authority totally external to the revelation, we must show its effects in experience and judge by that. I do not deny that God working in us counts in the response we make to the revealed Word incarnate in some object of our experience: this is in fact necessary if the Word is to be held basic to all things; this does not, however, obviate the point that if we are to respond to revelation at all, it must be in a discursive form.

Moreover, a position which denies the legitimacy of philosophical interpretation of dogma has no apologetic power. Apologetics is the means by which the Church communicates its intellectual position to those whose experience does not include in a meaningful way its historical symbols. Prejudice against uncritical acceptance of metaphorical expression (in a sense all expression is metaphorical, but some forms are subject to strenuous critical rules prevalent in all usage) often eliminates the truth of religion as a live option in people's lives, and this should be combatted. No tradition, if it is to be responsible to the truth it claims, can avoid apologetics, and there is no warrant for doing so in the Christian tradition, of which the kerygmatic theologians represent themselves as the only orthodox version.



Natural theology then is the critical examination of religious experience and the metaphysical position implied by it. From the standpoint of philosophy it carries critical thinking to the heart of religion, that is, to its special disclosures about the foundation and goal of man's being. From the standpoint of theology it carries the power of those disclosures into discursive commerce with the rest of man's experience.

Critics have often attacked the possibility of natural theology on a priori grounds, and I have defended it on that level. None the less, as has often been said about such things, there is no better argument for the legitimacy of an intellectual project than its successful prosecution. Toward this end I argue for natural theology as a valid discipline by dealing at once with an instance of it at work and the type of argument used. This is presented in three sections. The first is on the nature of experience and the relation through experience of man to the world. When, at the crucial beginning steps of the modern scientific movement, Kepler and Galileo resurrected the old atomists' distinction between primary and secondary qualities and emphasized the subjectivity of the latter, man's place in the universe was made that of a spectator on a nature defined by quantifiability.<sup>1</sup> When the

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1. See E. A. Burtt, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science (Garden City, 1954, Anchor) p. 83 ff.

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new science became an accepted thing, more circumspect thinkers saw the necessity of accounting for how man, in some ways a natural creature but in most ways not, could go about being a spectator on the natural world, and this problem defined the intent and largely the form of succeeding theories of experience.

For Descartes there were two substances besides God, the extended and the cogitative; but the divine substance underlay both, being the Reason



geometrically represented in extension and discursively represented in cogitation. Thus there was no real split in the rational mathematical foundations of each, and to overemphasize Descartes' proofs of God as something to save that aspect of the split between the substances is to take more seriously than he did the need to get down to the mathematical foundation of nature through sensible experimentation. This interpretation does more justice than most to Descartes' belief that by careful reasoning we could discover the rational base of not only physics but morals and theology as well; the mark of reality in anything was its rational foundation, clear and distinct to man's cogitation.

Descartes' dismissal of the need to pay attention to the rules of sensible observation was not held in high repute by the Englishmen. Hobbes tried to eliminate the dualism of mind and matter by reducing the first to the second. But this only made things worse: both of Descartes' substances participated in an overarching reason, but for Hobbes, while there may still be a mathematical basis for nature and the mind may share that nature, the mind no longer cogitated it, rather it mechanically responded to things ordered by it. Descartes' Reason was lost and the brain took over the function of reasoning.

Locke and Hume developed more subtle psychological explanations of the way and with what materials the mind reasoned, but still the problem remained the same: to explain how man could know the rational world by the marks it makes on him. This resulted in the identification of experience with the sensible marks written on the tabula rasa with the accompanying difficulty of determining which of the marks were primary or secondary, which were specious or from which valid inferences could be made. Kant tried to cope with the problem of what the world must be like given this general conception of



experience, but never until the nineteenth century was there an attempt to question man's position as an other worldly spectator somehow caught in this world.

With Charles Peirce the revolution came about. Fully appreciating the impact of science and mathematics, he conceived of the mathematical scientist as a wholly natural part of the world, and redefined both our concept of man and that of the world. Man was seen as a sign interpreter, and the world was what he could interpret. Wm. James, John Dewey and others have further worked out this new position.

My first chapter then sets out this view of experience relating man and the world in terms advantageous for further employment, maintaining a broad enough conception that religious experience can later be shown as valid in its explicit purport and not merely as a falsely labeled manifestation of something else. To make clear the process of interpretation I focus attention on consciousness where all signs are ideas, but consciousness is merely a part of the self responding to the world, and non-conscious parts function well as interpretants, as do parts of the world as signs. Most fundamentally, the self is both interpreter and interpretant of its world.

The second chapter shows how God is set in the world through man's experience. Specifically, I examine critical thinking and the impass it reaches when there is no place to stand to criticise the whole of thinking or the whole of the experience that thinking works through. Evidence is given that there are important times in experience when such criticism needs to be made and in fact is made, either well or badly. This chapter also serves to make clear the nature of my critical argument. Logic is the study of rules of thought leading to true conclusions; for most areas of experience we have verified the conclusions of logic by independent means so often that we can use the rules without hesitation. But in religious experience this is not



the case; we are not confident that a necessary idea of God proves a real God. Hence, I want to show the logical relation of God to other areas of experience, and then give independent evidence of his secondness (Peirce's term for the mark of existence).

Having extended the domain of experience to include God as a possible item, i.e. "God" is a possible interpretant of some aspect of experience, the third chapter then moves to specify at least one context in which God is to be found, and finally offers a test for his secondness. In an article contrasting and criticizing the traditional cosmological and ontological approaches to theology, Professor John E. Smith concludes with this program for natural theology:

The points of mutual involvement lead me to suggest that not nearly enough attention has been paid in recent thinking to the possibility of synthesizing the two ways of approach -- through the self and through the cosmos -- by means of a more comprehensive theory of being directed to the problem of the relation between man and the cosmos. If God appears in each pole and the two poles are themselves essentially involved in each other, then it seems likely that neither approach can be prior to the other and that we shall need both.<sup>2</sup>

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2. "The Present Status of Natural Theology," Journal of Philosophy, vol. LV. No. 22, Oct. 23, 1958, p. 935 f.

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My solution is just this, that the ultimate category of existence, from our standpoint God's personal sign, in fact himself as he is involved in the world, is basic to both self and world, and can appear incarnate in an item of experience, evoking an explicit expression of itself in the experiencer. Just one feature of this ultimate category is elaborated, and its metaphysical universality is merely hinted at, but I believe that this argument represents in microcosm the whole picture.



As for direction of attack, I define my position against the secular philosopher more than the kerygmatic theologian. The first chapter has considerable historical discussion with an interpretation of James threading its way throughout. The second has less history as it is moving toward the theological last chapter where my references are for the most part from the New Testament. To establish that I am defending the Christian position I can only use an orthodox terminology with references to the canonical literature; while this is sufficient for the secular philosophers, it hardly does justice to the theological critics. But then limitations must be imposed somewhere.

My purpose is to establish the legitimacy of a discipline and the validity of a particular version of it. These are two things, and as I mean to accomplish both, judgment should be passed on each count.



## Chapter One. Experience and Consciousness.

The basic clue to the genius and success of the "new" or "expanded" conception of experience, lately risen from the efforts of Charles Peirce, lies in appreciation of the succinctness with which experiencing is described. In contrast with the British empirical tradition which chose its descriptive terms largely from motives of methodological advantage, the pragmatists tried to be more empirically true, and their discussion of what goes on in experience carries a more authentic ring. To William James goes most credit for the widespread acceptance of the pragmatic view of experience, and it is to him we owe the most vivid and graphic descriptions. The "blooming, buzzing confusion", so opposed to the British mosaic of simple singulars as the elemental given of perception, enjoys a position of esteem not to be dislodged by metaphysical consequences or sophistications. With Dewey and with others, the uppermost concern has been descriptive authenticity.

And as to be hoped, a theory of experience that does more justice to our experience as it occurs has a great advantage in dealing with the metaphysical problems it occasions. More to Peirce and Dewey than to James we owe the metaphysical development and justification of the theory, and their work may be more important in the long run since it provides for the philosophical interpretation of experience as it bears on other problems. None the less, metaphysical speculations are always to be brought to the test of experience; they must add greater understanding and clarity, not misplaced abstraction or false precision; they must add greater insight



into new realities, not reduce the reality we have for the convenience of myopic method.

My hope in the first part of this essay is to outline the structure of experience in relation to the experiencer and the world experienced, treating the fact of experience as a reality in itself with the intention of providing a groundwork to which problems of what is experienced can be referred. If I begin and end on a metaphysical level, please realize that what I talk about is what our experience is, and if I do not help to clarify that and reveal new implications in it, there lies the most important failure.

Experience is a sign relating two entities, a self and the world. A self and the world are real insofar as each has the individual integrity to react to the other, that is, to be present to the other in opposition, together to form a unity containing terms dyadically related. Both a self and the world can function in contexts other than that determined by experience.

There is direction in the relation of self to world in experience. Experience belongs to the self; it is had by the self; if the world experiences the self, that is a different experience. In the self's experience, the world is the object, the self is the subject, and the world is interpreted in the self through experience. The self is a center of intention that takes experience as a sign of the world. Within experience there occur signs as objects, signs as signs of objects, and signs as interpretants, but experience itself is a sign of the world interpreted by the self which is both interpreter and interpretant.

A self can be both the interpreter and interpretant of its experience



of the world because of its nature both as a structured power and as a substantial entity with determinate content. As an interpreter a self is a power structured as a center of intention. This power integrates as best it can all elements of the self -- mind, body, controllable actions, etc. -- as the center intends an ideal. "Intention" is an anthropomorphism when it refers to the action of digesting food and integrating it to bodily purposes, for instance, as it is to all homeostatic and maturational processes. It is less an anthropomorphism when it refers to an organism's response to dangers in the world and its instinctive fulfilling of stages in a life history. And it is not anthropomorphic when it refers to a conscious mind's coping with situations in terms of its conscious intentions. The term intention is used to indicate that all of these actions rest on a common center. To say that a centered self intends an ideal (or ideals) is to borrow language most appropriate to the conscious aspect of a person and use it for something which encompasses all living activity, conscious and non-conscious. By intending an ideal I mean that the self organizes and directs the activities of the entire organism to bring about a balanced satisfaction of its needs, drives, ambitions, etc. The self, however, is not just one part of a person located above the pituitary or within the heart, nor is it a blithe vapor, an ectoplasm that is the seat of spiritual activity and destiny; it is the centered power of integration that rules all aspects of a human organism insofar as it is able to maintain itself as a being among and in distinction from others.

As an interpretant a self is the result of its interpretation of the world through experience. It is a positive, cumulative content to be judged in the experience of others. When a self interprets another entity



as something to be destroyed, the self becomes a destroyer. A self's experience does not stand under moral judgment, but the self does as interpretant of the experience. The being of a self does not exclude its experience, but insofar as experience is had, it is to be judged not as only a mediator between self and world but as a part of the self, integrated with other parts constituting together a centered whole.

For a self and the world to be related entities they must be both together and separate. Insofar as they are together they exist in a common field; here the self is one being among others, together constituting a world. This is what Dewey pointed out in calling experience an interaction of organism and environment where experience contains both self and world internally related, and is yet part of the world in another sense. What he usually failed to emphasize was the real distinction between self and world as entities which are not wholly internally related; he also failed to recognize that when experience includes both terms internally, the direction of experience is lost.

Insofar as they are separate, the world is an Other to the self, and experience is a third term, a sign of the world marked within the self. In conscious experience, the self can include itself in the Other, the object side of the directional relation. Although experience requires an interaction of self and world, it is not to be identified with that interaction, as Dewey thought. Self and world are related both dyadically and triadically, and experience is identified only with the latter. This point is best illustrated in conscious experience around which we shall center our discussion, though by no means is the triadic relation of self to world wholly conscious. There certain occurrences within the self are taken as



signs of the world; so taken, those occurrences have an added reality that they do not have considered merely as occurrences. Neither the self nor the world, when merely dyadically related, include experience. Experience is a third thing, had by the self and made part of it when the self is subject to the world as object.

All experience probably involves consciousness at some point. It could be argued that it is experience when the body shivers because cold stimuli on nerve endings are taken as signs of a threat to homeostasis. On the other hand, it could be argued that shivering is caused by a series of purely dyadic reactions and that "threat" is an unnecessary anthropomorphism. At any rate I shall speak of experience as involving consciousness, and for the most part the particular experiences to be considered are largely conscious.

If experience is a sign relating a self and the world, then the world is interpreted by the self in ways determined by the nature of the experience. Experience chooses and delimits aspects of the world for the self; each self has the world in ways peculiar to its own experience. Insofar as its experience is unified, it has what Prof. J. E. Smith calls a "life world". Selves experience the same world differently, but this does not vitiate their sharing of the common world; still less does it vitiate their responsibilities to each other arising from a common existence.

In the rest of this chapter I shall attempt to elaborate and justify what has been said so far.

### Section I. The Phenomenal Aspect of Experience

As a proper rubric for discussing the implications of the doctrine



that experience is a sign relating self and world, I propose the following three sections: a) the phenomenal nature of experience itself, b) the relation of experience as a sign to the world as its object, and c) the relation of experience as a sign to the self as interpretant. This three-fold division is similar to Peirce's analysis of semiotic into three trichotomies,<sup>1</sup> although I shall not say that the following discussion of

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1. "Logic as Semiotic: The Theory of Signs," Philosophical Writings of Peirce, ed. J. Buchler (N.Y., 1955, Dover), p. 101.
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experience in those three relations can be categorized under Peirce's trichotomies.

A person's experience is related to the history of his conscious life, up to and including the present. This observation suggests discussion in two directions: first, toward consciousness as the history of the content of one's consciousness, and second, toward what it is like to be conscious; because experience involves a triadic response of the entire organism, consciousness is included, and is the most articulate form, most open to study and presenting the most complex experiential operations. Since the first direction takes its meaning from the second, we shall start with the latter.

The chief pitfall in saying anything at all about consciousness is a quick, unnoticed slip into reductionism; far too tempting is the device of saying "consciousness is - - - -", with a predicate of non-conscious stuff. Consciousness is not derivable from what is non-conscious in the manner of giving non-conscious "cash" for our conceptual definition.

Some people say that we should forget about the category of conscious-



ness and agree that only actions which appear to be rather clever responses to environmental situations constitute the real meaning of the term. There is nothing going on in one's head, they say, other than the exercising of patterns of response at the level of neurological action, and these are to be judged by external results. But consider this example: I walk into a room and notice that a faucet is dripping. Without hesitation I decide to turn the handle tighter to see if the dripping stops, and when I do, it does; I'm thinking about the whole procedure. The next time I come into the room I notice it is dripping again, and again I turn it off, although this time I am no longer thinking about turning the faucet off when my hand touches the fixture but am chuckling to myself about the ridiculousness of the whole situation. The third time, I come into the room thinking about the importance of a book I have just read, turn the faucet off and leave the room without once breaking my train of thought about the book. By all appearances each instance of fixing the drip was identical with the others, but surely it makes sense to say that I was conscious of fixing it the first time, was conscious of something which the activity called up the second time, and the third time, when the habit had become established, was almost totally unconscious of what I was doing, thinking about something entirely unrelated.<sup>2</sup> It seems to do a palpable injustice to our own

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2. It is a problem whether I must be conscious of the drip at all to institute action in reference to it. If the tightening of the faucet is a totally habitual action it could conceivably be as unconscious as breathing or the mechanics of eating, though it could be maintained that even the latter is still on the periphery of consciousness.
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experience to reduce the meaning of consciousness to visible actions. I have no quarrel with those people who are interested in finding the neuro-



logical equivalents or manifestations of thought, but it is absurd to claim that an explanation of that is a sufficient explanation of consciousness. From many points of view it does not even deal with the most important aspects. Some modern behaviorists have attempted to explain the meaning as well as the causation of thoughts in terms of neurological responses without teleology or reference to final causes. They argue that thoughts are the feelings of responses made to stimuli, complicated responses running in habitual patterns established by the successes or failures of their outcomes in coping with problems. This hypothesis has undoubted advantages in explaining learning theory and proposing fruitful new avenues of investigation. But it tries to say that meaning is nothing more than a response on a sophisticated level; nothing is meant or intended by ideas; thinking is correct or incorrect in that it is a successful or unsuccessful action to cope with a situation. Unfortunately, such a theory can never make a normative claim that it is better than any other theory without appealing to a notion of "better" not allowed by the theory. If it is better because it makes a more successful response to the problem of what thought is, it then has to explain what "more successful" is, and so on. It is usually the case that at this point the criteria of "better" becomes an uncriticizable feeling, either of fulfillment or, more likely, of the disappearance of the problem. Some even claim, as Dewey sometimes seems to do, that correct thinking results in the absence of consciousness. None the less, these factual or evidential criteria are themselves in need of justification if they are to be called good, true or better than alternatives. It appears to me impossible to reduce final causes to first causes; each has its own domain and is an irreducible pole. Some explana-



tions can get along with one, but they cannot explain what it is the business of the other pole to explain.

Wm. James is another one who wants to reduce the status of consciousness to that of the non-conscious. His argument<sup>3</sup> is that the usual dis-

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3. In Essays in Radical Empiricism, "Does Consciousness Exist?" (N. Y., 1958, Longmans, Greens).
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tinction between the conscious and the non-conscious (or subjective and objective) is not a primary one, that the distinction only arises after the truly primary Weltstoff, called Pure Experience, is relegated by our thinking to various contexts - the history of our mental life being the context in which something is viewed as conscious, and spatial and temporal location in the external world that in which something is taken as non-conscious. Pure experience, understood as defined by its function in relocating the subject-object distinction, is relatively clear; James means it to be "plain, unqualified actuality, or existence".<sup>4</sup> The difficulty is that if

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4. Op. cit., p. 23.
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this pure experience is had by anyone, the dualism is made primary again - it must be had by a subject. That it be had is a necessary condition for the possibility of it being put in contexts, and James claims that we have it uncontextualized in the perceptual flux. Moreover, James wants to maintain that there is perceptual cash for pure experience; individuals do have experience in a pure state. "The instant field of the present is at all times what I call the 'pure' experience.... If the world were then and there to go out like a candle, it would remain truth absolute and



objective.... and no one would ever oppose the thought in it to the reality intended."<sup>5</sup> Not only does pure experience under this second definition

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5. Ibid., f.

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happen to us, but as a whole it has an all-pervasive aspect; it is "a simple that .... it is there, we act upon it."<sup>6</sup> It has "secondness", as Peirce

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6. Ibid.

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would say. It is true, as James maintains, that we do not notice our experience to be either subjective or objective as we are having it, but none the less we must be conscious to have it (in his sense of experience).

Consciousness then in an important sense is indefinable, if to define is to set the determinations of it in terms not already implying consciousness. And if we try to define by pointing to consciousness with synonyms, again more damage than help is accomplished. First of all, there are few synonyms to be found. "Awareness", "attention", "knowing within oneself" all indicate "consciousness of", and this begs the whole question. It is the nature of the state that is in question when the answer given is "the state of being conscious of". Second, if we found an exact synonym, it would hardly add new information.

A certain consideration, however, can throw the problem in a light more bearable. To say that consciousness is indefinable is not to say that it cannot be given meaning in terms of other things. Although we cannot determine what the quality "consciousness" is, we can note that the things that are in it are signs - conscious signs, to prevent confusion (to be a sign is not necessarily to be conscious). Consciousness is an important factor



only when we are considering the relations between signs as signs. We speak of ourselves being conscious only when we are talking about the signs as ideas in our minds. Consciousness is not important as a qualitative factor when we take the signs to be signs of something, that is, when the experience comprised of the signs relates the world to the self; this is not to say that experience of is unconscious, rather that it usually is not important to point out that it is conscious. There may be special occasions when it is significant to distinguish whether an experience be conscious or not, but normally we do not say "I consciously met Mr. Zilch today"; on the other side, an essential feature of any description of ideas as ideas is their consciousness. Consciousness then will play a large part in our discussion of experience as it is in itself, and much smaller parts in the discussion of the relation of experience to world and to self.

Although we cannot discursively define consciousness or reduce it to what is not conscious, and although locating the function in which consciousness is descriptively important tells us little more about what it is, we can get a feel for it by harking to what is not conscious. Now there are two kinds of things not conscious: unconscious things and non-conscious ones. To be unconscious as distinct from non-conscious, as A. A. Bowman has pointed out,<sup>7</sup> is to have the capacity at some time to be

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7. Sacramental Universe, (Princeton, 1939, Princeton Univ. Press) p. 204 f. The distinction is made in connection with the thesis that there are unconscious experiences, a thesis not to be read into the present discussion.

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conscious. I mean here an unconscious thought, not an unconscious person: an unconscious person is one all of whose thoughts are unconscious. We can



feel the quality of consciousness missing when we try, for instance, to remember something and cannot. We are not totally unconscious of it or we would not be aware of forgetting it; we do remember clues to its existence and nature - e.g. that it is the name of the President and that it begins with E and that all the other letters are low except one rather near the middle. These are interpretants of the sign, but we cannot recall the sign itself. To be conscious then means to have a sign present to mind; to be partly unconscious means to know the sign is there, i.e. knowable, but not be able to make it present.

Another instance of unconsciousness, one again cited by Bowman, is the feeling of interplay between consciousness and unconsciousness when we are falling asleep. This is a sticky problem because there are all sorts of ways of falling asleep. One is to "go out like a light", to sink into oblivion all at once; the only way we know this happens is when we wake up next morning and it seems like no time has passed, although it is daylight again and we feel refreshed. This type of going to sleep is helpful only in that it illustrates that total unconsciousness is uninformative. Another way of going to sleep is when our thoughts are still active, but we are startled by a ringing alarm or someone talking and realize that our thoughts were completely discontinuous with the environment. In such cases it often happens that we go on thinking without interruption until the next morning or until oblivion, but that later we cannot recollect what we thought of. This, aside from the above problem of recollection, merely points out that the continuity of our thought is heavily dependent upon continuity of awareness of environment and side factors. We often move from what we remember to what we do not by processes other than the explicit



connections; for instance, we remember passages sometimes by what the page looked like on which we read them; this is to say that many of the interpretations we give things are not proper to the nature of the thing but depend upon accidental contexts, etc., and this is not a new discovery.

Sometimes, however, we go to sleep aware that consciousness is slipping away. We "drift off". Our presence of mind degenerates and we lose a feeling of control. The presence of all conscious objects recedes, and their absence is felt; not absence "uberhaupt", but absence of something. This again illustrates that we cannot know what complete unconsciousness is, but also it points to a definite quality of losing consciousness. I would suspect that this is the best testimony to the quality of consciousness; we can feel conscious objects (thoughts, signs, etc.) to be more or less present.

Non-conscious things, as opposed to unconscious ones, are like stones or trees. Here I do not mean them as objects of which, for some reason, we cannot become conscious; rather they are things which cannot be conscious, which do not have consciousness. We can illuminate the nature of consciousness further by considering what non-conscious beings lack that conscious ones have. Non-conscious beings contain no type of reality in which signs can be taken as having meaning. By type of reality I have in mind mental life, the stuff of thinking, although the capacity to take signs as meaningful is not necessarily limited to what we see as consciousness; thinking is dependent upon physical - i.e. neurological structures and processes, but no amount of understanding of neurological reality will tell me what thinking reality is if I do not already know. We see thinking from the inside, so to speak.

The phrase "signs taken as having meaning" is, of course, redundant.



A sign is something which has meaning. What I want to indicate by the phrase is that those things which are in consciousness, aside from being what they are in themselves (ideas, thoughts, bits of consciousness), are also related by meanings which they would not have were they not in consciousness. Such units of consciousness are best called signs, and this I believe justifies the redundancy.

Because they have confused meaning with truth or "good" meaning, the problem of what we mean by meaning has been obscured by the pragmatists as much as it has been clarified. This point is attested to by the phenomenon of our calling some meanings "pragmatic", and others not. James wrote:

To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve - what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.<sup>8</sup>  
(italics mine)

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8. "What Pragmatism Means" Pragmatism. (N. Y., 1955, Meridian), p. 43.
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With Peirce, meaning is defined by the following:

"Consider what effects that might conceivably have practical bearing you conceive the object of your conception to have. Then your conception of those effects is the WHOLE of your conception of the object."<sup>9</sup>

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9. "What Pragmatism Is," Values in a Universe of Chance, ed. P. Wiener (Garden City, N. Y., 1958, Doubleday Anchor), p. 192.
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That he intends this as what we ought to mean by meaning, as a method How To Make Our Ideas Clear, is shown by the following. Does not what we mean



sometimes contain impractical things not to be understood as effects? What else would Peirce be arguing against when he stated those stipulations if not the inclination to give importance to things with no practical bearing? Peirce intends to limit meanings to those which, for various reasons, are better than others. But he has not thereby defined the nature of meaning.

What we mean by meaning is all of the interpretants that are given to a sign; not all of the interpretants that can be given or all that should, but all that are. This explains Freud's discovery that we attach "symbolic" meanings to things which they ordinarily or practically would not have. There must be rules for the validity of meanings; this is, however, a different problem, and is not to be solved too quickly. A cameo means something different to a pawn broker from what it does to the man whose grandmother first wore it, and both meanings are valid in their own contexts. A conscious sign to which no explicit interpretants are given has no meaning except that it is something of the form that can have interpretants; this is analytic from its being a conscious sign, taken to have meaning. A non-sense syllable is at least known to be that.

In a discussion above of a form of reductionism, I asserted that consciousness involves final causes as well as first causes, and this was to show the scientism in question to be a reductionism. To spell this out a bit more, what I intended was that if conscious signs have meaning, then they have a forward reference that can be likened to a final cause. Specifically, the meaning of a sign is its interpretants, and while it stretches the point to say that signs are motivated by their interpretants, it is quite sane to say that they exist for their interpretants, and for the following reasons. First, signs cannot occur in consciousness without the



implication of some interpretants occurring too, and the consciousness of the forward movement in time is of the movement from sign to interpretant. A sense of time span is had only when we sense the connection of a sign present at the moment to another sign of which it is the interpretant or which it suggests as interpretant. Signs or thoughts normally flow into one another with a reference both to their predecessors and to their successors. When something occurs to change our line of consciousness abruptly, the sense of a time span is lost; we cannot point out earlier and later moments merging into one another, only a logical before and after. The definition of a thought as a conscious sign cannot be exhausted by a mere first-causal explanation in terms of the signs that give rise to it.

The second reason for saying signs exist for their interpretants as an event exists for a final cause pushes this argument further. If a sign is actually thought by a man, it has also a physical being that can be accounted for, at least partially,<sup>10</sup> by reference to first causes; here

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10. This does not preclude the possibility that final causes are necessary for explanation of physical processes also; but it is at present widely maintained that first causes alone will suffice.

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the "real" cause is the most immediate, the state "just before" the caused state. But if the physical event is also a conscious sign, then it has a more than physical reality. In one sense the first cause of a sign, considered in its conscious context, could be the prior sign which brought it up by association; if this be the case, as some psychologists maintain, then there would be no final causes, since succeeding signs are merely first-caused by the former and would exert no forward pull. In another



sense, if its object be the first cause of a sign, its interpretant would be its final cause. Of the three types of explanation, physical causation, associative causation and interpretive causation, the third does most justice to our experiential life. The first totally ignores the added dimension experience gives to physical reality; the second notes the experiential aspect but treats the conscious life as a purely passive passing of bits of qualitatively determinate consciousness across the mind, missing the fact that ideas are present as objective to me, who judges and intends; the third explanation, in terms of thought as signs in an interpretative process, copes with the implications resident in the nature of our ideas as we have them. It explains both the temporally backward and forward reference of meaning: a sign means its object, and the meaning is specified in its interpretants.<sup>11</sup> This again shows the necessity of final

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11. Two more problems must not be confused with the present issue. It might be maintained that explanation by interpretative causation should take care of such things as willing, which it does not. This problem is to be solved, however, by a discussion of the different kinds of things that can be signs, on one hand, and on the other by determining the relation of the self to its conscious signs. The second problem is the implication that meaning refers not to other signs but to a co-existent reality of which it is the true (or false) sign. This issue is part of the larger problem of truth and criteria of the validity of signs.
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causes in an explanation of consciousness. The being of a mental event is not exhausted in its physical reality, but also includes its conscious reference to final causes in meaning.

About what it is like to be conscious, we have now said the following things: the quality "consciousness" cannot be determined by what is not conscious; scientific and Jamesian reductions are shown to be untenable.



What consciousness contains, i.e. states of consciousness, are signs, and consciousness is descriptively most important when considering signs in their relation to one another as elements of conscious life. Getting a feel for what consciousness is by contrasting it with what is not conscious, we considered things of which we are not conscious (unconscious) and things which have no consciousness (non-conscious things). As to the former, we found that we know of things we have forgotten by their remembered interpretants, but sometimes we cannot become conscious of the thing itself; that to be conscious of a sign is to have it present; that continuity of consciousness is sometimes given by things not explicitly recognized as interpretants but which are connected with periferal associations with the environment; that we can feel objects of consciousness to be more or less present, i.e. that the quality of consciousness can be strong or weak, and this can be noticed. As to the latter we found that what non-conscious things cannot do is to take signs as having meaning (this is but to say they are unconscious, although it gives an added characteristic of consciousness). Against the pragmatists it was argued that meaning is all the interpretants given a sign, not just the good ones. Finally it was maintained that consciousness requires first and final causes because consciousness of the passage of time requires a reference in a sign to both its predecessors and successors and because consciousness is best explained as interpretive process, which requires objects and interpretants as first and final causes of signs. We now turn in another direction, to what consciousness is as the history of one's conscious life.

All the signs of which we have ever been conscious are related to each other systematically. They constitute a system. The following considera-



tions explain and substantiate this thesis:

1) No item can stand in consciousness unconnected with other signs. For something to be in consciousness it must be a sign; that is, it must contain within itself a reference to the rest of a sign function. A sign function has three terms; a sign, an object, and an interpretant. An object can be another sign, a collection of other signs imaginatively unified by the sign, or some non-conscious reality that makes itself felt in consciousness in the form of a sign. A conscious sign is any qualitatively determinate bit of consciousness with sufficient unity to be distinguished from its object and interpretant and which stands for its object in some respect. An interpretant is another sign which specifies the respect in which the sign of which it is the interpretant stands for its object.<sup>12</sup>

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12. For a quick clear account of the most basic elements of a sign function see Charles W. Morris' Foundations of the Theory of Signs, International Encyclopedia of Unified Science, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Chicago, 1938, University of Chicago), p. 3 ff. Morris is concerned to define sign functions for scientific use, but his sign vehicle, designation and interpretant stand for our sign, object, interpretant in most elementary respects.
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To be conscious of something entails being conscious of it long enough to know that it means something, i.e. that it is at least interpretable; if the train of thought is so quickly interrupted that no specific interpretant is hit upon, then the last item in the train at least contains the quality of interpretability, and that is a minimal interpretant. For a sign to be a conscious one, we must hold it in consciousness for a span of time, during which is made the minimal interpretation that the sign is interpretable.

This throws more light on the quality of consciousness itself. For



something to be an object in consciousness, it must define itself in an objective context; this is to say, for something to be dyadically opposed as an object to a subject, it must sustain itself in a context different from the subject for a period of time, since dyadic opposition is reaction requiring time; also the subject must sustain itself in opposition to the object for that time. I am not now speaking of the world as object, but of signs of the world as object. The context of objectivity in which a sign occurs is that of an interpretative function, and the mark of this context in the sign itself is interpretability. Thus the mark of consciousness is the interpretability of its contents. To feed this point back on just one previous consideration, what we feel when we feel consciousness slipping away as we go to sleep is the loss of meaningfulness in what crosses our minds. Not only do we less and less carefully interpret our thoughts, but they seem less and less interpretable. They are not only less significant, but in fact also seem less of a form which has significance.

Thus for something to be conscious it must carry the possibility of being interpreted. That we are not always explicitly conscious of this interpretability is only to say that we are not always conscious of being conscious.

2) Consciousness cannot be pure flux. It may be that the world of physical reality is pure flux, and this may apply to the physical aspects of thinking, but the life of consciousness cannot properly be described in that way, notwithstanding James' doctrine that what was immediately present to consciousness was a pure perceptual flux and that this flux was interrupted by static concepts. "The perceptual flux as such.... means nothing, and is but what it immediately is." The intellectual life



of man consists almost wholly in his substitution of a conceptual order for the perceptual order in which his experience originally comes" (Italics omitted) "...concepts are secondary formations, inadequate and only ministerial."<sup>13</sup> The trouble with James' theory is his failure to recog-

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13. "Percept and Concept," Some Problems of Philosophy (New York, 1911, Longmans, Green & Co.), pp. 49, 51, 79.

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nize that nothing, not even perception, could be present to consciousness without being interpreted. Conscious sensibility is not of the stuff of *physical reality but of the stuff of* consciousness, which is interpretable. Our senses may be continuously bombarded, but we only notice those things for which we have signs to interpret. Even if the last sign in an interrupted train is a percept that goes uninterpreted, we can only recall it as being conscious if we go up to it through what went before, i.e., interpret it as a sign, one of whose objects was a previous sign.

The flow of consciousness is demarcated by signs, and signs are distinct insofar as one can stand for another. This raises two problems: a) how do signs achieve the individual unity to be distinct, and b) how can they be together so as to pass from one to the other?

a) A sign has a unity according to the quality or aspect in respect to which it relates its interpretant to its object. For instance, an object "book" has a sign "red" interpreted by an interpretant articulated as "the book is red"; the unity of the sign is its color. The theory of different types of unities is what Peirce called semiotic,<sup>14</sup> and is too detailed to

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14. Peirce, "Logic as Semiotic", Philosophical Writings.

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go into here.

The temporal (as opposed to logical) demarcation and unity of a sign is given by its role in a sign function. The point in the temporal extension of thought where a sign is cut off and becomes the object of a following sign is not fixed until it is interpreted as the object of the following sign by an interpretant. Hence, we are unaware of a boundary between the sign "book" and the sign "red" until the interpretant takes the second to stand for the first in some respect; then the book and the red are seen as distinct signs, and if the interpretant is interpreted, it then appears distinct from the red, etc. This leads to the next problem, how the signs can be together.

b) The delineation of our consciousness into elements in a sign function is accomplished after they become present to mind. The object and the sign of it are not differentiated until the interpretant is in mind. This is what James saw when he argued that the present is a perceptual flux and that it is divided into segments for knowledge's sake when it is past by a new present which is yet a flux. But as the difficulties with James' system show, this is not entirely right, and for the following reasons:

First, the flowing present is not just an "it", not "nothing but... what it immediately is." For something to be consciously present at all, it must carry the mark of interpretability; consequently, even the immediate uninterpreted present (if we can speak of that at all) is already implicated in a sign function by its very form as an object in consciousness. Thus, at the very moment we are conscious of red, before we distinguish the red as a sign of the book, our consciousness of the red includes the quality of interpretability; we may or may not single out that quality in a further



interpretation, which, as pointed out above, is but to say we may or may not be conscious of being conscious.

Second, we are conscious of only those things which we can interpret; we are conscious only of those things for which we have interpretants. To say that for something to be in consciousness it must be interpretable is to say that at the very moment we are conscious of it we are giving it a minimal interpretation. If, for instance, a loud noise bursts upon our consciousness and we have no idea what the noise is (we have no interpretant descriptive of the noise), we nonetheless must note that it is a noise. If we make no interpretations of it at all, not even that it is a noise, or that at least it is a disturbance to our train of thought, then we are not conscious of it. This goes beyond what we have said before.

Third, the above point implies a theory of time that rules out consciousness as a pure flux. What must a "moment" be like to have a sign interpreted within it? It must first of all be of a certain duration within which time the interpretation can take place. It can be logically divided into before-and-after-the-interpretation. But to be a moment which cannot be divided into further moments, it cannot have parts of which we can be conscious as occurring earlier and later. The present does not appear to be an extension of time with parts; if we think about "now" in such a way as it has earlier and later parts, we call all but the last one "past". A moment of time which we call present has a before and after, but not an earlier and later.

A special danger to be guarded against here is collapsing all of time into one atomic moment. If both a sign and its interpretant are contained in one moment with no earlier and later parts, and if for the interpretant



to appear it must also be interpreted, why are not all signs contained in one moment? The answer is complex, but it is a good one. Not only are both sign and interpretant contained within the moment, but there is process from the first to the second, the process of interpretation. A process implies that a possibility is made actual and that an indeterminacy is determined. In the moment, the sign is with the possible interpretant before it is with the actual one; after the interpretant is actualized, something has been added to the possible to make it actual, and that addition came in the process. The addition is a further determination of the possible, in fact a complete determination of it in respect to the past; the actual is wholly determinate in that respect. But then the actual interpretant also has a possible interpretant which is actualized by a process of interpretation. This second interpretation constitutes a second atomic moment with the first interpretant actual before and the second actual after the process. Atomic moments then are defined by irreducible and discrete bits of process; two processes represent two atomic moments, since, because the first interpretant appears in two roles, as interpretant and as sign to be interpreted, an earlier and a later can be distinguished. If we use a spacial figure, the sequence of atomic moments would not look like a row of dominoes lined end to end with the different halves representing before and after; rather the dominoes would be overlapping with the after of one being the before of the following.

This theory has the added advantage of accounting for the direction of time. Time moves toward the future by virtue of the process of actualization. What we feel as the on-movingness of the present is the process defining an atomic moment, the movement from possible to actual.



What must be accounted for then in a theory of the connections of signs is their apparent continuity and their functional discontinuity. They are discontinuous in that at one moment we can have both a sign and its interpretant functionally related, and that function produces the further distinction between sign and object. This is against James' theory that it is impossible to have an interpretative relation in the immediate present. Consciousness appears to be a continuous stream of signs because there is no point at which an atomic moment is finished and another not begun. To say that atomic moments have no earlier and later is not to say they have no interiors; that which is a part of one can also be a part of another one, and the direction of sequence is given by the process of actualizing and interpretant. While consciousness flows, it is not pure uninterpreted flux.

3) It is quite obvious to anyone who reflects upon his own consciousness that it rarely if ever appears to be a series of atomic moments, each containing an interpretation. If all the time we could hold in mind in a given moment were that taken by a sign lasting for a minute period, consciousness would be a blooming, buzzing confusion indeed. Fortunately for our sanity, we are able rather early in life to abstract, that is to have signs which are interpretants for a great many signs.

Among the signs which are the possible interpretants for a conscious sign in an atomic moment are many that have as the respect in which the sign can stand for its object a respect that applies to a great many other signs. With the example of the red book, our thought of red is quite likely a whole string of signs, lasting perhaps a second or two, all of which are somewhat different but all of which can be collected under the



aegis "red" to stand for the book. Even a rather unsophisticated human being has a great wealth of "general" interpretants, if I might use that term without a fixed technical meaning yet. And it seems from my own reflection that nearly all of conscious life is interpreted in terms of such interpretants; at least those interpretations that we are conscious of making are those which are describable in general terms.

This gives rise to an important point. We can only be conscious of making those interpretations for which we have interpretants. Our limited number of interpretants limits those processes of interpretation of which we can be conscious. This means that there are two kinds of self-consciousness. A. A. Bowman saw this point well, and called them primary and secondary self-consciousness.<sup>15</sup> The system of connections that signs

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15. Sacramental Universe, p. 259 ff.

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form by virtue of being related by interpretative functions is the ground for primary self-consciousness; every sign in my conscious life is connected to at least one other sign as interpretant, and since it would be difficult to have a set of signs within the total system none of which are connected with any sign in the rest of the system, it is probable that all signs are connected with each other by some route or another. This totality of all my signs is that to which a present sign is related in primary self-consciousness when it is interpreted by one of the system's signs. A sign is given a quality that is characteristically mine when it is integrated into my system of consciousness.

Secondary self-consciousness is the explicit interpretation of a



sign as belonging to me. I am conscious of my self's consciousness only when I have an interpretant that so recognizes some sign or interpretation. My conception of what I am is in part a conception of what I have thought, and I can be conscious of only that part of what I have thought that I can pick out with interpretants. To be sure, this discussion does not exhaust even the root meaning of self-consciousness; using the mechanism of secondary self-consciousness, man is capable of taking what he sees himself to have thought and done as signs of an underlying self that cannot be immediately had, since the self is not itself a sign.

Primary self-consciousness is of the present time, my system of signs and the new sign being related in the atomic moment by the connection of interpretation; the interpretant represents the system. Secondary self-consciousness is of my past being. Secondary self-consciousness is itself an interpretation whose object (the object of the sign being given an interpretant) must be another process of interpretation wherein a sign is related to my system of signs via its interpretant. Thus the secondary self-consciousness is later than that which it marks as part of myself.

The similarities and differences between the two types of self-consciousness are well illustrated in interconnection by Bowman's example of the tea-taster. The tea-taster first sips, tastes: primary self-consciousness; then there is a pause while the chemical reactions completing the process of taste take place; then the expert connects the feelings of the end of the process with those of the beginning, of which he is now secondarily conscious, and unites all in a judgment about the whole taste. Here primary and secondary self-consciousness are distinguishable, although they flow into one another.<sup>16</sup>



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16. Ibid.

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The upshot of these considerations is that in describing the phenomenon of our consciousness, we must take note of the far reaching power of man's interpretative ability. Man can encompass his whole life in thought, all of history, actual or potential. His capacity for imagination, for hypothesizing new and speculative interpretants for his experience, has met little limitation. Interpretation of experience is not to be thought bound to a purely mechanistic model of how signs occur and are interpreted; as in all things, some interpretations are more important than others, and the structures of experience are to be found in its more significant portions.

An historical system of consciousness then is all the signs that have appeared in one's consciousness. They are systematic because they are interlocked by interpretative relations; a sign at one time interprets, another time is interpreted. Since every sign of which I am conscious at a present moment is interpreted by a sign from within my historical system of signs, the new sign is given a special flavor characteristically mine, a flavor coming from the connotations of the interpretant. In this sense, the system of signs is prior to any individual sign, as Bowman has pointed out in an abstract way,<sup>17</sup> in that there is a special character to the

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system

17. Op. cit. Ch. I. This is a discussion of the nature of system and function. See also Ch. V, p. 194.

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system as a whole that is imparted to each sign by virtue of its being in the system. Aside from its relation to the other elements in its sign



function, a sign is related to the system as part to whole. With his usual descriptive accuracy and metaphysical befuddledness, this is what James saw when he called our thoughts "warm".<sup>18</sup>

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18. Principles of Psychology, Vol. I, pp. 73-4. "Each pulse of cognitive consciousness, each Thought, dies away and is replaced by another. The other, among the things it knows, knows its own predecessor, and finding 'warm', in the way we have described, greets it, saying: 'Thou art mine, and part of the same self with me!'"
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One more problem about an historical system of conscious signs needs to be considered here. We have not been capable of consciousness or triadic, interpretative reaction all of our lives. Up to a point, perhaps reached before birth, what mental activity we had was in no way conscious; no interpretation took place. When and how did consciousness begin? What was the first sign? To make the problem harder, the first sign had to be accompanied by an interpretant which must have had prior meaning in our consciousness. And if the interpreted sign was not a precept with its object in non-conscious reality, it must have had a third sign as its object. In one sense, the rise of consciousness is a matter of scientific study, but in another sense it presents a purely philosophical problem. At some point, a mental activity carried with it a potentiality for conscious interpretation, and that potentiality was actualized. But the fact that we cannot point to the first member of a system does not mitigate the fact that the system exists, nor does it obviate our knowledge of it.

We have so far discussed consciousness, what it is like and how it is structured in an historical person. What remains now in the problem of experience as a phenomenon is to determine the connection of con-



sciousness and experience. The thesis is that consciousness is an integral part of every experience, and hence of experience in general, but that there is more to experience than consciousness. This relationship will be shown in discussing experience as a sign relating a world to a self.

## Section II. Experience and World

It is nothing new these days to point out that a recurring problem in philosophy since Descartes has been to get out of the mind, by which I mean to be able to claim truth for knowledge of the world over against the mind. The problem was occasioned by a move taken by both Descartes and his follower, Locke, leader of the British empirical tradition, in their attempts to find a sure mark of truth, an indubitable starting point. The proper place to check the truth of our knowledge, they said, was on the ideas themselves, not the world. One looked at one's conception of something, declared Descartes, to see if it were clear and distinct. Locke explicitly substituted "determined or determinate idea" for "clear and distinct idea", by which he meant a singular or complex of singulars written upon the mind, the "tabula" (see his Epistle To the Reader, Essay Concerning Human Understanding). Hume further specified the determinateness as "force and vivacity" of singular sense impressions. Always, to see whether our knowledge were true, we are told to reduce it to its simple components and see if we have vivid and forceful impressions for each part.

The difficulties with this move are notorious. For Descartes, thoughts were of a different substance from the world, and the only way he could maintain that even our clearest and most distinct ideas corresponded to



the world was by claiming that God could not, could not, deceive us about such things. The British empiricists are in an even more tenuous position, for, as Paul Weiss has pointed out,<sup>19</sup> they had to maintain the ontological

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19. Modes of Being (Carbondale, 1958, Southern Ill. Univ. Press), p. 241.

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argument for every single impression. The ontological argument asserts the reality or existence of something from some characteristic in the idea of it; in the theological tradition the guarantee of the object was the necessity of the idea, meaning that the idea of the denial of the object's existence was self-contradictory. The guarantee in the British empiricist tradition was the force and vivacity of the idea, the mark of the idea as an impression, not a fiction produced by the mind. There was no way, however, of supporting this version of the ontological argument if one chose to doubt it.

The lesson to be learned from this history is that if we start in the mind as the basis of truth, we cannot get out. If the search for truth is referred to a characteristic of ideas, the only truth we can have is about ideas. The problem then is to find a starting place where the world as such is already an element.

Up to this point our discussion has centered around the phenomenal nature of consciousness, and this procedure may be misleading if the primary thesis stated at the beginning is not reasserted. Experience is a sign relating the world to the self. Experience as a whole is of the world. We spoke of consciousness and of the operations of signs within consciousness, but we should note that the second occurrence of the word consciousness



designates a part of the world. How is experience a sign of the world?

The argument will take the following form. If experience is a sign of the world, the world must get itself represented in experience in certain respects through certain ways. The thesis on this issue is that some signs, percepts, have parts of the world as their objects, not other signs; one type of reality can be a sign of another type. The Cartesian-Empiricist difficulty is avoided by insisting that the reality of one is that of a sign for the other; in searching for truth, one does not look at the signs as things in themselves, but at them as signs of the world. This amounts to saying that we look at the world, mediated by signs, but no less the world for all that, in order to establish truth. Truth finding, in some sense, goes on in the world, not our minds; it is the testing of the world against the world.

If experience is a sign of the world, and the self is the interpretant and interpreter of the sign, then we must show the connection between the self and experience. Experience is at once a part of a self and autonomous as a sign. We must then distinguish the operations of experience as a sign from its operations as it is an element of a self. A self has experience as a sign, and includes it as part of its being as interpreter and interpretant. It is my hope, in Section III, to make this clear by a discussion of subject and object and of Bowman's attempt to reduce the self to the historical system of experiences.

In discussing the structure of consciousness, I have taken all of the elements of a sign function to be conscious signs, with only an occasional reference to a special kind of sign, a percept. Now a great many of our signs are percepts, and the peculiar character of a percept needs to be



discussed. A percept is itself a conscious sign, with a non-conscious object, interpreted by another conscious sign; of course, as conscious signs the percepts and their interpretants are part of broader organismic responses.

It is important to emphasize that a percept is a conscious sign, composed of the stuff of consciousness, and that it is not a purely physical thing. A percept, like any conscious sign, cannot exist in consciousness without an interpretant. According to Peirce, the most primitive form of consciousness is a perceptual judgment wherein a percept is interpreted. A percept is a direct sign of the world, but it is never had in an unmediated form, that is outside of a perceptual judgment.

This theory must be distinguished from others which fail to see that the percepts we have in consciousness are of a different stuff from most of their objects. Wm. James represents the theory closest to the one I am espousing which still differs on just this point. His doctrine of pure experience, discussed partially above, maintains that we have "present to us", what I would call "in consciousness" and what Dewey would call "had by us", pure perceptualized being. According to the way we sort out individual portions of this pure experience, it gets put in certain contexts, the two main contexts being that of the sequence of my experience of the pure experience and that of its constituting the real physical world. If we disregard the difficulties involved in a pure experience that cannot but must be experienced by someone, we still find the theory suffering from the following problem. The perceptual flow of experience as it is pure and immediate in our minds, is of the same stuff which constitutes the world perceived. As it flows by in the stream of extended presents,



the perceptual front is unmediated, uninterpreted; it contains no thirdness. James realizes that to be interpreted the perceptual flow would have to be cut up and forced into concepts, which, for him, are distortions of the real; he wants to maintain that in the perceptual present we have an unadulterated contact with reality to which all concept-ridden notions and theories can be referred for verification. The failure of this doctrine, however, rests on the difficulty that an uninterpreted part of consciousness has no connection with any other part. Unless it is given an interpretant while it is still present, an interpretant that connects it with the rest of our thought, it slips irrevocably into the past, not even our past, since it is not given the character of "ours" by being integrated into our system of signs. We have no hook in the uninterpreted by which to bring it back into present consciousness; it is not even of the form of which we could be conscious.

But what about this non-physical stuff? Perhaps I use the word "conscious stuff" unadvisedly; what I want to indicate is that percepts, indeed all signs, have a dimension of reality over and above that usually attributed to non-conscious things, a reality given them precisely because they are signs. Non-conscious things include physical things and ideas in themselves. An idea is something, again according to Peirce, whose being "consists in mere capability of getting thought, not in anybody's Actually thinking them."<sup>20</sup> When an idea is thought it is given the added

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20. "A Neglected Argument," Values.... p. 359.

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property of being a sign, but as it is in itself it lacks the reality a sign has.



As has been said many times in the course of this chapter, the added dimension of reality consciousness has, over and above the reality the bodily equivalences of mental life, is not something to be explained from the standpoint of the non-conscious. Nonetheless, its mark is the ability to be a sign, to refer beyond its being in itself to an object mediated through itself to another sign, an interpretant. A percept has this reality; James' immediate perceptual flux does not.

The chief issue now is, how can a sign have as an object something of a different sort of reality? There is no a priori difficulty in supposing that it can, but the problem is to show how. Consider a percept of the physical world, the world of brute fact; take a percept of a table, for instance. First of all, I am at least dyadically related to the table. I touch it, and a dyadic chain of responses connects the table to the outcome of neural processes in my brain; similarly, light rays bring certain responses to my brain as I look at it, etc. Presumably all of my faculties of sensation relate the world, including the table, to my brain. Specifically, the table is related dyadically to that part of my brain which is the non-conscious counterpart of consciousness. But for the table to come into consciousness, it must terminate in something that can be interpreted. A percept is a mental occurrence whose reality consists both in its being the end product of a chain of dyadic responses and in its being interpreted.

Let me reiterate the conditions governing the abstractions we have made for clarity's sake when we discuss only consciousness as the model for experience. Experience is an interpretative response of the self as interpreter. While the interpretation is usually centered in one aspect of



the self, for instance consciousness, the response involves to some degree all the systematically related elements of the self. Reading a book is rather strictly a conscious experience, above and beyond the mere seeing; the feeling of awe or terror is largely non-conscious. I have limited discussion to highly articulated consciousness for ease in citing accepted and recognizable evidence.

We must bear in mind that "conscious sign" denotes not only what we think of "in mind" but also the whole response the organismic self makes, reflected in consciousness. Accordingly, when I speak of "a system of signs" I mean the whole system of interpretative elements which function in experience as signs, although they are most clear for analysis in their conscious aspects. When the physical is distinguished from the conscious as lacking a dimension of reality the latter has, the intent is to distinguish the dyadic from the triadic or interpretative. The interpretative functioning of signs is most explicit in consciousness, though it goes on in other parts of the self as well.

The crucial point is that a percept is not only conditioned by the dyadic relation to the table, but also by its interpretability. I must have a sign that can interpret it. This means that I notice only those elements of sensible reaction in my brain for which I have interpretants. That mental occurrence can take on the added reality of consciousness which can be interpreted. To be sure, this is not a tight affair; there is a certain amount of slippage. A percept is not interpreted exactly; the contribution from the purely dyadic side causes resistance to interpretants that do not quite fit, and we are continually speculating new interpretants as hypotheses to better interpret the resistance in the



percept.

The implications of the fact that what can become conscious is limited to what is actually interpretable, can only be brought out by anticipating the discussion of critical interpretation to be found in the next chapter, but it is profitable to do so here. As a bare minimum, percepts are merely connected with an interpretant; that interpretation, a perceptual judgment, also can be criticized. To criticize something is to consider it as an hypothesis to be tested, and then subject it to certain tests. Now to reiterate a point made above, those interpretations about which we usually speak are not the whole chain of interpretative processes contained in a series of atomic moments of consciousness, but rather crucial interpretations in which the interpretant stands for a great length of the chain. Thus, when I touch the table, the percept I recognize interpreting is the table's feel, not the components of that feel. The same holds for sight; Hume was right (though he thought it meant something different) when he pointed out we see the table as brown, not a spectrum of shaded degrees of brown. Moreover, the interpretant I use to interpret the whole complex of sensible reaction in my brain is probably just "table", and only afterwards do I think "brown", "hard", "square", etc. The point is that the percept is not just the complex of "simples" that I derive on later analysis, but rather the whole unity interpretable by "table". It also includes the side contributed by the manifold of sensible, physical, dyadic reactions, and these offer resistance to the interpretant "table", perhaps in the end proving it inappropriate; but the percept cannot avoid the form forced upon it by its interpretability.

The upshot of great moment stemming from this doctrine is that inter-



pretants like "tragedy" and "substance" may be as legitimate for interpreting the world as "brown" or "hard". As a matter of fact, they are usually taken tentatively, more hypothetically than "simple" interpretants, and are usually subjected to more critical tests. But insofar as they are interpretants, they are all of similar form.

Now what does this mean, that "tragedy" and "substance" can be as legitimate interpretants of the world as "brown" and "hard"? This takes us back to the nature of signs as being of the world as well as of other signs. The interpretants we have, for the most part, do not interpret percepts as the feelings on our nerve ends, or part of the dyadic chains within the body, but rather move far out on the causal chains connecting us with our environment and interpret our percepts as they are revelatory of the world "out there". This is not to say that we do not notice bodily sensations, or, on the other hand, things very far remote from the near environment. But on the whole, the most part of our interpretants function for the range of our everyday vision and hearing. It would be interesting on another line to investigate the factors that go into determining the general drift of the growth of our interpretants, the levels upon which the most pressing problems are posed that we must cope with, and upon which the most interesting things happen, and upon which we find best expression for what we need to express. Even more interesting is the unity and continuity of the world as we interpret it; only when the hard brown table becomes a dance of electrons is the issue of continuity of interpretative vocabulary urged. As long as our experience is conscious and that consciousness is interpretation of percepts or further sophisticated judgments about perceptual judgments, our experience is of the world. For what we interpret is not



just the sign but the object through the sign. We see the world through signs, concrete situations; only a sophisticated thinker sees the signs and not the world, and even in so doing he considers the signs as aspects of the world. When we check the validity of our interpretations, we look not at signs as signs, but at the world present in signs.<sup>21</sup> The following

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21. A kind of experience not profitably called "of the world" is reverie. Reverie is a close interchange of primary and secondary self-consciousness, but even in the latter, little thought is taken of it being objectively real. That it is objectively real is not to be doubted, since it is a definite state of mind; but reverie does not claim or acknowledge validity.
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chapter spells this out more fully.

Two concluding general points can be made to this section. First, we have not yet determined all the different kinds of things that can constitute the world. Especially we should not think of the world as composed merely of those things that can excite our nerve endings. To be dyadically opposed to another being in time and space means that the opposition must be mediated in physical ways, but this does not preclude my saying legitimately that my friend is "piqued"; his pique is not a merely physical thing - it is a state of consciousness - but it has its marks on his features which I see and which convey his state to me. Similarly, there may be other kinds of reality constituting the world that are only mediated by the physical.

It is even too extreme to limit dyadic relations to the physical or what can be mediated by the physical. I surely seem to know pure ideas mediated through conscious signs but without going through a purely physical mediation. Mathematics seems to have such a dyadic status; I learn it by gradually sharpening and defining my store of interpretants, and by the



difficulty I find in the process of learning I know that mathematical ideas have some being apart from me. But this is a problem beyond the compass of this paper, and to put one's foot in too far is to be carried away.

Second, the world, as it is brought to me by experience, is determined in special ways. Apart from the objective unity it has in itself as a real entity, the world is unified, chosen and given meaning peculiar to me by virtue of the sign - experience - through which it is mediated. Insofar as my experience is mine, the world as I have it is my world, and I make connections and disjunctions perhaps not resident in the world outside of its triadic, i.e. experiential, relations to me. The clues to how the world is so taken are to be found in examination of how the self is related to its experience.

### Section III. Experience and Self

It is essential for the principal thesis of this chapter to make the strongest possible case against totally identifying experience with the self that has it. In one sense, experience is part of the self, but from no possible standpoint in that sense is it more than a part beside others.. Experience and the self are not congruent. Surprisingly enough, A.A. Bowman argues that they are. A detailed analysis of his argument will get the major points of the issue stated.

Among the difficulties in analysing someone else's discussion of a topic after having staked much on one's own discussion is an inevitable confusion in terms. Especially since Bowman has heavily influenced what I have said so far and I have put his terms to my own use, I find it hard



to do justice to his argument when I want to turn and refute it, though I must try to do so.

The notion of experience, as a system, is his, but I have carefully avoided an ambiguity in his doctrine that allows him to do wonderful things. His ambiguity is based on two ways in which the term "an experience" can be taken: on the one hand, an experience is a state of mind, a qualitatively determinate state of consciousness, as I have taken the term; on the other hand, an experience includes all the extra-conscious elements necessary for an experience of, both an experiencer and the world experienced. Although he describes and justifies only the former side, from the latter he can conclude that the self is totally included in the system of all its experiences.

Two considerations lead me to hold him to the former alone, aside from the fact that it is the only side he justifies. First, he does separate in other discussions the objective world from the system of subjective experiences. He maintains that we have to subject our experiences to certain tests and perform operations with them to determine which of them are veridical. In Studies in the Philosophy of Religion he argues that we cannot assume a single experience to be veridical, but rather that an object is only truly experienced in a series of experiences.<sup>22</sup> In Chapter

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22. Studies (New York, 1937, Macmillan), Vol. II, p. 209 ff. It must be noted that in this work he takes a stand contrary to the Sacramental Universe, saying that consciousness can be defined in terms of experience and not vice versa (p. 241). Since the more elaborate account of experience is in S. A., I confine the rest of my discussion to that work to avoid these contradictory theses (both books were compiled by editors from notes after Bowman's death.)

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VI of Sacramental Universe he argues that experience is wholly subjective



and to be distinguished from the entirely different and independent mode of being of the physical. "Objective" connotes the relation between any mode of being and consciousness;<sup>23</sup> by becoming aware of the relations

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23. Sacramental Universe, p. 223 ff.

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between subjectivity and objectivity we learn how to experientially determine what the world is. These doctrines indicate that at least the objective pole is not to be included in the subjective system of experiences, although it gets its character of objectivity by being related to it. Second, purely methodologically it is more fruitful to make the distinction between the self and the content of its conscious states when the issue under discussion is the very relation between them.

For our purposes, then, Bowman's system of experiences is the system of conscious states; unconscious states are to be included in this system by virtue of part of their essence being the possibility of being conscious (see n. 7 above). His thesis is that a system of experiences is a subject for each of its individual experiences. No experience can exist by itself, but only in functional relation with other experiences, and as we have seen above, this gives the individual experience a definition as part of the whole system. "In the order of being the system assuredly precedes its individuated contents."<sup>24</sup>

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24. The following argument is to be found in Sacramental Universe, pp. 194-199.

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Bowman's next move is to show how the system can be an agent. Psychological states are activities, he says, and an agent is the being that sustains the activities. This, however, begs the question. The system



of activities is not necessarily the same as the system of conscious states that come into being by activities relating them. That which relates them, which does the acting, may be outside their system of interconnections, even if the system is ontologically prior to its contents. Here is an example of his slipping the subject illegitimately into the experience. A system of functions may not account for the power of functioning.

As evidence for the above moves, he attempts to show whose experiences the psychical states are in the following dichotomies:

- a) "Either the activities must be assigned to a subject other than themselves, or else b) there is no need to assume any such subject.

By the latter alternative I do not mean that a subject or agent is denied, but that the character of subject is ascribed to the activity as such."

In reference to (b), Bowman takes William James to be representative of the position, to wit, that our mental processes not only are psychical operations, but that they themselves perform those operations. The difficulty Bowman points out in this position is that if a mental activity X is the knowledge of Y, then X cannot possibly know Y, since it is the knowledge of Y itself. This is the same as saying, with Peirce, that the interpreter and the interpretant are not the same, and I think it a valid point, if confined to the domain of conscious signs.

Alternative (a), that the activities must be assigned to a subject other than themselves, gives rise to the second dichotomy: "Either (a) the subject must be thought as existing independently of the activities assigned to it; or (b) the activities and the subject must somehow be thought together."



(a) is the Kantian position, and Bowman refrains from a technical argument except for one point.

"....the subjective states or activities, which differentiate the empirical from the transcendental self, are not appearances at all. That is to say, they are not objects, but instances, of experience, and for that reason it cannot be assumed (as it is by Kant) that they define themselves against the noumenal ego as appearances define themselves against the thing-in-itself."  
(p. 197)

This is, however, just the point at issue, whether the self is to be identified with instances of mental activity, or whether it has some sort of independence from them. To call mental activities "appearances" is too strong for many reasons, but so is calling them "instances", in the opposite direction. Mental activities which we take to be signs of the self mediate our knowledge of it, and not merely in an indexical way; but as signs they are not to be identified with their object.

Bowman then concludes that (b) is the only possible alternative, namely that the subject and the activities of the subject, though not identical, must be thought together. This "means that every time we think of a mental event as occurring, we must think of a subject as acting. The latter is an implicate or presupposition of the former." Moreover, an active subject implies a plurality of activities which "relate themselves to the agent as an indefinitely variable manifold to an invariable unity. The activities are correlated not only to the system as such but also to other individual members. Otherwise a distinct subject would have to be posited for each activity. The subject then, says Bowman, is "a system which, with each addition to its contents, will reassert its unity and self-identity." The only difference between a system of experience and a subject of experience is merely verbal, that is, "A system of experience is the unity of our



mental activities when viewed in the light of their functional relations to one another; a subject of experience is this same system when viewed in the light of its relation to any particular activity."

Bowman's argument is inadequate, and this can be shown by an expansion of the critical principle used above to undercut his imputation of agency to the system of experiences. To make it clear I shall make use of the prerogative insisted upon above, of calling experiences conscious states or signs. Now the system of signs is the system of all elements in all of one's sign functions, with the exception of objects of percepts which appear only in mediated form in the percepts' interpretants. Included in the sign functions are the processes of interpretation that functionally relate the signs; however, the processes of interpretation are included in the system of signs as completed things for which we can have signs, not in the actual act of interpreting. An action is not the same thing as an acting, and Bowman has confused the two. An interpretation as an action is the functional relation of sign and interpretant; insofar as it is an element in the system of signs it is a wholly determinate, actual thing. An interpretation as an acting is a real process, with being only in a present moment; it is not wholly actual, but an actualizing; and interpretation as an acting changes to an action when it becomes past.

The subject as agent is that which does the acting. Bowman claims that the system in terms of which a sign is being interpreted is the agent doing the interpreting. The system, as represented by the interpretant, is that which performs the interpretation. But his is a loose use of words. A sign is interpreted by an interpretant, and hence by the system, but this



is only to say that the interpretant is the term with which the sign is interpreted. An empty milk bottle may be replaced by a full one, but this does not prove that a milkman is a full hottle. Two general considerations arise from this.

1) The system of conscious signs is a dependent reality. It has a dimension of reality not had by the self considered as body alone, but it is dependent on the self, including body, for its existence. Specifically, it is dependent on the power of the self operating to integrate its parts for the power of the agency which performs interpretation. The being of the system is sustained by the power of the self to make it a factor in the present moment. A system of signs once thought is past, and will remain so unless brought into the present again by a power outside of itself, a power that relates it to a new sign, making the new sign a part of it. Consciousness must always be renewed in an actual being.

2) The relation of the self to the system of conscious signs can be explicated by recalling a distinction between subject and object made briefly above. For something to appear in consciousness, that is, for us to be conscious of something, it must be present. To be present to means to be dyadically opposed as an object to a subject. But not only is a sign present, it must be present with an interpretant, and through the interpretant, with the entire system. That which is present must sustain itself in an objective context, the context itself being dyadically opposed to the subject which must also sustain itself. The system of conscious signs that Bowman tried to make the subject of the individual signs is really the objective context which sustains the object in con-



sciousness over against the subject.

Bowman maintains, at one point<sup>25</sup> that consciousness of an object is

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25. Sacramental Universe, p. 255 ff.

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necessarily also an experience of what it means to be a subject. What he intends by this is that all consciousness is also primary self-consciousness, due to the necessity of all consciousness being related. What he goes on to imply is that the system of experiences experienced is also the subject of the object in consciousness. This is not the case. It is the objective context in which the object can be an object to the subject. But he is right in that the experience of the context is the experience of objectivity, that which is opposed to the subject. It is the experience of the directionality of subjecthood in consciousness.

As a cautionary note, we must not confuse experience as a system of conscious signs with the world because we call them both objects to a subject. It is the world which is experienced through conscious signs, but it achieves the directional character of object by virtue of the very fact that it is mediated through signs which are objects in consciousness. Before going on to explicate this, the point should be made for future chapters that what constitutes the world for us is what can get itself objectified in consciousness, be it physical, ideal, or what have you.

We have, in this section, distinguished the self from experience as a system of conscious signs insofar as the self is a power, an interpreter. Still to be maintained is the other side of the thesis asserted at the beginning, namely, that the self is also the interpretant of experience.

Experience, as it is in itself, is a sign mediating the world, as it



is represented in experience, to a self which includes its experience as a part. A self is both a structured, centered power and the structure through which the power operates. In common parlance, the structure through which the power operates is the body and mind; if further distinction be made, the intellect, will and passions. And by an extension not so very remote, the self is also his actions external to the body, at least responsibility extends that far. It not being my intention to delineate parts of the self further than has been done, I shall toss in but one parenthetical comment before discussing the dual role of experience and consciousness in the self. I imagine that a more extensive investigation of all the elements of the self would reveal that the hard-bitten notion of physical as being merely the sort of thing 19th century physics and chemistry thought it was is too narrow and unrealistic. As Peirce thought (see the Neglected Argument), such things as change and growth require a reference to an ideal as well as antecedent states.

Now as to consciousness and the self, consciousness is two things. First, insofar as consciousness is merely something the self does or has, like walking or feet, though composed of signs in triadic relations to each other, it still does not relate the world to the self in any other way than dyadically. The relation between the world and consciousness is dyadic, though the signs in consciousness are functionally triadic. Second, consciousness is a unique part of the self in that the self can make it stand out as being not a part of the self but as a sign of the world. Insofar as consciousness is a sign it is not defined in terms of the self, rather in terms of its sign function, with the world being part of the sign function. Consciousness is of the world, not of consciousness;



the world is presented in consciousness. For the most part, the self as interpretant of consciousness is operating in consciousness too, that is to say, the self assumes the form of a conscious interpretant, it is represented or epitomized in a conscious interpretant; the signs which the self interprets are of the world.

The confusion between consciousness and experience can now be cleared up. For experience to establish a triadic relation between the self and the world, the taking of something as a sign of the world must occur in consciousness; it is an interpretation. However, there are extra-conscious processes that achieve special significance as part of experience because of their relation to consciousness. We have already discussed the physical aspect of percepts. On the side of the self, the non-conscious elements are also involved in the centered action of the interpreter and interpretant. Anger as an interpretant involves physiological changes, as well as does any action resulting from conscious interpretation of the world. Unless the self as interpreter and interpretant of its experience intimately includes physical action, we could never account for moral responsibility as coming from a centered self. Action must be inextricably bound to the conscious part of man's being. Insofar as man's reaction to the world is affected by the fact that it is a triadic relation, it can be called experience.

Ultimately, self as interpreter and self as interpretant are merely different aspects of the same thing. A self has consciousness by providing his experience with the power to be present to him. A self is his experience because in it he is related to the world, and thus achieving his definition, in ways that enable him to take it as something more than its dyadic effect upon him. He can, in fact, see it as a thing apart from him.



This brings us around to our first thesis. Experience is a sign relating two entities, a self and the world. Without experience, when self and world are merely dyadically related, they can be seen as independent entities only from a position exterior to them both. From the standpoint of self, there is only self, since it cannot get from the form it has to the world. That it is affected by the world can only be known from a standpoint that includes the world as affector. Experience enables the self to take the world's effects as effects, since those effects are signs of the world. Through experience, the being of the self can acknowledge the being of the world. Without experience, we would have being in opposition to the world, but we would have no world in which to work out our being.



## Chapter Two. Truth and Criticism

Since this is an essay in natural theology, and since it began with a chapter on experience and its mechanics, the next move obviously seems to be to relate God to experience in some way. Now insofar as a proof of God is supposed somehow to make him present in our experience, philosophy cannot furnish such a proof, since philosophy, at least conceived in a simple way, is not very adept at creating experiences. It can, however, give the logic of what such an experience would be; that is, given the experience, it could give a philosophic account of it. This is the plan of the following two chapters. And, of course, beyond this, it is my hope that this scheme of what it would be like will itself be an interpretant by which those who deny evidence of God in their experience might see more there than they saw before.

As it is my purpose to articulate areas of experience not commonly recognized rather than "prove" the existence of an item in that strange domain of experience by a deductive argument from first principles agreed upon in mundane experiences, my argument is not as weak as its weakest point, but is as weak as the forcefulness with which it presents its conclusion as a valid possibility. Philosophical logic, as Peirce and many others since him have seen, is a body of rules for reasoning that results in true conclusions. For most areas of experience we can test rules often enough to have confidence in their ability to get us to true conclusion without having to test each application. But the logic of reasoning to God is in a rather poor state of development due to the fact that it is



difficult to verify the conclusions it reaches by extra-logical means, as is done in most other areas. And as has been shown by the many criticisms of the Medieval proofs for God, the logic of mundane experience cannot be applied to the Holy, at least in a flatfooted way.

The first reaction of someone who reads a proof for God, before he finds a fallacy, is still to be unconvinced; a proof for God lays out the logical relationships between accepted principles and God, but it does not create in the mind of the reader the experience of God as present which would verify the logic. And it cannot be asserted that our mental rules of logic have an ontological foundation, since that is the very point at issue, whether the ontos goes that far. This understanding of the problem illuminates many of the difficulties of the traditional proofs. It is precisely the point Kant made in criticism of the cosmological argument, that it moved from empirical facts to a necessary idea, putting it in the same position as the ontological argument as Anselm had it. Now if, as has often been claimed, the traditional proofs are only for the faithful, the necessary ideas might well serve as terms by which their experience of God could be interpreted. In this case the "proofs" would be valid as instances of "faith seeking understanding", where the object of faith was related to other areas of experience. But this would not be a deductive proof from those other areas, as is so often maintained. Anselm's proof does not hold for "the fool who says in his heart there is no God"; but it does hold for his fellow Christians for whom God already has a real presence, and it does clarify their understanding.

A further more practical difficulty with the traditional arguments is that the ideas in which they terminate are not very obvious interpretants



of experience. As with the first cause or prime mover, it is difficult to connect these with the rest of our religious life, and to say "this is what we mean by God" is not as obvious as St. Thomas would like to think.

My plan avoids these difficulties, though it incurs its own peculiar kind; namely, it can make no claim to coerciveness. I will try to show how God as the Christians conceive him fits into at least one area of experience, and then will indicate experiential tests for this to verify my logic. It will become obvious why one person cannot perform these tests for everyone else, and the validity of my argument can be ascertained only by each person trying the tests; then I will point out a further difficulty with performing the tests at all.

If philosophy is about the nature of things and not merely a manifestation of the foibles of man's thinking, then it must have evidence to work on. The bulk of my argument will be to get philosophers to recognize a certain kind of evidence as legitimate to begin with. According to Peirce's distinction, this is an argument with little form of argumentation; at least I cannot prove before hand the validity of my argumentation. In an effort to extend critical thinking to areas of experience as general and sometimes as amorphous as the religious, I admittedly sacrifice the precision and ease of verifiability that is inherent in science; but this seems a worthwhile, even necessary venture if we are not to turn the most important parts of life over to undisciplined passion, especially if, in our distaste for undisciplined passion, we deny those parts of experience altogether. Moreover, if it is possible to open atheists and disbelievers to new experience as it is possible to enlighten aesthetic clods (the analogy is not to be taken too pointedly), then the state of theological



reasoning can perhaps be made more precise and easily validated in the course of time.

### Section I. Critical Thinking

One of the characteristics of the intellectual aspect of our experience is that consciousness in that sphere is critical. By this I mean that certain key signs, usually called propositions or theories, are considered hypothetically to be representative of the world in some respect, not just of other conscious signs. And when we consider them hypothetically, I mean that we consciously set some part of our experience away from us as a third term relating the "real us" and the world, and proceed to test it. There are three important issues here: a) what it means to consider part of our experience hypothetically; b) what testing is; c) what true knowledge is, i.e. what it means for a proposition to stand for part of the world in some respect to us.

A) Consciously taking a sign as hypothetical is a good illustration of the thesis maintained in the last chapter that experience both is a part of the self and at the same time can be held away from the self. This is possible due to the fact that we can turn from the world as seen in the proposition and consider the proposition itself in its role as a sign. Not only is the world present to us in the signs but the signs of the world can be present also. However, as was maintained before, the signs can be present as signs only when they are themselves further mediated, i.e. interpreted by signs.

This means that not only can signs be held away hypothetically, but somewhere along the line some signs must be appropriated as part of the



self. For, in the experience of objectifying part of experience and considering it hypothetically, the experience in process is part of the self. It is a part in both of the senses of self that we have distinguished: as the self is a power it is a part governed by the power as interpreter, and as the self is the content of what it does, it is a part of the actual being of the self as interpretant of the objectified experience. I both make the objectification of the proposition so it can be hypothetical, and I am the being making it. The experience of objectification is mine, it is me (or part of me), and it can, by a further objectification, be abstracted from me and considered as a sign of the world.

In the previous chapter I argued for the use of the word "meaning" to be limited to those interpretants I do in fact make, and distinguished this from the program of the pragmatists to make "meaning" mean only those interpretants that stand some sort of test. The purpose in this was to make the present point more clear. Insofar as my experience is a part of my self it is not necessary to distinguish certain of my interpretants as being true, though of course all true signs, determined by tests, are included in my experience as part of myself. In order to put signs to the test, to have an opinion as to their truth or falsity, we must consider them hypothetically, i.e. suspend them from ourselves as signs relating the world to us.

b) The testing of hypotheses is, of course, a key issue, although since it is not the primary subject of our study, it will be treated in a cursory, general, yet I hope, precise way. It is especially general in that I want to fit my argument about God in as a type of test, yet facing the difficulty that it is a different sort of test from what we



ordinarily consider to be typical. This is the point made above, that I am trying to justify the use of reason in religious experience where it is not commonly thought applicable.

Generally stated, we test a proposition by arriving at it by means independent from the occurrence giving rise to its hypothetical consideration, the independent source and path satisfying us. This statement needs unpacking in two places: first, arrival at the proposition from an independent source by an independent path; and second, the satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

1. This theory is similar to Prof. Weiss' in Modes of Being, propositions 1.71:

The meaning of any idea is any other, perceptual or not, as qualified by that conceivable transformation which would convert it into the former.

and 3.25:

A claim to truth is vindicable if a consequence in mind is abstractable from a consequence in nature in a predesignatable way.

The chief differences are that I would substitute true meaning where he has only meaning, and world where he has nature. I allow for other aspects of the world than the physical, as his term implies, and I believe in other contexts he would agree with my position on this.

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First, the doctrine that verification is accomplished by arriving at the proposition by means different from its original suggestion is based a) on the premise that the world of which the proposition is hypothetically true exists independently from the proposition and is either fairly stable or its changes can be predicted, and b) on the hope that our thought is sufficient to make the necessary predictions and logical transformation connecting the proposition originally considered and a direct reference to it at another time and place. That the premise is true is a point that has been urged from the beginning of our discussions; to deny it would be to



deny the possibility of a hypothetically true meaning being true. Our thought could not be true of anything.

That the hope is not a mere hope can be shown by a consideration of the negative side. The only way by which a proposition could ever be proved wrong is by showing that the proper transformations of thought and predictions of outcomes of independent direct reference that should confirm the hypothesis in fact result in a contradiction of the hypothetical proposition. In other words, to know we are wrong, we have to arrive at the hypothesis by independent means with a contradicting result. If we could never know anything to be wrong, it would be a fool's paradise, and under the circumstances there could of course be nothing wrong with that. As a matter of fact we do find ourselves wrong at times and thus we do make the necessary independent processes of verification.

Second, since all the propositions involved in the verification process themselves stand in need of verification, that is, they too can be considered hypothetically, we limit the verification regress at points where we are satisfied with the validity of the propositions. And satisfaction is based upon our funded experience of past verifications analogous to the ones at hand and upon our trust in propositions and methods that have never proved false. Our knowledge is always fallible, as Peirce pointed out, but it need not be fallacious.

Our funded experience gives us satisfactory resting places both for method and for the sources of independent direct reference to the world. Logic is an obvious example of a satisfactory method or path of mental transformations which we do not question in certain fields of application, assuming, of course, that the logic is directed to operating existentially



rather than giving the foundations of mathematics.<sup>2</sup> Other methods of

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2. These need not be distinct, though at the present time they are. Logical systems constructed with an eye first to mathematical application have satisfactory application to a much narrower area of experience than logic aimed at describing a logos of sorts in the world. Weiss is especially good on this point; see Modes, 1.79 - 1.04, 3.15 - 3.36, particularly 3.27 - 3.36.
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thought, not so easily formalized, are also accepted as satisfactory.

The independent sources to which reference is made often determine the degree of complexity of the thought transformations necessary to relate it to the hypothetical proposition. If we want to find out whether we are right in thinking that a book is red, all we have to do is look again. To test whether we are right in thinking that it is going to rain, we have to know what the marks of rain are and then see if they are present now, or wait and see. But if we want to know if a table can be described as a dance of electrons, the mathematics and instruments involved in the test are so complicated as to be beyond the grasp of all but the most expert.

This theory, so close to the pragmatists' position, is to be sharply distinguished from it on the following two points: the doctrine of satisfaction vs. belief, and the locus of proper sources of confirmation. As to the first, their doctrine that inquiry, i.e. verification processes, rests or concludes on belief points out many psychological insights, but it goes too far and smacks of the behavioristic. Although a point of satisfaction can be an undoubted belief, and certainly some are, it nonetheless can be a point at which we rest for merely "practical purposes", leaving it open to further investigation in the future. It seems to me that pointing out the fallibility of all knowledge undermines the strength of their



belief doctrine, and gives purely speculative or "paper" doubt much more real force. That we have no reason now to doubt a point of satisfactory validity does not vitiate the lurking suspicion that we may have reason to do so in the future; while we accept a point as satisfactory now, we are likely not to admit to believing it. The fact that our very logic is under criticism and that our notions of perception and how to do it are being revised at the present time only make the case stronger.

As to the second, there is no a priori reason why the source from which the hypothetical proposition is tested need be practical effects, either conceived as Peirce would have it or perceived as James would.<sup>3</sup> As Weiss

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3. Peirce's maxim, quoted on p. 14 above refers to testable but not necessarily tested meaning, and he would make further steps to validate the conceived practical effects. My criticism still holds, however.

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has pointed out,<sup>4</sup> there are purposes for which it is satisfactory to test

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4. Modes, p. 65.

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a proposition by reference to theory, and sometimes conceptual differences are more important than empirical. Ultimately, however, I believe that even theories and distinctions of mere conceptual importance must be brought to the test of experience in some way, for it is only in experience that the world appears as that to which all true propositions refer. Outside of experience the self/world distinction is radically transformed. It is to be remembered that I take the world to be anything for which our conscious signs can stand, rightly or wrongly, and this includes many things such as selves, whose reality is not descriptively exhausted in their empirical



descriptions. The upshot of this is that a proposition might not properly be tested by direct empirical methods but by reference to a theory which in turn is tested as a whole.

c) The third factor we consider in critical thinking is the ontological set-up implied by what has been said, that is, what the relation of world, self, and experience implicit in critical thinking is. When we are right in interpreting our experience to stand in such and such a way for the world, we as selves are rightly related to the world in the intellectual aspect of that relation. This proposition is crucial to the problem of truth.

To say that in our intellectual relation to the world rightness and wrongness, that is, truth and falsity, apply between self and world instead of experience and world is a formulation that easily copes with general instances, though it has more trouble with particular cases. However, the general is more fundamental than the particular here. We normally speak of proposition, a certain sort of conscious experience, as being true of the world; nonetheless, the proposition is not a disembodied idea irrelevant to any person, but is a thing whose reality comes in significant measure from the very fact that it is had by a self. A conscious sign is not only influenced by its relation to other conscious signs, but also by its relations to other parts of the self. To make the case stronger, most of the paths of verification by which we can call a sign true involve non-conscious parts of the self - senses, action, etc. Even though in our conscious intellectual criticism we do abstract and hold off hypotheses as being independent from us, the experience in which this is done is ours and we are in it.

Truth, then, is a dyadic relation between self and world made possible



by the self's capacity to treat part of its being as a third term, creating a triadic relation. This is to say that truth is part of an existential relation, that is, a dyad with secondness, but that it depends on there also being a triadic relation between self and world. If we could separate off experience from the self that has it, truth could be a triadic relation, experience being true of a world for a self; this is in fact what we do most of the time. But the fact that experience belongs to and helps constitute the self reasserts itself with secondness over against the world; a self is in his experience, and it is only because of this that experience can occur, much less be tested. The foundation of the triadic relation is a dyadic one, where one pole has the capacity to create a dyad within itself which makes a triad with the world; in the process of testing the resulting triad, the dyad within the self must be asserted to hold propositions hypothetically and then denied to bring the proposition into relation to the world instead of the self; the proposition can be related to the world in a testable manner only by embodying it in a self that is in an organic dyadic relation to the world.

An important outcome of this consideration is that a new point of view is required when speaking of truth as holding between the self, including its experience, and the world. Call it the human point of view from which we see our knowledge as fallible and truth as applying to propositions in conscious experience as signs of the world. It is from this standpoint that most of our reflection goes on, and only from this standpoint can we detect truth or falsity by tests, even though they are fallible; all judgments of validity here are made with reference to time, with reference to criticism from the future. However, as fallible knowledge can only be



checked by embodying it in a self that is dyadically related to the world, where the test consists in the self acting in ways directed by thought and receiving reactions from the world with secondness that either confirm or contradict the triad's expectations, the self, constituted according to the directions of experience, is related as a whole to the world either rightly or wrongly. We can detect the truth or falsity of the self's stance toward the world by its implications within our fallible knowledge, but the validity of that stance is more than just an object of even the best and final opinion. The truth of the relation between self and world can be judged absolutely only from an eternal or divine standpoint. We cannot make such a judgment, but we do know that the nature of things as containing self-world relations allows for such to be done if only there is an eternal or divine judge. Not only on the very general and basic level of one's Weltanschauung is it possible to think of one's whole self related in a true or false way to the world, but also on more particular relations to small parts of the world; except in ethics, we get along rather well without much consideration of eternal judgment. But it is possible, and as the Existentialists and crisis theologians have pointed out, there are crucial times when we act as if "authenticity" were important. This is not yet, of course, to prove that eternal judgments are made.

One word need be said about the intellectual aspect of the relation of self to world. Truth, we have seen, is dependent upon an existential relation between self and world, and the intellectual aspect of this relation is not the only important aspect. The moral aspect of the self's relation to the world, to particular parts or to the world as a whole is of obvious significance. As with the intellectual aspect, we overstep



the limits of our fallible capacities of moral reasoning if we go beyond judgment of consequences and make eternal judgments; hopefully, the ideal standard for eternal, divine, moral judgment can be made known to us, else we are caught within an inescapable relativism. But as of yet we have not shown what such a standard would be or how we could know it; many people think both tasks impossible and are content with relativism.

It is interesting to note that since the intellectual and the moral are both aspects of the same existential relation of self to world, there is a normative character to both, granted that we should be good and should know the truth. Whether or not that last assumption is true depends on whether real eternal, divine judgments are made.

### Section Two

Josiah Royce, posing the problem for his Gifford Lectures, notes that ordinary thinking distinguishes sharply between the internal meaning of an idea, its qualitative character, and the external meaning, its referential character. This is the difference between the sheer essence of an idea and its correspondence to, indication of or standing for an existent fact. And the problem of truth, says Royce, is commonly thought to be that of ascertaining the external meaning, whether a fact corresponds to an idea. Moreover, "no study of the inner structure of ideas, of their conscious conformity to their internal purpose, can so far promise to throw any direct light upon their success in fulfilling their external purpose".<sup>5</sup> The problem,

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5. Josiah Royce, The World and the Individual, "First Series" (N. Y., 1959, Dover), p. 30.

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however, is not all external. "...no idea is true or false except with



reference to the object that this very idea first means to select as its own object." The problem of verification turns first upon some consideration of the inner meaning of an idea. Royce goes on:

And apart from such conscious selection, apart from such ideal predetermination of the object on the part of the idea, apart from such free voluntary submission of the idea to its self-imposed task, the object itself, the fact world, in its independence, can do nothing either to confirm or refute the idea.<sup>6</sup>

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6. Op. cit., p. 31 f.

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The solution Royce ultimately offers is the idealistic one. The internal meaning of an idea is extended as a purpose to include the external meaning; since the external meaning is defined with Being as one term, the fact, the problem of being and knowledge are bound together. "To be means simply to express, to embody the complete internal meaning of a certain absolute system of ideas, - a system, moreover, which is genuinely implied in the true meaning or purpose of every finite idea, however fragmentary."<sup>7</sup>

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7. Op. cit., p. 36.

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He goes on, discussing purpose: "Our ideas now imperfectly embody our will. And the real world is just our whole will embodied."<sup>8</sup>

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8. Op. cit., p. 37.

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My own solution differs from Royce's, in the beginning at least, for many reasons, the elaboration of which would require a lengthy critical discussion of his system. Let it be said simply that I prefer to give the doctrine of ideas its first formulation in a more naturalistic sphere, as



grounded in a discussion of consciousness as a part of the self and with reference to men as organisms in a world, but with special non-mechanistic capacities. To be sure, my discussion of conscious signs is a far cry from the biologism of Dewey, but it is not on the other hand, derived <sup>first</sup> from metaphysical speculation. The locus I choose for the problem reflects my opinion as to what the experience is that we explain by metaphysics; both Royce and Dewey also start from experience, they say, and I suppose the only way to find which of us is right is by seeing, in the end, which does the best descriptive job. My differences from Royce, however, are not as great as they seem at first sight; especially in the treatment of purpose, though I do not push it as far as he does, we come together in solving the problem of the selectivity of ideas.

How can we phrase Royce's problem in our own terms? The external meaning is simply translated into the reference of conscious signs to objects in the world, a sign has external meaning when it stands for something in the world, not just for another conscious sign. Royce's internal meaning, likewise, corresponds to the sign functioning within consciousness as such, but it is a little harder to get Royce's meaning out of these terms. In the first place, the internal meaning of an idea is not to be limited to the inside of the bit of consciousness occupying one atomic moment, excluding the actualizing interpretant. Royce's example of the internal meaning of an idea is a musical melody, indicating that they take time. For us, the internal meaning of an idea could be a series of atomic moments running for an indefinite extent of time within the limitation that the object of every sign in the series must be another conscious sign. Now there is nothing to say that a sign need have only one possible object.



By abstracting a sign from its process we can make it stand for anything, truly, falsely, or irrelevantly. Moreover, we can make an idea, such as a melody, stand for a real object, a sound, in the world by thinking about it in that way. But every sign, as it is present in thought and is interpreted, is interpreted as standing for just one object, an object perhaps indefinite or vague, but a singular object nonetheless. Hence, when a single unified idea is in mind, the series of atomic interpretations of which it is composed must have only conscious signs for objects; the exception to this could be the first sign if it is a percept, in which case the idea would have at least some external reference, though that may be what we would call "associative"; the idea would be concluded, or at least broken, at the point where an interpretant took a sign to stand for the whole series and in turn was interpreted. The fact that we can interpret a sign of the whole series lets us call the whole thing a unified idea.

The second problem in translating Royce's notion of internal meaning into the terminology we have set up gives rise to an important point we have not had occasion to discuss before; whether single signs have an internally complex nature apart from their connections in a sign function. Now it might be maintained that the smallest unit of signs could be internally simple, say a single shade of red, on the grounds that to speak of a single sign is an unreal abstraction. A sign is always in time, the argument would run, and this means that it has always another sign as interpretant; an atomic moment cannot be actually divided. In this way, when we think of a complex tissue of things, either of a complex environment or of an idea heavily charged with complex connotations, we would really be playing our



interpretative faculty over a complex object, simple point by simple point; and this complex object would never itself be in consciousness totum simul in all its complexity. This position need not maintain that the world as object is in itself composed of simples, only that the signs by which we see it are simple; and even the signs are not simple in the Humean sense since they only exist in sign functions and thus have that much connective tissue.

Against this position, admitting all it says about the unreality of abstracting from the process of an atomic moment, I still argue that signs have an internal complexity over and above the richness of qualities brought out by the plethora of atomic moments contained in even the shortest idea that can be isolated by the interpretants we have. First, there is no a priori reason to suppose that they are simple. To be sure, our interpretants can focus sharply on certain features, but by the same token, they may not focus sharply; the only way you can account for a vague interpretation of a conscious sign is by admitting that the sign has unarticulated complexity. The complexity can be had as a whole without being analyzed into its components by further interpretants. Second, percepts, for instance, are very definitely this way. We feel not only their secondness but also their quality, and if that quality can be interpreted as several qualities, those qualities must be complexly contained in the percept. This is not to say that there cannot be several percepts, individually interpreted, however; in fact, for there to be several interpretations, the percepts must be repeated, according to the rule that one process of interpretation has at the time only one object. But a complex percept might stand as object for several interpretations if single qualities



function as signs in the different interpretations. Third, a sign that is an interpretant must be qualitatively complex, for by definition it includes both a sign and its object related within it. Otherwise there is no thirdness in the interpretation.

Finally we have arrived at a point where we can begin solving Royce's problem as to how the inner meaning of an idea selects the outer object to which it is related by external meaning.

This is a problem for us only in critical thinking. In that large portion of our conscious life that is not critical, it is the "external" object that chooses our ideas by the dyadic coerciveness it exerts on the composition of our percepts. The interpretations of the percept follow uncritically, governed by whatever laws of association and other factors of non-conscious experience that happen to be operative. In critical thinking, however, the direction is reversed, for what we are testing is the fitness of the signs to interpret the "external" object. The fact that this is an issue only in critical thinking goes to justify my departure from Royce as to how to couch the problem. He tends to conceive of the problems of knowledge to be the only important problems of experience, his involvement of other spheres in ideas by purpose notwithstanding.

I need re-emphasize two things here. First, the object need not be limited to some link in the dyadic chain that gave rise to a percept, although the testing will be accomplished by such chains or their equivalents; the object is that for which the conscious sign is purported to stand, and may be as non-empirical as another self; a conscious sign can be interpreted as standing for a self through the mediation of empirical marks of the self. Secondly, the routes by which the proposition to be



tested is formed may be abstract and extend for some time through the mazes of conscious thought without reference to the object; a proposition of sophisticated construction can be tested, however, by whatever transformations of thought are necessary to relate it to a sign with direct reference to its object at a crucial point.



On to the problem. A major characteristic of critical thinking is that it assigns to our thoughts contexts of relevancy. To ask whether a proposition is true of some part of the world, is to ask whether it is true in some particular respect. This is the same point that holds for all sign functions: a sign stands for its object in a certain respect as noted by an interpretant. The only difference in critical thinking is that the order of priority is reversed. Given the interpretant, the problem is to see if the sign does in fact stand for the object in that respect.

The respect is crucial for the context, since it determines what terms are relevant for investigation within the context. For instance, if two men, A and B are talking together, and A asks, pointing to a book, "What is that?", B might answer, "That's Dickens' Copperfield". A could then reply, "Oh, I didn't mean that. I meant what color is it. Do you think it's red?" Now B's answer was not wrong; it was simply irrelevant in the context of A's question. In that context, there could be no test, strictly speaking, of the truth or falsity of B's answer. So we have one added qualification to critical thinking. Of all the possible terms that could come to mind during a test, and all the possible tools to work with, the relevant ones are selected in some way by the context of the issue.

I illustrated this point by an example involving two persons in dialogue, but the significance of contexts for the ordering of terms in critical thinking applies equally for an individual's thought. In fact, we often describe a process of critical thinking as a dialogue with oneself, on the one hand posing hypotheses and on the other answering. To put this personal dialogue in more precise terms, on the one hand we abstract our experience from us and ask Is it true?, and on the other we re-appropriate



it in answer. In actual thinking, however, the movement from one to the other is so unclear, vacillating and subtle that we can reconstruct it as a dialogue only afterwards.

How is it that the respect in which a sign stands for an object determines what terms are relevant in the context of determining the sign's validity? By "terms" I mean all those things of which we take account, and "relevant" terms are those we should take account of in a certain context; terms are not only ideas in logical processes, but also tools in the investigation, relevant factors of the setting or environment, or what have you. Given a sign seen as standing for an object and the problem of determining whether it truly represents the object, the respect in which the sign does its representing determines the relevant terms in the investigation by eliminating those that pertain to the object in other respects and those that pertain to the sign in respects other than standing for that object. Thus when A wondered whether B agreed with him as to the color of the book, the red he had in mind stood for the book in respect to its color, not as to its author, title, location, publisher, etc. Nor was the fact that red is to be found in stoplights relevant either, nor its emotional impact on the persons.

Now the context can be made less simple if the means of verification involves other contexts. Disregarding distortions in different perspectives and problems of communication, A could verify his sign merely by asking B, who had also seen the book. But if the book were not present, for instance, A might have to identify it for B by the author and title. And if B had never seen the book, perhaps he might know that all of Dickens' works are published with red covers, or perhaps a friend had described the appearance



of the book to him as "the brilliant aspect of a stoplight". And so, the independent means of verification might involve transformations through many contexts, though the principle in each is the same.

I suspect that many heated debates get hung up over the problem of contexts without realizing it. Passionate denials on one side of what the other side passionately affirms, and on the same evidence, often stem from the fact that the sides judge from different contexts; and the other side's affirmation of what from one's own side is irrelevant is usually thought to be false, since it does not answer the question one thinks is being asked. This situation becomes especially acute if one side denies the legitimacy of the other's context while only thinking that he is denying the other's answer. Take two cases:

People who fancy themselves tough-minded scientific types often eschew, with all the righteous indignation connoted by that word, the attempt to critically determine whether a situation is "tragic" or not. They either say that tragedy is a meaningless notion altogether, or that it is such a subjective thing that it is only a personal response, that the situation itself contains no tragedy, that at any rate it is impossible to talk about critically. What they usually have in mind is that our interpretant "tragedy" must stand for the situation in respect to some one separable, visible part of it, a part which we perceive with some sort of sense impression. And they deny the legitimacy of any context that is not easily testable by sense impressions. What they do not understand is that tragedy does not purport to stand for a situation in the respect of a sensible part, but is what Dewey called a "pervasive quality"; it is not



impossible, however, to transform elements of tragedy into elements of perception by round-about ways and to test these. The difficulty lies in that it is more difficult to test "tragedy" than "red". It is a fallacy, nonetheless, to suppose that because a thing is not easily testable it either has no legitimate context or fits falsely into one that is easily tested. There may be an important purpose for finding whether a situation is tragic, and the purpose will justify the effort. Where these people who deny non-sensible qualities run into most embarrassment is when they laugh at a funny joke. What is there to laugh at?

A second case is more to the present point. Many people think the interpretant "God" to be non-sense because they suppose it to stand for the world in a respect it does not. This is not to say we cannot make certain transformations of thought to test "God" as an interpretant in experience, but it does say that a simple-minded approach will run aground in trying to "see" God. It is precisely the purpose of this paper to specify the context in which God has meaning and in which our doctrines about him can be tested.

The examples we have seen so far illustrating the nature and significance of contexts in critical thought have all raised the question of the place of purpose in the scheme of things. If we look at a context as an accomplished fact, something first set up by inquiry and into which it then steps to proceed, we can describe it adequately in terms of the respect in which the sign stands for its object. But such contexts are only found in text books. Inquiry is an affair of fleshy significance. The process of creating and sustaining a context for actual inquiry is accomplished by purpose. Although the sign, object and interpretant must be given, the context is not brought about as something relevant in the life of a thinker until he has a purpose



entailing it. With A and B and their book, it was A's purpose that brought about the context. Now what does all this mean?

Let me first distinguish between a statically structured context and a vitally structured one. The static context is the wholly determinate one that we see, when looking back upon it, <sup>and</sup> is defined by the respect in which a sign stands for its object. Being wholly determinate, statically structured contexts are easily formalized, as they are done in formal inquiry. Vital contexts are those that are being brought into play, and their striking characteristic is the purpose that determines which sign is to be taken as standing for which object and in which respect. All static contexts, if not ideal but actual, once were structured by purposes; and all vital contexts can be analyzed as static ones.

In the actual process of critical thinking it is the purpose in mind that structures the context of thought in the following way. The purpose selects from the plethora of signs in past experience those that are relevant for the fulfilling of the purpose. It does so by involving the interpretant inside the purpose, and as we have seen above, the context structured by the respect in which the sign stands for the object can be gotten from the interpretant. The problem now is to see how the interpretant is involved in the purpose, which requires an examination of purpose as such.

In the very first section of this paper I spoke of the power of the self as "intending an ideal", and have made little mention of that pretentious sounding doctrine since. I take it to be a principle of the greatest metaphysical generality, applicable to all integrated, self sustaining actual entities; this is not the place to justify such a



generalization, although I shall argue for purpose as a special case of it, and hope that this limited discussion will throw whatever light is necessary upon the general principle. A conscious purpose is a conscious intending of an ideal, where signs in consciousness articulate the power of intending, which, in the context of conscious experience, can be called will without too much straining of terms. To narrow the field even further, a critical purpose is a will for truth, it is the power of the self operating in consciousness, intending the ideal of having truth - if we detach our experience from us; of being true - insofar as we are in our experience.

The two basic terms that articulate the purpose in critical thinking are the interpretant and the ideal. In addition are all those terms involved in moving from the interpretant to the ideal. We shall take these two basic terms one at a time. The interpretant gives the basic locus of the purpose. If, for example, our purpose is to know truly what color a book is, it is the interpretant "the book is red colored" that sets up the problem, and this brings up the sign "red" and object "book" as relevant terms in a relevant context. The problem is only complicated, not changed in principle, if we do not first have a hypothesis to test as to what color the book is, i.e. if we have not yet seen the book. In this case the interpretant would be derived from other knowledge that the book must have some color which in turn makes us look for a color to test as a sign for it. The respect in which the hypothetical sign stands for the object seen by the interpretant, is still the same, and determines the context if the interpretant is made part of the purpose.

As to the ideal, most often it is vague or even not acknowledged. We often do not quite understand for what purposes we do things, though we



feel the purposes to be justified. The situation with critical purposes, however, is somewhat different. The ideal is to have true knowledge about the object in the interpretation in respect to the sign, and this ideal is so general that we are hardly conscious of it as being an ideal. Nonetheless the having of truth or the state of truth is that which is intended by a critical purpose; that the truth is fallible does not vitiate the force of the purpose.

The crucial issue is whether the justification of the purpose is contained in its accomplishment, or whether a purpose necessarily makes reference beyond itself to something not contained in the context it defines. There is opinion on both sides. Some say, with reference to critical purposes that having the truth is an end in itself, and others maintain that every purpose of verification is always for something else, some other practical or conceptual purpose. Certainly there is introspective evidence for both sides. The pragmatists have long and loudly declared that critical thought is for the purpose of solving problems of a practical nature. Here the purpose of having truth is justified by the further purpose of putting that truth to work. On the other hand stands the evidence of idle curiosity, described so eloquently by Peirce in his "Neglected Argument" as Musement. And this issue sometimes is a matter of extreme concern. The instrumentalists are apt to go so far as to deny consciousness altogether to mental activity that is not for some further, nonconscious purpose. On the other side, there are many academic humanists that vehemently urge knowledge for knowledge's sake. How are we to resolve the issue?

The question is, What constitutes a justification of a critical purpose? To justify a purpose is to interpret the purpose as being justified. This



adds little to our understanding of justification except to clarify the problem; nonetheless it permits us to eliminate one alternative. If the purpose is an object which must be interpreted by some sort of sign of justification, then we necessarily move out of the context of the fulfilled purpose. In other words, true knowledge of the color of the book does not in itself justify the purpose of establishing that knowledge. We must look for justification outside the context defined by the purpose. But now what are signs of justification? I see no reason why there should be just one kind of justification. For instance, as the instrumentalists point out, a critical purpose is justified if it results in something for further use, and there can be many ways in which a purpose can be justified by further purposes that stand outside the context defined by the purpose. There is nothing wrong with this as long as there are always more external contexts to which we can look.

But what about the special case of those who plunk for idle curiosity, truth for truth's sake? The ideal to which their critical purposes intend is not to be in a state better able to handle another problem, but merely to be in a state of truth, to have truth. This requires that truth itself be a justified ideal, and it is not so hard to see this when we remember that having truth is being correctly related to the world according to the intellectual aspect of that relation. And since the feeling in us is strong that we should know the truth, a feeling that carries beyond instrumental situations, and although the latter may account for how we came to feel that way, I think it not a bad plan for metaphysics to at least make the attempt to explain the nature of things with a normative relation between



self and world. The crucial test for such a scheme of things comes in the experience of a judgment on that relation, and that judgment must be an eternal one, made from outside the self-world relation. If it were not, the justification of the judgment would be infinitely postponed within the fallible vision of human understanding.

To summarize then, a purpose defines a context in which the terms relevant for verification are determined by the respect in which the sign stands for its object as seen by the interpretant involved in the purpose. The purpose, however, aims us beyond the context it defines; it can be interpreted as justified only by some external sign of justification. The justification can either be a further purpose or the state as having of truth itself; the former works only so long as the supply of external contexts is unlimited, and the latter only if truth is a justified ideal, meaning that the relation of self to world called truth is a normative one.

And to answer Royce's question how an idea selects its object, we say that our purposes define the context in which idea (sign) and object are related. If our purpose is to establish truth, both sign and "external fact" are involved. A conscious purpose entails both idea and being. Since it is undeniable that we do have purposes, the only task left, which can be left to another time and place, is to explain how we have them.

### Section III. The Ultimate Context

We have now come to the point where we can raise the question as to the relation of God to our experience, and we have prepared for raising it in connection with the intellectual aspect of experience. Is there an ultimate context in our experience?



An ultimate context would be one in which all contexts are contained, one in terms of which nothing is irrelevant. In such a context our experience would relate the world as a whole to us as a whole, or to put it in terms of our previous description of contexts, our experience stands for the world in every respect, interpreted so by us. My argument will proceed as follows:

1. Metaphysics is critical thinking on the level of the ultimate context.

There are certain crises that occur in experience wherein the world as a whole is taken as object and wherein we, as whole selves, interpret the experience of it.

There are certain factors ingredient in all of our experience that indicate a basic attitude toward the world.

The ultimate context has real being in our experience on intellectual level, for crucial moments, and in a pervasive way.

2. The critical verification of our experience in the ultimate context is always fallible, to be accomplished only within more experience. But by definition the ultimate context includes the future experience wherein we verify it. Verification, therefore, calls in the eternal standpoint from which man is seen as including his experience. We take our experience in the ultimate context to be true or false only from the divine standpoint which we never achieve, though we feel its presence. It necessitates a normative ontological principle underlying the relation of self to world as the ground of being and which, since it can be distorted and thwarted, is also the goal of being.
3. The purposes by which the ultimate context is brought into experience all point beyond that ultimate context for justification.



But they can only be justified by some factor in experience.

God, the justifier of the ultimate context, must at once totally transcend that context and, if he is to indicate his judgment of its justification, must appear within it.

I thought it good to spell out this argument in advance so that its lines would be clear, since the succeeding chapter will explicitly depend upon it.

1. While the ultimate context is abstractly conceivable as the all-inclusive context, this does not prove that it counts in our experience in a more concrete way. The following three forms are not the only such occurrences of it in experience, but they serve both to establish it as a concrete phenomenon and also to explain in more detail the guises it has.

Held in its purely intellectual aspect, the ultimate context can be viewed as the stamping ground for metaphysicians. Metaphysics is generally conceded to be the one study where nothing is left out, wherein nothing is irrelevant. This does not mean that everything is studied metaphysically, but that everything is put in its proper context and all contexts are related. In other words, it is the study of all things in their ultimacy, as they are related in and to the ultimate context.

It is a sure sign that philosophy is hedging in its duty to do metaphysics when it claims some things are philosophically meaningless or irrelevant since this means that it is working on a less than ultimate context. And if it is claimed that things like normative ethics, religion and art are meaningful in other contexts, but because these are fraught with emotion and are not easily testable by some myopic criterion whose virtue is precision and whose vice is that it can handle nothing that we actually find in experience, and hence are not subject to critical philosophy,



then this is surely desertion of the field in the face of the enemy. It is nothing less than unrealistic to say that there are areas of experience over which we exercise no critical control, at least in our own response. Our reason, in some form or other, is present in all we do, and this can be criticized. The task is to understand the nature of the reason that can cope with the ultimate context.

Although metaphysics never has the whole of the ultimate context in mind at once, since it can fulfill its obligations to make everything relevant by explaining parts of the ultimate context in terms relatable to the other parts, metaphysics, nonetheless, seeks an ultimate category or principle applicable to the whole context. This primary principle of "logos" is the ultimate category of explanation and is the key to the ultimate context. This means on the one hand that it explains in what respect our experience relates the world as a whole to us, and on the other how we, including our experience are to be related to the world.

There are certain crises that call into question our relation to the world as a whole. I have in mind Heidegger's attitude toward death, Jaspers' Grenzsituationen, or Tillich's <sup>[boundary situations]</sup> critical stress periods as war or economic depression. Professor John E. Smith maintains that those times in the cycle of human life that we see fit to celebrate - birth, puberty, entrance into an adult occupation, marriage and death - are times when one's relation to the world at large is more important than his relation to some particular part of it.

What is common to all these is that some seemingly particular and partial part of the world figures in our experience as a symbol for the whole. When I say "figures as a symbol for the whole" I mean that the



response, the full interpretation we give it is appropriate to the whole world as object, not just this part. Death, for instance, in one context is merely the cessation of life. Yet in the context where we look to death as the end of our seemingly infinite chances to do better, our response to it is indicative, i.e., a sign, of our response to life as a whole. As another example, one of Jaspers' border situations, the collapse of one's source of stability and identification, a loved one, a job, etc., forces one to recast the meaning of his entire world. Here again, the attitude toward the event goes beyond the event itself and is, in fact, one's attitude toward the world as a whole; and the quality in the event that is the same as a pervasive quality in the world, or the quality in one's response to the event that is the same for one's response to the world at large is what unifies or stands for the world. We usually speak of such qualities as "meanings".

Tillich, also, is right in pointing to war as an event that calls into question the ultimate context. The shock and disruption of war reorients one's attitude toward everything. And when this shock is nationwide the reorientation must take place in an even greater anarchy of still-points. The fixed attitude one has slowly developed toward the world is broken and the world itself is faced in need of reinterpretation as a whole. Marriage, one of Smith's times of celebration, is yet another point where the unity of one's world can be called into question, either to be reinforced or reoriented, and though marriage in our society at least is not always taken with much seriousness and far reaching import, the fact that it sometimes is and always can be accounts for its celebratory character. The world is taken differently when its interpreter does his interpreting as one of a



couple as well as an individual.

Let me fix this point with one more example. When in the career of a student he reaches his senior year, it strikes him with arresting force that he has come to the end of what seemed before an endless number of possibilities to do better later. Before, his failings did not really count since his true identity was the student of the future. But in that last lame-duck semester, when final judgment is already passed upon his academic career by graduate schools and business corporations, those first seven semesters appear as the undeniable and irrevocable specter of his identity. This, I suppose, is a mild touch of the feeling he shall later have toward death. And this final ultimate identity he sees is the mirror of his world as a whole.

This brings up one last consideration here. The identity of the self has special significance in the ultimate context. It is the self that is interpreter and interpretant of his experience, and in the ultimate context the identity of the self is fixed in relation to the world as a whole, for ultimately, one is thoroughly in his experience. In the context outside of which there is no other, one's experience cannot be held away hypothetically, but defines absolutely his relation to the world. And whether or not anyone or anything judges that ultimate relation, he knows it stands under judgment. This is the meaning and power behind the old doctrine of the day of last judgment, the day of Wrath, the day of no more second chances.

These times of crisis indicate that a self has a basic orientation



toward his world and that this orientation crops up as a crucial factor at various periods. Call it a basic attitude, if you will, a Weltanschauung, it is the unified style with which one "takes" or interprets his experience to give him his world.

In technical terms this basic attitude stems from the fact that each individual experience is interpreted by the system of past experiences or signs, and receives its peculiar stamp from certain crucial interpretations that are made. One's Weltanschauung can be a basic trust or distrust, a confidence or insecurity, hopeful or despairing. The world can appear fearful, joyful, pleasant, to be endured, dangerous, safe, something to be enjoyed, something to be taken by storm. In those people we know well, perhaps even in ourselves, we see the unique attitude that defines the style with which they do things. This basic attitude, as much as anything, defines the individuality of people's characters. Whether or not the crucial interpretations that determine these attitudes are recognized - and as psychologists tell us most of them are made at an age too early to remember - they are interpretations that take some experience as symbolic of the whole world, and our attitude in that interpretation becomes our basic Weltanschauung, to be changed only by other ultimate interpretations.

As these basic attitudes define our relation to the world as a whole, they define the ultimate context for us. And as our ultimate relation to the world stands under judgment, so do they.

These considerations establish the function of the ultimate context in our experience on intellectual, existential and pervasive levels. Needless to say, these all affect one another. As the "beatnik" type, the



"Existentialist" type and the "analytic philosopher" type show, one's metaphysics affects his basic attitudes. Likewise, one's basic attitude is apt to color and distort his intellectual view of reality; sometimes it is hard to tell in which direction the causal relation runs. And it is the experience of all of us that both our intellectual view and our more submerged attitudes affect our reactions in time of crisis.

2. When we raise the question as to the validity of our experience in the ultimate context, that is, of our relation to the world, we do not ask whether there is such experience or relation, but whether the one we are considering is the right one. This critical question can be raised not only of our metaphysics but of our actual attitudes and responses to crises insofar as they have an intellectual aspect.

To make criticism within the ultimate context entails, of course, two factors: holding some experience hypothetically and then testing it. Metaphysics offers no difficulty to the first side, since it is framed in the language of hypothetical propositions. Basic attitudes are harder to consider clearly as hypotheses for the simple reason that they are harder to objectify. It is usually only in crises where negations and forceful alternatives call those attitudes into question that they appear with any objectivity, though this is not to say that an introspective person cannot objectify them without the Sturm und Drang. As a matter of fact, however, we usually do not call our actual basic attitudes into question unless we are forced to.

Performing tests on the ultimate context offers its own problems. In practice, we test our metaphysics part by part, arriving at its propositions



by as many paths as possible, being now circumspect, now self reflexive. Because we carry it with us as a potential interpretant of experience, it gets continually remolded and verified. But as for our attitudes, the only critical tests we can give them are the crucial times of stress where they are shattered and proved inadequate. Basic attitudes are not structured along lines that see potentialities unrealized in experience, as metaphysics is, and so it includes nothing more than the experience we actually have. Hence a test is always a re-shaping of the attitude itself, and not merely an independent test performed on an objective hypothesis.

However, to say that something is ultimate is to say that there is nothing left over of its kind. The ultimate context of experience is inclusive of all experience. It is therefore impossible for us to genuinely put it to the test of critical thinking, for there is no route independent of the ultimate context itself, and no independent object.

The human way to solve this dilemma is to push verification to the future and say that in the future we get out of the context. Practically, this is all we can do, and within the limits of our fallible knowledge is not a bad place to be at all. But what the problem really requires is a spectator view of the context. The fallible verification theory is based on the premise that there is a unified continuous self to whom one part of the world is present at one time, and another part, or the same part transformed, present at another time so that the self can connect the two and check them. But for the ultimate context this is precisely what cannot be done, since our interpretation of the world as a whole is called into question. And when we consider the problem in terms of experience as a



part of the self, the ultimate context is the final and completely inclusive determination of the dyadic relation between self and world, determined by the former's added capacity for triadic relations. The only independent source against which this can be tested is an ideal of the proper normative relation. According to our fallible natures, this we cannot do. Metaphysics is resigned to this, but as indicated by the examples of crises cited above where the critical question of basic attitudes is raised, there are times when a fallible temporalized answer to the question will not do. These are the times when the future does not count, when judgment is cast upon the wholly determined context and the judgment of the future is irrelevant, when one reaches the last semester. These are times when the only relevant judgment is that which escapes the ultimate context altogether.

Such a judgment can only be made from the context of the eternal. From the eternal standpoint the ultimate context itself, including man and his world, is the thing tested, and it is tested against the ideal. I am not yet saying that such a judgment is made, or that it is even possible. But what would it be like? In the eternal context, God would be the judge, the interpreter. The actual ultimate context of man and his world, as it is determined by man is the sign. The ideal of the relation, the logos, is the <sup>the relation</sup> object of, ~~and~~ against which it is interpreted. The world, man and his world, are not airy ideas in God's mind, as conscious signs of our world are in ours, but they are real and solid, composed of genuine dyadic and triadic relations. This is not idealism in the bad sense of the term, though it may not be far from what the idealists had in mind. To carry the analogy of God the experience any further would be to stretch it, and indulge in metaphysical speculations I am not prepared to test in our



experience (though this is not to say that there is no context in which those speculations are not important).

What can we conclude so far? Not assuming that any judgment is made from an eternal standpoint, we at least know that we sometimes experience the need of such a judgment, we know that there is a determinate ultimate context. Further, if such a judgment is made, it is done in terms of an ideal logos. And if there is such a logos, as the foundation upon which the world including ourselves is built, it is the ground of our being; but we can thwart this normative ground - that we do is seen in the diversity of compositions of the ultimate contexts in the course of our own lives; so *insofar as it is* as the ideal relation to the world, *which* we ought to fulfill, it is the goal of our being. Finally, if such a divine judgment is made known to us, then the logos must be made known.

3. One more dimension must be added to our problem before we go about testing its nature and solution. If we bring up the ultimate context as a live factor in our experience, we do so by an ultimate purpose. We said in the previous section that a context was brought into our experience and defined therein by a purpose, and we discussed critical purposes in general. It is the ultimate purpose that in the same way makes the ultimate context a crucial thing.

How can we describe the ultimate purpose? It is by definition not like anything else and it goes beyond any purpose contained within the ultimate context. Just the abstract limitations on the concept of ultimate purpose have enormous consequences. The ultimate purpose projects beyond



anything to be contained in the ultimate context it defines to an end not possible in the context of fallible experience. The purpose of metaphysics is to know truth in its most complete form. But Why? Why should we be true? The pragmatic partial hypothetical truths of experience let us "get along" there. But the answer to the question why be true is not the sort of thing experience can tell us. Since truth is a relation between self and world, it can itself only be justified by a normative character seen in that relation and justified from without. And the purpose defining the ultimate context appearing in existential situations is even more evidently the intending of an ideal seen only from outside the ultimate context.

Man has an ultimate purpose when he projects himself out of the human standpoint to an eternal one, and judges the ultimate context wherein his experience relates him to the world. But man can never make that judgment because he can never leave the human point of view. To make the judgment he would have to see himself against the ideal logos.

But what then can justify such a purpose? The ideal intended must be there and must itself be justified, that is, established as the proper ultimate goal of man in the eternal context. Here is the paradox. On the one hand, in order to establish the ultimate goal of man, God must be wholly transcendent to his world, else he appears as a mere part of the ultimate context. Even if he appears, as we are now making him appear, as the justifier of the ultimate goal of man, even though we say he is totally transcendent of our experience, he is nonetheless an item of knowledge, and because all of our knowledge is open to doubt, can be doubted; if he can be doubted, he cannot justify our ultimate goal. On the other hand, if he is to justify our goal and make it known to us, he must appear within



experience. He must make known the nature of the goal and give us means to judge from outside the human context. If he is totally transcendent, he is irrelevant and his judgment makes no difference. To be relevant he must be within our ultimate context, and be known fallibly and doubtedly by us.

How are we to resolve this paradox? How are we to give our knowledge of God the experiential verification it needs to stand as critically approved? *In this chapter we have seen*  
~~This chapter has shown~~ how God can be related to experience in certain ways, *have* and hopefully ~~has~~ done so in terms that one can use to interpret his own experience. The following chapter will lay this out more, giving theological answers to some of the questions raised and discussing how they can be treated.



### Chapter Three. Natural Theology

Discussing critical thinking and experience we hit upon a paradox that not only can be talked about but which also occurs as an actual existential problem. The paradox is that God must stand completely outside of the ultimate context of our experience if he is to establish a proper ultimate context in terms of which our determinate version can be criticized. At the same time, if we are to be conscious of this criticism in a real, not merely verbal way, he must appear within the context as a judging judge. Christian theology<sup>1</sup> offers an explanation of the paradox and determinate specified

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1. A good case can be made out that Judaic theology offers the same type of resolution, but my own position is that the Christian one is better; what follows draws explicitly on the doctrine of Jesus as the Christ, and I hope to show that Christology offers the best interpretation of the experience in which the problem arises.
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ways of relating and testing this explanation in certain areas. We shall look at the Christian position in its general form, then choose some specific places to test it.

Christians go right to the heart of the problem by claiming that God is at once both transcendent and immanent. The doctrine of the trinity has often been used to explain how this is possible, but I think it dubious that that doctrine can accomplish its task, keeping its tri-partite divisions straight. As Cyril Richardson<sup>2</sup> has pointed out in many ways, the concept of

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2. The Doctrine of the Trinity (Nashville, 1958, Abingdon).
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the Trinity arose in the early church out of a feeling that God manifested himself in several forms, but there was a great fluidity of thought concern-



ing which manifestations were to be known as Father, Son or Spirit. The basic difficulty in the doctrine is this: either (a) all three persons are equally immanent manifestations of a transcendent God, in which case you still have not explained the relations between God's transcendence and his immanence; moreover, it is difficult to decide whether the persons as manifestations of the transcendent are really and truly God, or just mere manifestations of something else which is the genuine article. Or (b) one of the three persons, the Father, is taken as God transcendent, the Son is God immanent, and the Spirit is somewhere in between. There are several difficulties with this: if the Father is wholly transcendent, we cannot even apply the metaphor "father" to him; if the Son is "begotten of the Father", he has a lesser status and again, not quite as much God as is the Transcendent; finally, it departs too far from the biblical imagery of Fatherhood and Sonship: the Father is just as immanent as the Son to the biblical people. My conclusion is, agreeing with Richardson, that the classical formulations of the doctrine of the Trinity all point up valid aspects of the problem but that as a tight doctrine it does not solve the problem we are interested in now. This does not preclude us, however, from using trinitarian terms later on.

What, then, is a good way to explain God's paradoxical immanence and transcendence? To call it a Christian explanation we need a way that does justice in two directions at once: to the philosophical problems and to the canonical literature. To begin with, let us call God as he appears in the ultimate context, i.e. as immanent, the "logos", a good New Testament term. I suggest that the relation of this logos to God as transcendent we



can describe on the analogy of the relation of the signs of a self to the self. What I mean by analogy here is that the interpretant "self" as used for human beings is suggested as an interpretant for God.

This doctrine necessitates clarifying our notion of self. I have previously called the self a "center of intention" which I described as a centered power operant in a being and including as its determinate parts those structures and actions (contents) for which it is responsible. That it is "centered" means that its dynamic parts are traceable to coming from one center or point of direction. We know this center of intention not only by its "external" signs, its gestures and expressed purposes, but also by its signs that appear in introspection. As Professor John E. Smith has argued, the self is known as neither a universal, an instance of a universal, nor the intersection of several universals, but is revealed through a series of particulars taken as signs for the center of intention.

My neighbor is for me always presented as constellations and series of signs - changing, moving sets of gestures, speech, deeds, etc. - and these signs begin to form a system which defines for me the unity and identity of the other self just to the extent to which I am able to interpret these signs and thus gain insight into the center of intention of which they are the expression. I have no other access to the self of my neighbor save through this process of mediation and indeed he emerges and remains as a self for me only in so far as I am able to reach those most comprehensive and enduring purposes which make up his unity and are at the root of this persistence through time.<sup>3</sup>

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3. John E. Smith, "Knowledge of Selves and the Theory of Interpretation," *Kant-Studien*, Band 5), Heft 3, 1959/60, p. 321. Smith's theory has an added dimension lacking explicitly in my account, namely the place of time in the process of interpreting words and gestures as expressive of purposes, and purposes of basic traits, etc. However, if my discussion of time in the interpretative process dealt with in the first chapter



be borne in mind, it is easy to see where I would go to make my account congruent with his.

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The point to be urged here is that the signs of the self are taken as such by another self, or by one's own self if you hold them away in experience. From the standpoint of the one whose signs they are, they are as much a part of him as anything is and he cannot be abstracted from them. Yet from the outside, from the standpoint of the one who takes the signs as signs, they are distinguished from their object, the center of intention.

In a similar fashion we call God the self whose appearance to us is the logos in its various forms. The logos appears in our experience as a sign of God. But from the side of God transcendent, the logos is an integral part of himself, "very God of very God," as my gesture is verily part of me. Just as we can treat human gestures and words for what they are as well as for whom they reveal, so we treat the logos as a thing in itself, as well as a sign for a transcendent God.

Now in applying the metaphor of selfhood to God, have we really solved our problem? We have, it seems, insofar as the logos is God immanent and also points beyond itself to a center of intention not the same as its signs. But how can the center of intention be wholly transcendent if it is the center of just these immanent signs? To put the problem another way, a human center of intention expresses itself in its words and gestures because it is a power operating in structures that terminate in those words and gestures. Yet if there were the same sort of arrangement with God, the center of intention would be so connected with the logos that it could hardly be called transcendent.



Two responses are to be made to this dilemma. On the one hand, we must acknowledge that the paradox does slip back in here, to the extent that we must deny for God the connections between center of intention and outward manifestations that we maintain for the inner nature of human selves. From the standpoint of God, we cannot see what the connection between his transcendence and his immanence is, except that in some mysterious way the latter is a sign for the former. On the other hand, we are not in God's standpoint anyway, and from the standpoint of another self the problem is not important. Other selves exist for me because their signs have secondness, the mark of existence. If there were no signs, the other self would not only be unknowable, but as far as I am concerned, he would not exist; he is relevant only in the context where he is an object of some signs. God, too, can be said to exist only through signs which have their being in the field of experiential existence. If his logos were not in my world, he could not be said to exist for me, and if it were not in some possible world he could not be said to exist at all.

The problem of the relation between God's transcendent center of intention and his immanent logos is a speculative question that cannot be answered because it goes beyond the limits of possible relevance to experience. The logos claims to be the most ultimate category of existence, and there is no possible category by which we can go beyond it. By disregarding what it says, we can consider it merely as a sign of something beyond, but to explain its connection as any more than a sign for an object we must operate within that category and cannot explain beyond it. The center of intention is wholly transcendent, and what we interpret it to be through its signs is always short of what it is, and is only analogous to human selves. Because



the logos is the most ultimate category in which our experience is framed, though we can test our understanding of it, we cannot raise the question as to how it is related to the transcend center of intention whose sign it is. This explains why the mystery is a mystery, but it does not vitiate the fact that the logos is truly God.

### Section I. The Logos

In the beginning was the logos, and the logos was with God, and the logos was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it....(John 1:1-5, R.S.V., reading "logos" for "Word").

This statement of the doctrine of the logos indicates that it was taken as more than one power beside others, more than one principle among others; "without him was not anything made that was made". We would say more that the logos was taken as the ultimate ontological category, the most basic principle in all things. Remember that "ultimate" means "most fundamental such that nothing of the kind is left outside". The ultimate ontological category would be that category of being inclusive of all others.

The ultimate category is at once a real category of existence, an intellectual category of interpretation, a real goal of being (especially man), and a recognized goal in terms of which we judge ourselves.

The first two indicate that when philosophers understand the ultimate category, there well may be a discrepancy between their understanding and what they are understanding, above and beyond the fact that a sign is not its object. Our knowledge is everywhere fallible. Not only is our speculation fallible, but even if the ultimate category or logos were divinely



disclosed, as I believe it is, we could only understand it in discursive, therefore fallible terms. This is a simple point, made by Charles Peirce,<sup>4</sup>

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4. "Questions Concerning Certain Faculties Claimed for Man," Values, p. 15 f.
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but it has the effect of denying any revelation in a perfect form that cannot be doubted. Everything we understand must be in terms we understand, and we can always mis-understand the terms, or the terms we have may be inadequate to what they try to express. If there were any revelation given straight from heaven in perfect form and indubitable, we either would know it to be perfect by a fallible, discursive interpretation, whereupon we might be wrong, or else we would know it by yet another immediate, divinely established interpretation; but then we never could tell at all whether our thoughts were fallible or perfect. If revelation is the suggestion or disclosure of something not hit upon before or not deducible from more mundane experience, it still must be tested, and we find that in the testing our understanding is constantly more refined.

The ontological category as goal not only indicates the same problem as above, but also implies that man (and perhaps other beings) can pervert to some degree the ontological foundation of his being, and thus that foundation again becomes his goal.. But if the logos is really the ultimate category, then man cannot escape it while perverting it, and it must be such that can sustain this perversion. Further, if man does not escape the ultimate category while perverting it in certain areas, it is not enough to say to him that his perversion is in self-contradiction with his being, for his answer is "So what? as long as it is possible?" It further must be



established that it is right for man to acknowledge that the ultimate category is everywhere good, and this can only be done from without, that is, by God disclosing it to be so. It is beyond the scope of this paper to show God's relation to the world as creator, that he was right when he "saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). But the argument would run first, to find some notion of goodness, perhaps revealed, see if it fits our expectations, and then judge the ultimate category everywhere in terms of it. This is premised on the principle that the ultimate category contains within itself the category of goodness, and since man's being is founded on the ultimate category, its aspect of goodness can give rise to the expectations by which man judges his intellectual understanding of it. If we can show how goodness is contained within the ultimate category, then the denial of goodness would amount to a denial of being.

But for the purpose of the present discussion, we can assume that God is good, the logos is God, and therefore is good; and if the logos is good, we ought not pervert it anywhere. In laying out the doctrine of the logos, we lay out the ultimate category as the ontological principle which man perverted, making it again his goal; but in the perversion, man lost the power to reach the goal unless he can appropriate the ultimate category in unperverted form. The ultimate category is God immanent in the world, the logos, the Christ.

What general characterization can we make of this logos? This presents a serious problem because the logos as ultimate category appears in so many contexts, and in each differently, so that though it often occurs in common-



sense thinking, it does not appear under one name. There is no one characterization I know of in English that does justice to all aspects of the logos, so the characterization I give it will stretch and creak at points. The logos, I say, can be characterized as love, and there are several reasons for calling it that. First, it fits into the canonical literature of Christianity and makes connection with theology and traditional church history easier. Secondly, the everyday connotations of the word love have to do with psychological, emotional factors, which make them easier to tie up with religious life, though I do not say that religion has to do only with psychological things. Thirdly, although it stretches the imagination to talk of physics and logic in terms of love, it does an even greater injustice to human experience to describe it in terms of physics and logic. While we sacrifice much clarity and precision in calling the ontological principle as it appears in physics and logic love, it is positively false to apply the over precise terms of those fields to experience as the ultimate category. Moreover, saying that the logos in physics and logic is love does not preclude scientific investigation in precise terms, since such investigation should not pretend to metaphysical explanation anyway; the only difficulty is in reconciling the scientific and metaphysical terms. On the other hand, any scientific or logical term applied to experience as the logos would be false, since experience encompasses elements that defy classification under the abstract categories of science and logic. This is necessarily so. Science presupposes that truth only applies to the objective form things have to consciousness; but in experience consciousness is directional, indicating that things not only have a being as looked at but as looking. Logic only copes with things in their static natures



as can be contained within implications; but the experience of making inferences goes beyond logic.<sup>5</sup> All of our characterizations reflect the

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5. See Weiss, Modes of Being, prop. 3.34. "Inference is an art in which one risks replacing a satisfactory premise by an unsatisfactory conclusion."
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imperfection of our knowledge; we can approach the logos as ultimate category in many ways, and I give it one characterization only for the sake of a shaky consistency. To call it love is sufficient, however, for the areas in which we shall here discuss and test it.

What is love, if it is the ultimate category or logos? Love is the existence of at least two things so that they are related to each other in interaction, each one maintaining his integrity at the other's sufferance. To put it more positively, each being contributes to the system of the interaction of the two of them by maximizing the integrity of both.<sup>6</sup>

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6. Some people think love as a general principle is a desire for union. My doctrine is a direct contradiction of this, claiming that love is the maximization of individuality of related beings. Desire for union is the desire to annihilate those factors in the other that give it its individuality.
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As the ultimate ontological principle, love may be described as follows. It is existence itself. To exist means to stand related in opposition and connection with another being. On the one hand, there seems to be a system in which both beings are internally related, and on the other each is distinct and in opposition to the other, defining itself in terms of the interaction with the other, yet with enough interiority to do the interacting and defining. If there is much of a system, it does not exhaust the



existence of its content - beings by internal relations since they are also externally related to each other and to some degree each has the power of destroying the relation and hence the identity of both. The ultimate category is thus the source of the possibility of an individual existing with others. Putting the problem another way, to exist is to maintain one's integrity in the face of another, and since one's own integrity is defined in terms of the other's it requires maintaining both. Maintaining integrity is not a status quo affair, because the relation between the individuals is dynamic, enduring through time which always threatens the relationship. Hence each individual attempts to maximize those actions which bring about more integrity in the future. As the ultimate category of being, love is the state of affairs where this takes place. An individual loving is one trying to maximize the integrity in interaction of all concerned.

Existence is not only of particulars, whatever they might be. An individual like a human being is an integrated system of many facets cognitively described as particulars, and its individuality consists in its integrity. Likewise, an individual integrates himself over against another integrated individual. The other may be another like individual, e.g. another human being, or it may be as inclusive as the world, so long as the world has an integrity or unifying power over against the individual. I began this entire discussion with the distinction between self and world as individual entities, related from the one side by experience. One's world as taken in the ultimate context has the integrity of being defined as that self's world. And we can answer in abstract the normative question raised at the end of the last chapter, namely, how the ultimate context is to be properly constituted: as the maximization of the integrity of self



and world. One should love the world and all in it, and the above is what love is, abstractly speaking.

If we approach the ultimate category from the static standpoint of logic, it is seen as the principle of non-contradiction, "for every X, X is not non-X". This is saying that every entity has its being in opposition to what is not itself. The law of identity, "every X is an X" and the law of excluded middle, "every X is X or non-X" say the same thing. The relation of identity is the relation to oneself as what is <sup>not</sup> not itself, and excluded middle says that there are two integral terms related in such a way that a being has to be one or the other. Modus Ponens leaves the static world of implication for the dynamic world of inference, and is based on the hope that when something is defined in terms of another, when isolated from it, it will be the same being.<sup>7</sup>

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7. See Weiss, Modes of Being, props. 1.94-1.104, especially 1.96.

These are metaphysical doctrines whose further justification would involve a systematic ontology that would go beyond the limits of this paper. Everything cannot be stated and argued for at once, and I state these only to sketch the picture into which I shall fit the object of our primary interest, the logos as related to human beings.

What is human love? By this I do not mean love only for humans but rather the love humans have and can direct at most anyone or anything. It would have to be an attitude and the corresponding actions that work for maximizing the integrity of the beings concerned, for our basic attitudes, it will be remembered, are what give an overall shape and style to our



experience, and it is through our experience that we do our part in shaping the relations we have with other things. Now there are two important parts to this way of putting it. First, the nature of human integrity, and secondly, the relation between feelings or attitudes and actual effect produced.

As to the first, integrity is the integration of all parts of the person around the center of intention so that the person is his own man, controlling all that can be controlled, autonomous to such a high degree that he can be the same person in every situation while never refusing to respond to the situation as it is and grow in that response. The person with integrity is able to accept the world and himself as they are in truth because he does not need a special version to hold him together; he takes responsibility for what he does. We shall go into this further when we can contrast it with non-integration and lack of love.

As to the second, love is an objective thing that can be measured in recognizable ways in terms of the integrity of the individuals involved. Consequently, we define love by this, not by feelings. Nonetheless, insofar as what we do to bring about love is accompanied and somewhat directed by feelings and attitudes, it is legitimate to speak of "feeling love" for things. But we always test which of our feelings are loving ones by their outward effects, conceived or actual.

Our discussion of love in terms of what we have said before of the logos will always be confused until we show how love can be problematic. If love is the ultimate category underlying our being, why do we not act lovingly as a matter of course? First I shall have to show how the logos can give rise to the possibility of its being perverted. Then I need discuss how man, being able to pervert the ground of his being, has done so



in fact, with the result that he is in a state of sin, which is the state of being unable to love in its many manifestations. Finally, I shall show how the state of grace is the state in which man is able to call upon the power of love in the ultimate ground of his being with the help of an outside agency to again be able to love.

Producing integrity in man, love gives rise to free will which is able to pervert love insofar as man is able to control to some extent the relations he has with what is other than him. Necessary for this perversion is the possibility of responding to signs wrongly. If man's relations with the world were solely in terms of dyadic responses, there would be no possibility of his loving or not loving. He would act merely according to the principles that controlled his existence and could never get out of step with the ultimate category. However, since his experience gives him the possibility for triadic relations, he can make a centered response that responsibility works for disintegration, i.e. that is unloving. He can mis-take a sign, or taking it rightly, can make the wrong response to the world in terms of it. The fact that man has this possibility also conditions his ability to love in the state of grace, since he is always liable to err or "backslide". Heaven is our conception of the place where this is not possible.

That man has in fact perverted the ultimate category, the logos, is hardly a point that need be argued in a world so manifestly unloving by any definition. But what does it mean specifically? Abstractly defined, lack of love would be disintegration of the beings involved together, and being unloving is making a disintegrating move in relation to one's situation,



or a move not sufficient to promote integrity in the future. For human beings, the care of the problem is this: to treat another person as a being of integrity requires that we penetrate by interpretation through all the disjointed parts of his person, taking them as signs, to the center of his intentions wherein his integrating power, his integrity, lies. But if we are to be the interpreter of signs, the interpretant is to be in us. So in penetrating through to his center of intention, we must respond from the depths of our being also; our being as interpreter and interpretant is centered and directed in the triadic response of one center of intentions to another. This is precisely what the unloving man cannot do, and this inability constitutes the state of sin.

An unloving man takes the being of his neighbor to be constituted by one part of his total person, one part alone, out of connection with the center of intention which is the seat of his integrity. He takes him, for instance, as an object of sexual attraction, as the performer of a certain job, as an arms bearer, as a producer, in short as someone whose being is limited to a role that does not acknowledge the depths of selfhood, the integrity of the individual to be found in the center of intention. And taking others in these limited ways, we respond with only limited parts of our own person, not from the depths of our souls, not from the very source of our integrating power, our centers of intention. Adam took the apple in bad faith to God's love, for since the response of our whole selves is the highest response we can make, we take God to be at least a centered self, and then he took Eve as an object of sexual gratification, knowing as he did so the shame with which sex was then filled.

From here on out, the complications pour like water gushing from a



broken dam. Eve responded in kind, and Adam felt the loss of his integrity from her side. He could no longer define his integrity from her actions or his, and the relation between them denied the integrity of each. We try to find our identity, but the only things we have to go on are the limited uncentered responses through which our relations with others are defined. We see ourselves as role-players, and since we cannot escape the ultimate category, we are vaguely conscious, perhaps painfully conscious, of the inadequacy of this solution. But we have lost the means whereby to acknowledge our own integrity and that of others. We are incapable of making the centered response which indicates our potential integrity.

In the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, St. Paul describes the state of sin as "slavery to the law". Slavery to the law is the frantic attempt to define our identity in terms of myriad determinations of the role of the "righteous man". But no amount of role playing and forcing others into role playing by judgments upon them according to the law can bring about the centered response of love to others or to oneself that can restore integrity. In fact, it has the opposite effect. Our response to people in terms of the law is a response to partial roles, and this is the antithesis of the response to the center of intention. The response of love disregards one's definition by role playing and goes to the heart of one's being. This is not to say that we should not make judgments according to moral law, but such judgments do not acknowledge or promote the true center of integrity of the persons involved.

The inability to love plays back upon us so that we fear the loss of our own souls, that is, of our integrity. We try desperately to shore up



our integrity by the correct playing of roles, and we deceive ourselves about those things which threaten our identity in those roles. We see other people only in those roles that are consonant with our own, and do not acknowledge their being apart from those roles. We distort the world to fit ourselves, and blind ourselves to those things which would force us to be something other than our frantically constructed identity. Even our reason is fallen, deceiving and blind.

The state of sin is not necessary. We could have loved. But as Reinhold Niebuhr's famous enigmatic dictum says, it is inevitable. Our society makes every effort to give us satisfactory identities in terms of roles, and we so fear the loss of even that identity that we resist and blind ourselves to those factors that call for a centered response. Moreover, the persons whom we meet are in the same fix, and through their own fear cannot make the initial response of love that we can accept for resurrecting our own integrity. Resurrection is what it needs, and is what the New Testament calls it. The death of the spirit is the death of our integrity, it is the inability to acknowledge and respond with the center of our intentions. Finding again the power to love is the resurrection of our whole selves in the fullest sense.

This is the problem to which Christian theology addresses itself. Having lost the capacity to love, how do we get it restored? Having lost the capacity to respond to the integrity of other centers of intention with the integrity of our own, how do we regain it? The key to the problem lies in the fact that we never escape the ultimate category, even as we are perverting it. We pervert the power of conscious human love, but only by the power of the ultimate category on a more fundamental level. We bring



about disintegration, but the power by which we do this is still the integrating, relating, opposing power of being. The solution is to call upon the more fundamental level of the logos whom we affirm even in denying him.

The factor which gave rise to the possibility of the state of sin determines the form in which the state of grace will be brought about, the state wherein sin is overcome. Man is able to pervert the logos in him because he can be related to the world in a triadic way. He has a hand in the creation of his own identity because he can take the world as signs for himself. He brings the integrity of his own center of intention into play by responding to someone else, or he can deny it by not responding. Since the state of sin, the inability to love, is brought about by and concerns the level of man's interpretative experience, the power of love must be reintroduced at that point. The reappropriation of the logos in one's own being to the center of intention must be evoked in experience by the appearance of the logos in the world. The logos, the power of love, must call into our mechanisms of response the logos resident but perverted in us.

And the logos became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only son from the father.... And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

(John 1:14, 16-18, R.S.V., reading "logos" for "Word")

When Christians assert that Jesus is truly God in the act of saving man, they are claiming that he was a man in whose actions the logos was so explicit that his love for men evoked the logos in them with the result



that they made a loving, centered response. He was the incarnation of God as logos with the power to save men's integrity if they accepted his love.<sup>8</sup>

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8. Historical opinion about what sort of a man Jesus was is irrelevant here. What is relevant in the context of asking whether he were God incarnate is whether in fact he could give men the power to love. The effect he had on the apostles indicates that he was, though the final test, of course, we must make ourselves.
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Salvation from the state of sin, if it is to come at all, must come in this way. Only a man who is able to love us perfectly, treat us not as men judged by the law, but as integral centers of intention, as beings with integrity, only such a man can prompt us to love in return. God is in us as logos and in objects of our experience as logos. But from the state of sin we can direct our action according to the logos only if we see it explicit in another. And the fears for the loss of our own integral selves can be allayed only by accepting the unmitigated love of another. Judgments of our moral righteousness are made upon us in terms of the logos, in terms of our being related to the world lovingly, but the judgment is overridden by the very love through which the judgment is made. Love judges, and perhaps finds us wanting, but it still loves.

The Church is that body of men whom Jesus' love has affected and who mediate his love to those distant from him in space and time by ecclesiastical symbols, the Bible, preaching the logos and by their own love through which they point to the perfect love that first overcame the self-entrenching power of the inability to love. The whole emphasis on witness in the Church is an attempt to give experiential evidence that in Jesus the logos was present in a saving way.

Testimony of other people is never conclusive, however, in matters of



this kind, although the bulk of it in Christian history gives weight to the assertion that what Christians have tried and found successful ought to be tried by other people. There is a sense in which the inability to love prohibits recognition of love in other people; in fact, we often refuse to accept other people's love because it forces us to respond in a way we are unsure of. The appearance of the logos in an explicit item of our experience to which we must react is not in itself sufficient to make us automatically respond with the logos in our own being, however, that is, to acknowledge the integrity of the other with the center of intention wherein our own integrity lies. The risk involved in making such an interpretation where we have so often found that others deny it as valid, insisting that they themselves are nothing more than the roles they play, makes us leery of accepting another's love at face value. Especially in this so when we have identified ourselves entirely as the person defined by his failures in fulfilling laws. If we are guilty, and our being is nothing more than a constellation of guilts, then we are unworthy of love and reject it for ourselves. This again denies the logos its place at the center of intention, because we are more than what we do and have failed to do. The self is more than the collection of its signs; it is the center of intention revealed through the signs. And the interpretation of those signs as revelatory of a center of intention goes beyond judging the signs in themselves; it is a loving interpretation, acknowledge another's center with one's own, the depths of one person meeting the depths of another.

But what if the redeeming love of the incarnate logos is not accepted? The logos is the ultimate category implicit in all being, implicit in



ourselves as well as the world of our experience, and if we can deny its explicit manifestation in the world, we then have the power to deny its explicit residence in our actions. It has always been a matter of controversy in Christian theology as to the degree of control our center of intention has over the logos in us that responds to the logos in the Christ. Some people, the predestinarians, say that the logos in us does or does not respond without regard for our center of intention operating through our experience. At the other extreme are those who insist that whether or not we respond with love is solely dependent upon our willful, centered acceptance of the love of another. On the one hand, the logos in the guise of the Holy Spirit overcomes our center of intention and makes the response for us. On the other hand, we make the acceptance by a blind leap of faith. There is evidence for both sides, and I think both are right at times. The fact that we can willfully deny another's love out of fear or guilt testifies to the strength of our own center of intention, and to say that we are predestined to damnation if this is the case is a cheap way out of it. The fact that we can fervently desire to accept another's love but find ourselves unable to testifies to the autonomy of the ultimate category above and beyond the power we can draw on in our center of intention. At least what must be said is that acceptance of love must come about somehow, if its healing power is to be brought to bear on our sinful state.

The state of grace is the state of again being able to act according to the ultimate category in our experience. It is the state of being able to direct our experience and the relations we thereby create with the world so that we acknowledge and promote the integrity of the individuals we meet there. Grace is the logos working explicitly in our lives. Our experience



is always liable to the difficulties that brought on the state of sin in the first place, and as a matter of fact we do backslide at times. Nonetheless, to some degree we can fund our response to love in our experience to give us a reserve of faith that carries us over those trying times when we find our own love denied. And we can mediate the perfect love of God as logos that was manifest for us in the person of Jesus through our own love for others.

Now what does it mean, that we explicitly acknowledge the logos in the love of another person. On the one hand, it means that we are able to respond to his whole person as a center of intention with our own. On the other hand it means that we acknowledge his love as the ultimate category of existence. But the ultimate category of existence, if it is just that and no more is seen as a contingent affair. If it is contingent, then it is established by a transcending power. Thus it is we say that the logos is the immanent sign of a transcendent God, and as his sign, being the ultimate category of existence that we cannot escape even in questioning it, it is truly God. Taking it as a sign, we interpret it with the fullest response we know how to make, and see it as the sign of a self, a center of intention, even though we know that God transcendent is more than that. It seems paradoxical to say that we respond to God as we respond to other centers of intention, especially when we realize that this means we are acknowledging his integrity. But it is in the loving of God that we identify and bring into play our own integrity, our full selfhood, whether it is the transcendent God or his immanence in another person.

This is the answer Christians give to the dilemma posed at the end of



the last chapter. The ultimate context receives its justification from a transcendent power through the establishment of the norm of love. And this norm is the being of God in the ultimate context. Insofar as we understand it, we can judge our own relation to the world as the exemplification of the norm that we, as individual centers of intention, are empowered to make. To ask further if there be a divine judgment made on our constituting of our ultimate context, on our relation to the world, is to trade upon unnecessarily anthropomorphic speculation. For if the norm is there, and our offering is here, they are comparable; and from the extemporal standpoint they appear in comparative juxtaposition. What more need be said?

## Section II. The Tests

As in any area of critical thinking, with theology we are trying to find good ways of interpreting certain aspects of our experience. At least some of the aspects relevant to theology have to do with the concerns that bring the ultimate context of our experience as a whole into play, asking whether the comprehensive relationship we form with the world through our experience can be criticized as an entirety, and in terms of what. That we do criticize it and feel it inadequate is a fact that must be explained. Christian theology offers an explanation and, further, gives a suggestion as to how to heal, at least partially, the severance between man's version of the self-world relation and the norm.

To be sure, insofar as much of this is metaphysical explanation, it must be criticized in the way all other metaphysics is: through applicability to experience, consistency, and explanatory facility. As a theory it should have the recognizable advantages we require of all such theories,



even though these advantages may not in fact be recognized until we begin criticizing other people's metaphysical theories; and as everyone acts according to some metaphysics or other, we should be thankful for the means of criticism we do have.

Christianity, however, offers a test of a more stringent sort at the crucial point of the saving power of the logos explicitly incarnate in a human being. Again, to be sure, this test is based upon certain metaphysical suppositions, but they also give certain testimony for the scheme as a whole. Our discussion first shall ask just what the tests are, and then what they prove.

#### A. What the tests are.

The general procedure for testing an interpretation of experience is to frame the interpretation as an hypothesis, perform the operations and transformation of thought necessary to arrive at the hypothesis through a satisfactory independent source and means, and evaluate the hypothesis in terms of the new results. The Christian hypothesis is that the logos explicit in the Christ is able to free man from the state of sin where he is unable to respond to the selfhood of another with his own center of intention, and to restore to him an ability to create his relation to the world in accord with the norm, the ultimate category of existence. The testing comes in accepting the perfect love of Jesus and responding in kind. If one is able to operate with the integrity of his being, the hypothesis is verified.

As could be predicted from the theory of redemption, there is a



serious hitch at the point where the operation must be performed, where we must accept the love of another. It was noted above that some difficulty would arise over the degree to which the job of responding to another's love with love belonged to the logos at the foundation of our being or to the power of our own center of intention, consciously directed through experience. This difficulty will be left to the concluding section of our discussion, and for the present assume that acceptance is possible and is done.

We now must specify in general the marks of the state of grace to be recognized as the verification of the hypothesis. St. Paul gives the classic formulation upon which the Christian doctrine is grounded:

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecy, it will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

(1 Corinthians 13, R. S. V.)

The first paragraph underscores the point that the worth acquired through love overrides the worth we achieve through roles, be they those



of authority, perceptiveness, understanding, piety, charity of self sacrifice. None of these, as we have seen, demands the integrity of a centered personality. All are signs of the self, but not the object of those signs. I repeat that this does not deny the legitimacy of judging the performance of roles; but the crucial thing to bear in mind is that such judgments do not apply to the whole, i.e. the true self. A person is responsible for his performance of roles, but a judgment of that is merely a judgment of an action, not of a self. Love is the one thing a man does where his center of intention, his whole self is brought into play in the interpretative recognition of another such self appearing through his signs.

St. Paul's second paragraph depicts the marks of love, the signs of the relationship where at least one party recognizes and is concerned for the potential integrity of the other, doing so by an act involving his own center of intention. There is no need to rehearse each point by which St. Paul describes such a relation, and one observation will suffice in exposition. Ideal love can be a one way affair. It is not necessary for the one loved to return the love extended. Every mark St. Paul cites is one where love is given in the face of opposition to it. Love as it exists in the state of sin is not this way; it demands return or is retracted. In the state of sin love is merely the lack of objective hate, and is directed at something the loved one does that benefits the lover, not at the person of the beloved; it is only appreciation and desire. Active hate, as opposed to the dis-appreciation of something someone does, is much akin to true love insofar as it recognizes the center of intention of the object hated; it differs from love in wishing the disintegration of the other's



self instead of the contrary. True love, however, in trying to maximize the integrity of the other, is capable of sustaining a lack of love from the other side, believing that it can come, hoping that it will come, enduring its not coming.

The third paragraph has two points. First it points to the fact that love is the one enduring category of all existence, with the corollary that the value one has through his love is the one value not affected by the process of time. All other virtues can be annulled in the course of time, but the value one has in the realization of integrity is not relevant to what it does beyond what is required in bringing it about. Also, having gained the ability to love truly, that ability is not easily lost. Secondly, it points to the new depths of understanding that come about through love. We fully understand the heart of another's being, even as the perfect love in the Christ fully understands us. St. Paul puts this in the future, recognizing that human love is always somewhat imperfect, never able to fully return the love seen perfectly in Christ; but the road is marked, and we can anticipate the face to face vision when the signs of another's center of intention are transparent, not like a dark glass.

In general, the marks of a redeemed ability to love are to be seen in contrast with the state of sin. In analyzing our own sinful state we find rather systematic blocks against love. St. Paul speaks of these blocks as slavery, and we have already discussed slavery to the law, taking "law" to signify all roles by which we define our identity avoiding explicit recognition of our center of intention transcending all these signs. The specific forms that this slavery has differ from person to person, and to



treat them one by one is to risk irrelevance. In the formulation of the doctrine, or of the hypothesis which everyone can use, it is essential to state the general character of love, and it is on the general level that the case stands or falls. The Christian claims about love and the redeeming process hold for all its forms. Nonetheless, we do not often have a clear image of our ability to love in general. Hence I shall try to specify three more particular areas in terms of which we can interpret instances of love or its lack in our individual experience.

First, personal love of self. The antithesis of this, or counterpart in the state of sin, is selfishness. Selfishness is the state of conceiving of ourselves as thoroughly defined by the roles we play or attempt to play. We judge ourselves according to the laws we think good and come to the conclusion, since our laws are better than we are, that we are bad and unlovable.. Denying recognition of our center of intention, we try to fix up the image of ourselves as we are to fit that of what we ought to be. Finding that more effort at being good does not help much - indeed it cannot, since the problem is to love oneself, which goes beyond judgment according to law - we cheat by using other things illegitimately to build up our role-defined identity. We accept or reject elements of the world according to this capacity to improve our self-image.

Freedom from the law overcomes this by opening the self to the recognition of its center of intention underlying the signs of its being. Accepting someone else's love means accepting our center of intention as the object of love, and from this standpoint we can love ourselves in spite of our apparent unloveliness. Two distinguishing marks in this change in attitude toward



ourselves are the recognition of systematic patterns of interpretation of the world by which we engrandise our self image or vitiate the ideal image, and finally the abandoning of these patterns with the consequence that we look at our roles in terms of their objective character of forming a relation of self to world and not as they bear upon improving our self-image. We see that we systematically interpret the world in a prideful way, trying to deceive ourselves about what our identity is in terms of our roles. We see that we respond to the world with the purpose of bettering ourselves, often denying the true character of that world. In abandoning these systematic patterns of selfish behavior, we perform our roles for the end of their good fulfillment, and can evaluate them according to their objective worth. We are righteous not for the sake of our own salvation but for the sake of the rightness of the moral life. This is the only way to save morality from slavery to religious purposes. We do good because it is good, not because it will save our souls, and ethics is freed from the definition of pious, self saving virtue it so often receives at the hands of pacifists and the like.

Secondly, love for others. The antithesis of this is considering others as determined by the signs of their center of intention without recognition of that center. We find our inability to love others reinforced by the fact that we can understand them only in terms of their relation to our own roles. We cannot love others without bringing our own center of intention into play as interpretant of the other's signs, and if we fear to endanger the identity of our role-image by going beyond to recognition of the transcending center of intention, we cannot love others.



Usually we are conscious in a vague way of the reasons for which we refuse to endanger our self-image by loving others, these are marks of the state of sin.

Again, a greatly increased ability to love others is something we notice on a general level. But parallel with the two marks we picked out of the redeemed ability to love ourselves, we find similar, indeed not unconnected, systematic patterns whereby we forced our image of other people to fit in, in some selfish way, to our frightened image of ourselves. Consequently, in overcoming these systematic patterns of deception, we give others the freedom to be themselves for us; in fact, promoting their integrity works for giving them the freedom to be themselves outside of their explicit relation with us. Love, in other words, overcomes dependence on the other's image for self identity and achieves independence by calling forth and recognizing the center of intention that is the source of individual autonomy.

Thirdly, ability to love the truth. The antithesis to this is the systematic self deceptions about certain things that are threats to the self-image. Quite apart from other people, the world in general or some aspects in particular may be the objects of our self deception. The basic attitudes discussed in the previous chapter are subject to distortion of this kind: the world may be seen as hostile and dangerous to excuse the fact that we pitiful individuals have failed to accomplish what we ought; or it might be plush and secure, excusing us from looking its evils in the face; or it might be precarious, justifying our escape from ourselves in the loudly proclaimed effort to fix everything up. As for more particular areas of deception we need only look at the unwillingness of the British



diplomats to read the signs right in regard to Hitler's activities in the thirties, or our own unwillingness to face up to and cope with outright the possibility of another war, because doing so would undermine the self-justification we have found by equating goodness with material prosperity.

A man confident in his ultimate value as a loved and loving being is able to accept the threats to his identity insofar as that identity is contained in his signs, and is free to work with the world as it is. Of course, this freedom does not show itself immediately in all spheres, since our responses are deeply ingrained by habit. It may, in fact, not come out until a time of crisis that we do not need certain self deceptions any longer.

One last mark of the state of grace cannot be ignored. The slave to sin is characterized by a general fearfulness at the loss of the only identity he can find, that of the intersection of the universals describing his roles. What happiness he has is the mere appreciation of something that bolsters his self image, cuts down the glare reflecting from his ideal image, or that lessens his fear of loss of himself. The Christian on the other hand is characterized by a sublime joy that pervades everything he does. There is no reason for the joy, since the Christian has not necessarily improved his relation to the law; he is still a "sinner", though he realizes that is not all he is. The source of Christian joy is from within, not denying the claims of the world for other kinds of happiness or grief; it stems from the well-being of the loved and loving center of intention. Christian joy may be unconscious through most of our mundane experience, but when it flowers forth, it is recognizable both from within and from without.



B. What the tests prove.

My purpose in bringing the argument to this point through such seemingly unrelated types of discussion has been to justify a sort of theological logic. The first chapter discussed the nature and structure of experience in general, the second showed how "God" was related to experience as a possible interpretant, and in this chapter we have seen an elaboration of the hypothesis that God is related to our experience. Finally, we have specified a place where we can test the hypothesis, seeing whether the secondness we encounter in experience agrees with or refutes the theory.

It is not possible to separate the form from the content of my argument. Opponents of this approach will always claim that the test does not prove what I think it proves and that it can be explained in other ways. While there is no sure defense against this kind of attack, I cannot let it win its case merely by the stating of it. What does denying my conclusion entail?

First, it might claim that my description of human love is inaccurate. If this is so, I believe I have erred in the direction of too little separation of true love from appreciation of another's determinants for what they do for us. To me, at least, the Christian insight into the nature of the relations between persons is far more perceptive than any other, and I must leave my description as it is, hoping that everyone will find it the best interpretant for their experience. To deny this description would require showing it specifically inaccurate.

Secondly, to deny my argument one might claim that it is based on a wrong interpretation of selfhood, that there is no such thing as a "center of intention". The weight behind this claim is that the center of intention



is not scientifically observable and that science should stick to the describable properties of beings, not taking them as signs of anything else. This, I admit, may be good scientific procedure if science is willing to sacrifice some descriptive accuracy and relevance for precision's sake until it learns better what it can do; the only exception I take to this self-limitation of science is when it requires a centered response from an individual to obtain the observable data to analyze, as in psychoanalysis: here it should acknowledge all the elements that come into play. At any rate, the claim that it is not scientifically fruitful or feasible to talk of "centers of intention" does not militate against its use here, for the metaphysical description of selfhood explicitly goes beyond the limits of science. The refutation would have to be against my metaphysical argument, not my use of it. Again, I submit that "centers of intention mediated through signs" is a valid way of speaking of selves, a way which does most justice to our experience; for a discussion of this in other contexts I refer critics to J. E. Smith's paper "Knowledge of Selves and the Theory of Interpretation" (see note 3 above).

Thirdly, one might deny the connection between human love and the logos or ultimate category. This would take two forms: a) denying that there is an ultimate category, and/or b) denying that love is a valid way of describing it, even granting the technical definition of love. (a) is a self contradictory argument. To say that there is not an ultimate category is to say that there are some aspects of existence that are totally different than others, but saying this gives them at least the similarity of their being talked about together. To be sure, I am begging my ultimate category



by citing self-contradiction as evidence against the refutation, but I know of no one who would be willing to accept the consequences of denying self contradictions as everywhere applicable in a static scheme. At the least, it would put an end to all intelligible discussion. (b) would require a metaphysical argument to the effect both that the ultimate category is something other than what I have said, and that this other precludes speaking of it in the way I have, since I do not claim that this is the only way to approach it. Again, I think my argument stands. As subject to the ultimate category human beings are required to relate to each other in the way I call love, and the fact they can get around this and then have it as an unfulfilled goal is explained.

Fourthly, critics might argue that the ultimate category or logos is not a sign for a transcendent God. But was it not the point of the second chapter to show that in the ultimate context of our experience, the ultimate category was related to the transcendent in just that way? My discussion of the limits imposed upon critical questioning of the relation between the transcendent and the immanent due to the fact that the immanent is indeed the ultimate category, I believe, needs no repetition or amplification.

In short, my argument depends upon the correctness of its steps all along the line, and I have tried to justify each one of them directly, as the parts of a metaphysics should be. I claim that none is true simply because of its logical relation to its predecessors. But then if the whole is offered as an interpretation of the way things are, what is the force of the special test? Its force lies in four areas.

1) If the test is successful, it would testify to the validity of the Christological symbols. When pressed very hard, Christians would give up



the claim that their symbols are the only possible ones. It is conceivable that in a totally alien culture the symbol of Jesus as the man with the power of God would have no force, although that myth is rather universally applicable to the cultures we know; there is always a God become man or a divinely inspired prophet to pull mankind out of the trouble it has gotten itself in, be that God-man Buddha, Zoroaster, Mohammed, Prometheus, Wodin or Quetzalcoatl. Nonetheless, verification of Christianity's understanding of the problem by its symbols would show its adequacy for our culture, of which they are very much a part. It is essential that the logos become explicit in a man who is inside the history of human affairs, and if this love in Jesus can be mediated in our time, Christian symbolism is still shown to have power.

2) If the test is successful, it testifies to the Christian understanding of the nature and dynamics of love. Our understanding is always given support if we can perform operations under its direction and arrive at predicted results. Of all the points discussed, the nature of human relations in terms of interpretation of signs of centers of intention by other such centers is the most easily tested by the method of independent verification specified in Chapter II; it requires little in the way of circuitous transformations of thought to arrive at an independent reference point. Moreover, the process of testing is likely to improve our understanding of love in terms of specificity, insofar as each testor is required to interpret certain of his experiences as places to test the theory.

3) Insofar as the parts of the entire metaphysical description hang together, as well as hang separately, the whole thing is given substance if this one point is verified. At the very least, this test ties the



metaphysical speculation to experience in a concrete and controllable way. Christians draw the limits as to relevant and irrelevant theological doctrines on the basis of their necessity in explaining the experience involved in testing the problems and solutions connected with Christian love.

4) If the test yields negative results, either none at all or contradicting results, something is wrong with the explanation. Then the task begins of deciding how much to throw out. At this point, however, the method of testing loses its clean-cut objectivity, because Christians can always claim that it has not been performed correctly. In the next section we shall discuss the difficulties involved in the actual testing, but let it be admitted here that the judgment as to the results of the test, if they are negative, must be a subjective one made by each individual about himself to his own satisfaction. If the results are positive, the marks of the state of grace are visible, but if they are negative, there is no outward way of telling whether the solution to the state of sin, acceptance of perfect, explicit love, was fairly or unfairly tried.

The gist of this argument is that God appears with secondness in our experience as the explicit love that enables us to love in return. It is his visible and immanent sign, no less than God himself, that is the ultimate category of existence made explicit in the love of a man. There is undeniable secondness in the power of this love to change us. It is necessary to go through the elaborate argument I have to specify in precisely what ways God is related to experience and to avoid the errors of common sense that understand God to be a particular being on a par with other beings. Surely, if the transformations of thought necessary to relate God to experience in the proper context are ignored or mishandled, then religion can be non-sense.



But if the context in which our notion of God stands for the world in some respect is a valid one, as I have argued that it is, then it is a legitimate field for critical thought.

### Section III. The Testing

The nature of the problems involved in Christian theology make its testing like no other endeavor of critical thinking. As indicated previously, critical thinking involves holding some proposition hypothetically and verifying it by independent satisfactory means. What would this imply in the case of theology? The hypothesis is that acceptance of the love in Jesus will result in a change in us. The changes can be specified and the outlines of the tests predicted, but the performance of the test requires that Jesus' love be accepted not hypothetically. Of all tests, this one requires a non-hypothetical commitment, and if the commitment is half-hearted or "experimental" the test is bound to failure. There are many facets to this problem, but they all point to the same difficulty: religion is not a thing to be merely experimented with.

This is so from the nature of the case. We have already seen how the ultimacy of the ultimate context prohibits a genuine critical questioning of it, although we can readjust our hypothesis from the inside, so to speak. There is no way in which we can assume a standpoint outside of it for judgment. To put it in terms of testing hypotheses, we cannot make our understanding of it hypothetical and at the same time test it, for the testing is an act within the ultimate context.

The difficulty is not confined to intellectual criticism of our understanding of the ultimate context; it extends to all situations wherein the



self as a whole rooted in a center of intention is an interpretant of experience. The ultimate context of experience is the world as a whole, possible, actual, and past as it is ordered in an individual's experience. In the ultimate context the most comprehensive and determinate relation between self and world is fixed. This means that the interpretant of the self's experience is the center of intention and all over which its intentions hold sway, including the experience. This being the case, nothing is hypothetical.

And so it is with every instance where experience calls for interpretation by the whole self. In much of our experience, the center of intention functions merely as the interpreter, and a conscious sign is the interpretant. But a conscious sign is an idea, and interpretation limited to conscious signs is interpretation in terms of particulars and universals. Such interpretation suffices, perhaps, for "sense data", that is, it interprets percepts arising from dyadic responses through the physical environment. We do, however, interpret signs of physical nature to stand for non-physical things, e.g. selves and God. Nor is the world of our experience limited to "nature", selves and God; a letter proving Negro blood in a Southerner's ancestry, for instance, can present the far past to him with secondness, and a draft notice can present the future with equal force. And what interprets such conscious signs may be more than a conscious sign, perhaps excluding conscious signs. Emotional reactions are obvious examples. There are some experiences, as we have seen in the encounter of other selves, where the interpretant is a unified response from the center of intention, involving itself and all its controls.

To be sure, there is an intellectual aspect to those experiences wherein



the interpretant is the whole self. We interpret with conscious signs the marks of our own center of intention responding to another, and can even go so far, in the state of sin, to block those responses. There is good argument for saying that interpretation with non-conscious signs, e.g., emotions, physical reactions, the whole self, is more basic than wholly conscious interpretations, and we have seen how the latter is necessary for the perversion of the response of the center of intention where it is proper.

This all boils down to the fact that no experience wherein the whole self is fully united as interpreter and interpretant can be hypothetical. For the whole self includes the consciousness in which the hypothetical signs would be held off, and when the whole self is the interpretant, its parts cannot be disjoined from the center of intention. Consciousness is forged into the response as a whole, along with all other parts, inward and outward. That this is the case is the very ground for interpreting another's constellation of visible signs as indicative of a center of intention.

Those of us who have approached making a loving response to another person and at least have come close enough that the fulfillment is in sight, recognize the stumbling block set up by a hesitation to consider hypothetically whether the response of the whole self is warranted. If we interpret another's signs not with our whole selves but with a conscious suspicion that his signs may be deceiving, we never penetrate through to his center of intention.

So it is that the great value to be gained from the success of the test of love makes it at the same time the hardest thing to test. For the testing requires the denial of the experimental spirit that gives it its



public objectivity. There is no getting around the leap of faith required for the test to furnish the evidence for its verification.

The key step, the "operation", is to accept the love of Jesus or of another man mediating the logos that was incarnate in the Christ. To accept the love means that we must accept the object of that love namely, ourselves as centers of intention. This is precisely what we have no "reason" to do and likely much "reason" not to. To accept the love means that we must accept the other as a loving center of intention, which again requires an act of love on our part, an impossibility.

But what sort of impossibility is it for us to be unable to accept another's love? It is impossible because, fearing the loss of our integrity due to the fact that we recognize neither other persons' centers of intention nor our own, we identify ourselves with the roles we play and refuse to admit that we are any more than these. Moreover we force others to appear with the same sort of identity. We cannot accept love because it would make us accept ourselves as more than the role-defined identity we can cope with. And if we convince ourselves that others are no more than the collection of their appearances, we will see no reason why we are in error about ourselves. Especially, if we identify ourselves as experimenters or truth-seekers, if we identify others as that about which discursive truth is had, and if we are unwilling to deny the ultimacy of the objective rules for truth-seekers, to transcend that role and beg the truth of the question, responding as centers of intention, then to accept love is impossible. If love is as I have described, and can be discovered in the way specified, then the rules defining the role of the critical truth-seeker preclude the finding of this truth.



Stated in this way, one would seem a cad not to take the necessary leap to accept love. The hypothesis has plausibility. Thousands of Christians and other people calling it by a different name have testified that it is so, for what their testimony is worth. Most everyone during times of crisis has been shocked into some vague awareness that he and others have a depth uncomfortable and unwieldy to acknowledge. The possibility of this sort of truth is live enough that the truth seeker would be dishonest not to take steps to look into it; as Wm. James says,

....a rule of thinking which would absolutely prevent me from acknowledging certain kinds of truth if those kinds of truth were really there, would be an irrational rule.<sup>9</sup>

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9. "The Will to Believe," The Will to Believe and Other Essays on Popular Philosophy (N. Y., 1956, Dover), p. 28.
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Finally, the value to be gained from finding this truth is such as to be worth any risk, for it is the only value that gives an individual any worth in himself, apart from the public value of his roles.<sup>10</sup>

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10. The moral argument for taking the leap of acceptance is also compelling. When one's ethical actions are all directed at justifying himself, their true end is perverted, and they are likely to be perverted and distorted as well. But if one finds a higher justification in love, moral actions are freed to be performed for their own sake.
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But ~~we~~ are not now hung up on the problem noted before: how to go about accepting love? There is a certain coercive authority in the love of Jesus, as evidenced by the impact it had on his followers and on people today; nonetheless it can be denied. If we want to accept it and find we still cannot, we may be driven to explain this by a whim of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the logos in us, although such an explanation seems self defeating.



What practical steps can be taken to reinstate the ultimate category as a power upon which we can explicitly draw?

Intellectual assent will not solve the problem, for it only operates with conscious signs and cannot include the interpretation of a center of intention. But in a negative way, removing intellectual disbelief can remove at least one stumbling block. This is the purpose behind apologetics.

Moreover, we can force ourselves to ferret out those hidden mechanisms of fear that prevent us from acknowledging our transcendence of our roles. We may never be able to complete this job, and if those systematic patterns of self deception are strong enough, the task may be impossible. I take this to be a better explanation than that of the recalcitrant Holy Spirit for our failure to respond. It is to be hoped, however, that if we can accept love by degrees or at least be confident enough in our successful role-playing, we can have the strength and courage to see this task through to its fulfillment.

Finally, and this advice comes from one on the inside of the churches, we can throw ourselves into the company of the saints, those whose ability to love has been redeemed, hoping that their love will arouse our own. I am thoroughly aware of the unsaintly constituency of the churches, and their unsaintliness may defeat their purpose. I am also aware that many of the saints are outside of the churches, in fact, may never have heard of Christianity or explicitly Christian symbols. But Christians in the churches recognize that the Church is composed of those whom God has called, those whose ability to love, to explicitly participate in the ultimate category, has been called out by the logos as love appearing in their experience. The churches, however, offer the best means of mediating this love through their



exploitation of Christian symbolism. Symbolism is not to be distrusted because it is "mere symbolism"; the outward signs of a loving center of intention are "mere symbols", and Christians offer their symbols as also capable of mediating the love which is the redeeming logos, God.

The sum of this discussion is that apologetics can go no further than pointing the way and, perhaps, breaking down intellectual resistance to that which seems to have no guarantee of success. The truth of Christianity is not a public truth insofar as it involves an interpretant that can never be wholly public fact; the testing of it must be an individual affair. In the life of the Church, apologetics is coupled with preaching that uses ad hominum arguments to convince people of the state of sin as they are in it, and with the sacraments which are symbols through which the state of sin can be overcome. Apologetics is limited to its own role and powers.

But let it not be underestimated because of this. Natural theology, the form of apologetics I think valid, lays claim to the force of philosophical argument on the one hand and to accurate representation of the religious tradition on the other. It operates within the rules of philosophy, never claiming its doctrines to be true on the basis of external authority, only on that of internal evidence. It accepts the revelation claimed by the religious tradition without watering it down to common sense, but it asks that the revelation prove itself in experience. Let there be no petulant criticism that natural theology goes beyond the realm of critical thought, begging us to accept what is absurd. If it is to be criticized, its critics must accept the evidence that natural theology offers; that the evidence is hard to come by is no excuse. Natural theology claims its



justification in an area of experience one may choose to avoid; one may prefer not to take it seriously. But let these preferences never be sounded with the ring of authoritative disproof. Let it never be thought that an experience untried is an experience without validity. There is no virtue in the denial of what is not guaranteed in advance.



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