

CHAPTER XVIIITHE POSSIBILITY OF ETHICS

Metaphysics was conceived as the implementation of the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being. The fundamental question of the present chapter is whether ethics can be conceived in the same fashion. Our answer, which prolongs the discussion of questions raised in the chapters on common sense and in the study of human development, meets the issue in three steps.

First, an attempt is made to work out such notions as the good, will, value, obligation. From this effort there follows a method of ethics that parallels the method of metaphysics and, at the same time, a cosmic or ontological account of the good.

Secondly, the possibility of ethics is envisaged from the viewpoint of freedom and responsibility. The relevance of the canon of statistical residues is considered. The nature of practical insight, practical reflection, and the act of decision is outlined. The fact of man's essential freedom and responsibility is concluded.

Thirdly, the possibility of ethics is investigated from the further viewpoint of effective freedom. Is an ethics possible in the sense that it can be observed? Is man condemned to moral frustration? Is there a need for

a moral liberation, if human development is to escape the cycle of alternating progress and decline?

Finally, it may be well to note that our concern is not to draw up a code of ethics but rather to meet the relevant prior questions. The present chapter, then, sets forth not precepts but the general form of precepts. Perhaps there is no need to insist that the transition, from such a general form to the specialized precepts of particular domains of human activity, can take place only through an understanding of those activities. It follows that if an electronic computer were supplied with premises from this chapter, it could not conclude to any specialized precepts. However, I am writing not for electronic computers but for men, and as complete moral obtuseness is very rare, I feel justified in expecting critics to suppose that ~~even possible~~ readers of this book will be able to make the transition from the remote possibility of ethics, which is established, to the proximate possibility, which the exigent may demand.

1. The Notion of the Good

As being is intelligible and one, so also it is good. But while the intelligibility and unity of being follow spontaneously from the fact that being is whatever is to be grasped intelligently and affirmed reasonably, the goodness of being comes to light only by considering the extension of intellectual activity that we name deliberation and decision, choice and will.

1.1 Levels of the Good

On an elementary level, the good is the object of desire and, when it is attained, it is experienced as pleasant, enjoyable, satisfying. But man experiences aversion no less than desire, pain no less than pleasure; and so, on this elementary, empirical level, the good is coupled with its opposite, the bad.

However, among men's many desires, there is one that is unique. It is the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know. As other desire, it has its satisfaction. But unlike other desire, it is not content with satisfaction. Of itself, it heads beyond one's own joy in one's own insight to the further question whether one's own insight is correct. It is a desire to know and its immanent criterion is the attainment of an unconditioned that, by the fact that it is unconditioned, is independent of the individual's likes and dislikes, of his wishful and his anxious thinking.

Now through this desire and the knowledge it generates, there comes to light a second meaning of the good. Besides the good that is simply object of desire, there is the good of order. Such is the polity, the economy, the family as an institution. It is not the object of any single desire, for it stands to single desires as system to systematized, as universal condition to particulars that are conditioned, as scheme of recurrence that supervenes upon the materials of desires and the efforts to meet them and, at the price of limited restrictions, through the fertility of intelligent control, secures an otherwise unattainable abundance of satisfaction.

The good of order is dynamic, not merely in the sense that it orders the dynamic unfolding of desires and aversions, but also in the sense that it itself is system on the move. It possesses its own normative line of development, inasmuch as elements of the idea of order are grasped by insight into concrete situations, are formulated in proposals, are accepted by explicit or tacit agreements, and are put into execution only to change the situation and give rise to still further insights. Still, this normative line provides no more than a first approximation to the actual course of social development. The planets would move in straight lines if there were no gravitation, but in fact they move in perturbed ellipses. In like manner, social development would be simply a matter of intellectual development, if the human psyche were without its contribution; but in fact man's sensitive nature

constitutes both the dynamic materials to be ordered and the subjective conditions under which the order is discovered, communicated, accepted, and executed. So it is that social order finds in the desires and aversions of individuals and inter-subjective groups both an enormously powerful ally and a permanent source of egoistic and class deviation. The deviation not only constitutes a change in the main channel of development but also gives rise to secondary channels in which men are engaged in working out ever more efficacious counter-moves to protect themselves against the effects of deviations initiated by others, to correct the deviators, and in the ideal case to attack deviation at its root. However, as has been seen, concern with this ideal involves a transposition of the issue from the level of the policeman and the court, of diplomacy and war, to the level of culture and morality. Nor in the long run is common sense equal to this task since, besides its individual and group aberrations, it is subject to a general bias against concern with ultimate issues and ultimate results.

This brings us to the third aspect of the good, which is value. For the good of order is linked, not only with the manifold manifestations of spontaneous desires and aversions which it orders, but also with a third type of good which emerges on the level of reflection and judgment, of deliberation and choice. As the data of experience, so also sensitive desires and aversions are prior to questions and insights, reflections and judgments.

In contrast, the good of order, while it is anticipated and reflected by spontaneous intersubjectivity, essentially is a formal intelligibility that is to be discovered only by raising questions, grasped only through accumulating insights, formulated only in conceptions. None the less, though the good of order lies totally outside the field of sensitive appetite, it is in itself an object of human devotion. Individualism and socialism are neither food nor drink, neither clothes nor shelter, neither health nor wealth. They are constructions of human intelligence, possible systems for ordering the satisfaction of human desires. Still, men can embrace one system and reject others. They can do so with all the ardor of their being, though the issue regard neither their own individual advantage nor that of their relatives, friends, acquaintances, countrymen. Nor is this fact surprising. For human intelligence is not only speculative but also practical. So far from being content to determine the unities and correlations in things as they are, it is constantly on the watch to discern the possibilities that reveal things as they might be. But such possibilities are manifold. In large part they are mutually exclusive. The inventiveness of practical intelligence can issue in practical results, only if there exist the conjugate potency, form, and act of will, willingness, and willing with the function of singling out some possibilities from the manifold and by that decision and choice initiating and grounding the transition from the intellectual conception of a possible order to its concrete realization.

## 1.2

The Notion of Will

Will, then, is intellectual or spiritual appetite. As capacity for sensitive hunger stands to sensible food, so will stands to objects presented by intellect. As a bare capacity, will extends to every intellectual object, and so both to every possible order and to every concrete object as subsumed under some possible order. But besides the bare capacity that is will, there is the habitual inclination, specialized in particular directions, that constitutes the willingness and unwillingness with which individuals antecedently are disposed to making decisions and choices of determinate kinds. Just as a person that has not learnt a subject must go through a laborious process to acquire mastery, yet once mastery is acquired, can grasp readily the solution to any problem that arises in the field, so too a person that has not acquired willingness needs to be persuaded before he will will yet, once willingness is acquired, leaps to willing without any need of persuasion. Finally, besides the capacity, will, and the habit, willingness, there is the act, willing. It is the event, and so it alone is revealed directly. To know willingness, one must study the frequencies with which various objects are chosen by a given individual over a given period; and to know will, one must study the changes in such frequencies over a life-time.

Further, willing is rational and so moral.

The detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know grasps intelligently and affirms reasonably not only the facts of the universe of being but also its practical possibilities. Such practical possibilities include intelligent transformations not only of the environment in which man lives but also of man's own spontaneous living. For that living exhibits an otherwise coincidental manifold into which man can introduce a higher system by his own understanding of himself and his own deliberate choices. So it is that the detached and disinterested desire extends its sphere of influence from the field of cognitional activities through the field of knowledge into the field of deliberate human acts. So it is that the empirically, intelligently, rationally conscious subject of self-affirmation becomes a morally self-conscious subject of self-affirmation ~~becomes a morally self-conscious subject~~. Man is not only a knower but also a doer; the same intelligent and rational consciousness grounds the doing as well as the knowing; and from that identity of consciousness there springs inevitably <sup>an</sup> the exigence for self-consistency in knowing and doing.

How can that exigence be met? It is difficult enough for purely cognitional activities to be dominated by the detached and disinterested desire to know. How are such detachment and disinterestedness to be extended over human living? No doubt, moral living is difficult;



even theologians admit a sense in which it is impossible; but our present concern is with the fact of the exigence, and not a little of the evidence for the fact lies in the efforts of men to dodge it. The first and most common escape is to avoid self-consciousness. The precept of the sage was "Know thyself". But the precept at least was needed. How finely tempered must one's sincerity be, if one is to know oneself as one is, to know not a character-sketch that explains one in terms of ancestry and environment, but a moral analysis of one's deeds, one's words, one's mixed motives. How much simpler to pour oneself out in "worth while" external activity and, if praise and blame must be administered, then administer them not to oneself but to others. The second escape is rationalization. Inconsistency between knowing and doing can be removed by revising one's knowing into harmony with one's doing. Such a revision is, of course, a bold step. Not a little ingenuity is needed to transpose inconsistency between knowing and doing into inconsistency within knowing itself. The average mind can invent lies about matters of fact; it can trump up excuses; it can allege extenuating circumstances that mingle fact with fiction. But hypocrisy is no more than the tribute paid by vice to virtue. It falls far short of the genuine rationalization that argues vice to be virtue, that meets the charge of inconsistency not by denying the minor premises of fact but by denying the major premises of principle. But the revision of major premises is a tricky business; it is playing fast and loose with the pure desire to know

in its immediate domain of cognitional activity; and so the majority of men, instead of attempting rationalization themselves, are content to create an effective demand, a welcoming market, for more or less consistently developed counter-positions presented in myths and in philosophies. The third escape is moral renunciation. Video meliora proboque, deteriora autem sequor. It is without the illusion generated by fleeing self-consciousness. It is without the deceit generated by rationalization. But it is content with a speculative acknowledgement of the aspiration to make one's own living intelligent and reasonable. It is ready to confess its wrong doing, but it has given up any hope of amending its ways. If you please, it is very human; yet it also is incompletely human, for the demand for consistency between knowing and doing is dynamic; it asks to be operative; it seeks to extend detachment and disinterestedness into living, and it is not satisfied with a merely speculative acknowledgement of its existence.

As will be noted, we have been considering moral self-consciousness in its complete generality. According to the proverb there is honor among thieves. In different strata of society, in different epochs, in different cultures and civilizations, one meets with different moral codes. But the content of the moral code is one thing, and the dynamic function that demands its observance is another. Our consideration has centred on that dynamic function, on the operative exigence for self-consistency in self-consciousness and, since contrast is

moral self-consciousness

luminous, on the threefold escape of fleeing self-consciousness, of mitigating the moral code by rationalization, and of giving up hope in the struggle. In brief, we have been dealing with the question, 'Is there a meaning to the word 'ought'?' And ~~if there is, what is it?~~ Our answer differs from the Kantian answers, for if we agree in affirming a categorical imperative, we disagree inasmuch as we derive it wholly from speculative intelligence and reason. Again, our answers differ from the views at least popularly associated with Freud's name for, while we grant that moral self-consciousness has a concomitant in moral emotions and moral sentiments, and while we agree that these emotions and sentiments have a psychoneural basis and are subject ~~to~~ psychoneural aberration, we contend that it is a blunder to confuse these concomitants with moral self-consciousness itself. When Freud decided eventually to publish <sup>his</sup> Traumdeutung, he was overcoming emotions and sentiments <sup>and</sup> following what he considered the only intelligent and reasonable course of action; and such following is what we mean by obeying moral conscience.

## 1.3

The Notion of Value

Now it is in rational, moral self-consciousness that the good as value comes to light, for the value is the good as the possible object of rational choice. Just as the objects of desire fall under schemes of recurrence to give rise to the good of order grasped by intelligence,

so also the good of order with its concrete contents is a possible object of rational choice and so a value.

There follows at once a triple cross-division of values. They are true in so far as the possible choice is rational, but false in so far as the possibility of the choice results from the <sup>a</sup>flight from self-consciousness, or from <sup>rationalization</sup>~~rational~~ or from moral renunciation. They are terminal inasmuch as they are objects for possible choices, but they are originating inasmuch as directly and explicitly or indirectly and implicitly the fact that they are chosen modifies our habitual willingness, our effective orientation in the universe, and so our contribution to the dialectical process of progress or decline. Finally, they are actual, or in process, or in prospect, according as they have been realized already, or are in course of being realized, or merely are under consideration.

Further, values are hierarchic. Objects of desire are values only inasmuch as they fall under some intelligible order, for the value is the possible object of choice, choice is an act of will, and the will is intellectual appetite that regards directly only the intelligible good. Again, terminal values are subordinate to originating values, for the originating values ground good will, and good will grounds the realization of the terminal values. Finally, within terminal values themselves there is a hierarchy; for each is an intelligible order, but some of these orders include others, some are conditioning and others conditioned, some conditions more general and

and others less.

Now the division and the hierarchy of values reveal how the dynamic exigence of rational self-consciousness for self-consistency unfolds into a body of moral precepts concretely operative in a moral consciousness. For sensitive desires and aversions arise spontaneously; their objects cannot be willed until they are subsumed under some intelligible order; intelligible orders are linked one with another in mutual dependence, or as condition and conditioned, or as part and whole; and prior to becoming engaged of one's own choice, one already is engaged in the process by the fact of one's desires and aversions, by one's intelligent grasp of the intelligible orders under which they can be satisfied, and by one's self-consciousness of oneself as an actually rational knower and a potentially rational doer. For "not to choose" is not the object of a possible choice and, while one's choices can be reasonable or not, while they can be more reasonable or less, still one's own rational consciousness is an accomplished fact in the field of knowing and it demands in the name of its own consistency its extension into the field of doing. Such is the dynamic exigence, the operative, moral imperative. But as it concretely exists and functions in consciousness, it is immanent in its own concrete pre-suppositions and implications. It demands, not consistency in the abstract, but consistency in my consciousness, not the superficial consistency purchased by the flight

obtained by self-deception and rationalization nor the inadequate consistency that is content to be no worse than the next fellow, but the penetrating, honest, complete consistency that alone meets the requirements of the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know. Nor is this all, for, in the concrete, consistency means consistent terminal objects. But if there are to be terminal objects, there must be intelligible orders; their intelligibility must be genuine, and not the mere seeming that results from the scotosis of the dramatic subject or <sup>from</sup> the individual, group, or general bias of common sense. If the terminal objects are to be consistent, then there is no room for choosing the part and repudiating the whole, for choosing the conditioned and repudiating the condition, for choosing the antecedent and repudiating the consequent. Finally, intelligible orders include concrete objects of desire and exclude concrete objects of aversion, and so from the dynamic exigence of rational self-consciousness, by the simple process of asking what in fact that exigence concretely is, there can be determined a body of ethical principles.

## 1.4

The Method of Ethics

There follows a conclusion of fundamental importance, namely, the parallel and interpenetration of metaphysics and ethics. For just as the dynamic structure

of our knowing grounds a metaphysics, so the prolongation of that structure into human doing grounds an ethics. Just as the universe of proportionate being is a compound of potency, form, and act, because it is to be known through experience, understanding, and judgment, so the universe of man's proportionate good is a compound of objects of desire, intelligible orders, and values, because the good that man does intelligently and rationally is a manifold in the field of experience, ordered by intelligence, and rationally chosen. Just as metaphysics is a set of positions opposed by sets of counter-positions that arise from the incomplete domination in knowing of the detached and disinterested desire to know, so also values are true and ~~false~~, orders are troubled by disorders, and desires are unnecessarily frustrated, because the detachment and disinterestedness of the pure desire easily fails to develop into fully rational self-consciousness. Just as the counter-positions of metaphysics invite their own reversal by their inconsistency with intelligent and reasonable affirmation, so the basically similar counter-positions of the ethical order through the shorter and longer cycles of the dialectic of progress and decline either enforce their own reversal or destroy their carriers. Just as the heuristic structure of our knowing couples with the generalized emergent probability of the proportionate universe, to reveal an upwardly directed dynamism of finality towards ever

false

dialectic

fuller being, so the obligatory structure of our rational self-consciousness 1) finds its materials and its basis in the products of universal finality, 2) is itself finality on the level of intelligent and rational consciousness, and 3) is finality confronted with the alternative of choosing either development and progress or decline and extinction.

The theme of the parallel and interpenetration of metaphysics and ethics cannot be expanded further in the present context but, at least, something must be said on its methodological ground. We refused to conceive metaphysical method either as an abstract or as a concrete or as a transcendental deduction, not because we denied the exposition of a metaphysics to make use of the deductive form, but because we placed the principles of metaphysics <sup>rather</sup> ~~not~~ in sentences, nor in propositions, nor in judgments, but in the very structure of our knowing. Because that structure is latent and operative in everyone's knowing, it is universal on the side of the subject; and because that structure can be distorted by the interference of alien desires, it grounds a dialectical criticism of subjects. Again, because that structure is employed in every instance of knowing, it is universal on the side of the proportionate object; and because the structure remains dynamic until all questions are answered, it regards every proportionate object concretely. Accordingly, metaphysical method can take subjects as they are,

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invoke dialectical criticism to bring their fundamental orientations into agreement, and apply this agreement to the whole domain of proportionate being in its concreteness. But essentially the same method is available for ethics. Deductivism is brushed aside, not because conclusions do not follow from <sup>premises</sup> ~~them~~, but because the most basic precepts with all their conclusions fail to go to the root of the matter. For the root of ethics, as the root of metaphysics, lies <sup>neither</sup> ~~not~~ in sentences nor in propositions nor in judgments but in the dynamic structure of rational self-consciousness. Because that structure is latent and operative in everyone's choosing, it is universal on the side of the subject; because that structure can be dodged, it grounds a dialectical criticism of subjects. Again, because that structure is recurrent in every act of choice, it is universal; and because its universality consists not in abstraction, but in inevitable recurrence, it also is concrete. Accordingly, ethical method, as metaphysical, can take subjects as they are; it can correct any aberration in their views by a dialectical criticism; and it can apply these corrected views to the totality of concrete objects of choice. Such a method not only sets forth precepts but also bases them on their real principles, which are not propositions or judgments but existing persons; it not only sets forth correct precepts but also provides a radical criticism for mistaken precepts;

it is not content to appeal to logic for the application of precepts, for it can criticize situations as well as subjects and it can invoke dialectical analysis to reveal how situations are to be corrected; finally, because such a method clearly grasps an unchanging dynamic structure immanent in developing subjects that deal with changing situations in correspondingly changing manners, it can steer a sane course between the relativism of mere concreteness and the legalism of remote and static generalities; and it can do so, not by good luck, nor by vaguely postulating prudence, but methodically, because it takes its stand on the ever recurrent dynamic generality that is the structure of rational self-consciousness.

#### 1.5 The Ontology of the Good

So far our analysis has been concerned with the good in a human sense, with objects of desire, intelligible orders, terminal and originating values. But as the close relations between metaphysics and ethics suggest, it should be possible to generalize this notion and, indeed, to conceive the good as identical with the intelligibility that is intrinsic to being.

The main lines of the generalization are grasped easily enough. Instead of speaking of objects of desire, the intelligible orders within which desires are satisfied,

1007

and the terminal and originating values involved in choosing such orders and their contents, we propose to speak of a potential, formal, and actual good, where the potential good is identical with potential intelligibility and so includes but also extends beyond objects of desire, where the formal good is identical with formal intelligibility and so includes but also extends beyond human intelligible orders, where the actual good is identical with actual intelligibilities and so includes but also may extend beyond human values.

The justification of this generalization of the notion of the good is that it is already implicit in the narrower notion. Objects of desire are manifold, but they are not an isolated manifold. They are existents and events that in their concrete possibility and in their realization are bound inextricably through natural laws and actual frequencies with the total manifold of the universe of proportionate being. If objects of desire are instances of the good because of the satisfactions they yield, then the rest of the manifold of existents and events also are a good, because desires are satisfied not in some dream-land but only in the concrete universe. Again, the intelligible orders that are invented, implemented, adjusted and improved by men, are but further exploitations of pre-human, intelligible orders; moreover, they fall within the universal order of generalized

emergent probability, both as consequents of its fertility, and as ruled by its more inclusive sweep. If the intelligible orders of human invention are a good because they systematically assure the satisfaction of desires, then so also are the intelligible orders that under-lie, condition, precede, and include man's invention. Finally, intelligible orders and their contents as possible objects of rational choice, are values; but ~~the~~ the universal order, which is generalized emergent probability, conditions and penetrates, corrects and develops, every particular order; and rational self-consciousness cannot consistently choose the conditioned and reject the condition, choose the part and reject the whole, choose the consequent and reject the antecedent. Accordingly, since man is involved in choosing and since every consistent choice, at least implicitly, is a choice of universal order, the realization of universal order is a true value.

It will be noted that the third part of the argument includes the other two. For the actual good of value presupposes the formal good of order, and the formal good of order presupposes the potential good of a manifold to be ordered. Moreover, the realization of universal order is the realization of all existents and all events; universal order includes all intelligibilities as its constituent parts, whether they are unities or con<sup>u</sup>jugates, frequencies or the operators of development; and universal

order presupposes all manifolds that are ordered or to be ordered. So the good is identified with the intelligibility intrinsic to being.

To carry out so broad a generalization is far easier than to state exactly the range of its implications. Ignorance of implications, in turn, gives rise to the suspicion that one is being tricked into an easy optimism that denies the rather evident fact of evil in this universe. Accordingly, it will not be amiss to assert emphatically that the identification of being and the good by-passes human feelings and sentiments to take its stand exclusively upon intelligible order and rational value.

Feelings and sentiments are by-passed for, though one begins from objects of desire, one finds the potential good, not in them alone, but in the total manifold of the universe. This step does not suppose the discovery of some calculus to measure pleasure and pain, nor does it introduce any claim that the pleasure outweighs the pain. Quite simply it notes that objects of desire are manifold, that this manifold, so far from being isolated, is part and parcel of the total manifold, and that it is in the total manifold that concretely and effectively the potential good resides. Now it is to this first step that the hedonist or sentimentalist must object. He must claim that the meaning of the term, good, is settled on the unquestioning and unquestionable

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level of experience, that the good has to be the good as experienced, and that opposite to the good there is *the* no less real category of evil as experienced. Moreover, the foregoing is a quite coherent position, as long as no claim is made that it is either intelligent or reasonable. The trouble is that the claim cannot be avoided and, once it is made, the contradiction becomes obvious; for it is only by excluding the relevance of questions for intelligence and reflection that the good can be identified with objects of desire; and if such questions are excluded, then intelligence and reasonableness are excluded. On the other hand, if the determination of the notion of the good is a matter of intelligent inquiry and critical reflection, then *the* critical reflection's affirmation will be knowledge of the actual component of the good, intelligent inquiry's explanation will be the knowledge of the formal component of the good, the manifold of objects of desire can be no more than a potential good, and the way is open to the discovery that the manifold of indifferent objects and even the manifold of objects of aversion also are a potential good. Finally, to throw in the obvious methodological note, the positions and counter-positions of metaphysics not only have their prolongations into ethics but also these prolongations respectively invite development or invite reversal by the same dialectical procedures as *the* metaphysical originals.

intelligence

As the identification of the good with being in no manner denies or attempts to minimize pain or suffering, so it has not the slightest implication of a denial of unordered manifolds, of disorder, or of false values. For the middle term in the identification of the good with being is intelligibility. The intelligibility of this universe is to be grasped not only by direct but also by inverse insights; it is to be reached not by a single method, <sup>but</sup> by by the fourfold battery of classical and genetic, statistical and dialectical methods. In so far as the intelligibility of this universe is statistical, its goodness consists potentially in unordered manifolds, formally in the effective probability of the emergence of order, and actually in the eventual emergence. In so far as the intelligibility of this universe is genetic, its goodness consists potentially in the incompleteness and ~~awkwardness~~ of earlier stages of development, formally in the sequence of operators that would replace generic incompleteness by specific perfection, and actually in the attainment of that perfection. In so far as the intelligibility of this universe is dialectical, its goodness consists potentially in the failures and refusals of autonomous self-consciousness to be consistently reasonable, formally in the inner and outer tensions through which such failures and refusals bring about either the choice of their own reversal or the elimination of those that

awkwardness

obstinately refuse the reversal, and actually in the consequent removal of disorders and false values. To identify the good with the intelligibility of being is to identify it, not with the ideal intelligibility of some postulated utopia, but with the ascertainable intelligibility of the universe that exists.

## 2. The Notion of Freedom

Further clarification of the notions of will and choice, introduced in the preceding section, demands a consideration of the nature of human freedom.

### 2.1 The Significance of Statistical Residues

In our account of the canon of statistical residues it was argued that, while any physical event, Z, is implicit in a spatially and temporally scattered set of antecedents, P, Q, R....., none the less this implication does not admit systematic formulation. For the implication is constituted by the combination of a major and a minor premise; and while the major premise resides in laws and systematic unifications of laws, the minor premise lies in the concrete pattern of a diverging series of conditions



that cannot be determined systematically. Accordingly, the objective significance of statistical laws is, not that physical events occur freely, nor even that under special circumstances, such as schemes of recurrence, they cannot be predicted with a qualified certainty, but that in a general they cannot be predicted in virtue of any systematic deduction.

However, the existence of statistical residues is the possibility of higher integrations. There can be autonomous sciences of physics, chemistry, biology, and psychology, because on each earlier level of systematization there are statistical residues that constitute the merely coincidental manifolds to be systematized on the next level. It follows that higher laws and higher

*schemes of recurrence cannot be deduced from lower laws and lower schemes of recurrence, for the higher is engaged in regu-*

lating what the lower leaves as merely coincidental.

Moreover, since there are statistical residues on every level, it follows that events on any given level cannot be deduced in systematic fashion from the combination of all the laws and all the schemes of recurrence of that and of all prior levels.

Accordingly, the significance of the canon of statistical residues is not that it implies the freedom of our choices. Its significance lies in the fact that it makes possible an account of the autonomy of the successive departments of science, that this autonomy excludes a

determinism of the higher by the lower, and that the canon of statistical residues itself excludes a deductive determinism either in the lower or the higher. Undoubtedly, these exclusions make it far easier to dispose of arguments against the possibility of freedom, and they narrow down the field in which impediments to freedom can be found. Still, they are only exclusions. A positive account of freedom must arise from an examination of the act of will and of its intellectual antecedents.

## 2.2

The Underlying Sensitive Flow

In such a positive account there are four main elements, namely, the underlying sensitive flow, the practical insight, the process of reflection, and the decision. The underlying sensitive flow consists of sensible presentations and imaginative representations, of affective and aggressive feelings, of conscious bodily movements, etc. In this flow the sensitive psychologist can discern various laws and can work out consequent schemes of recurrence; he can compare such a flow at earlier and later stages of psychic development and move to the discovery of the operators that explanatorily relate the laws effective at one time to the laws effective at another. However, if his statement of his results is intelligent and reasonable, then his statement is not simply a product of the laws and schemes operative in his <sup>own</sup> psycho. On the contrary,

precisely in so far as his statement is intelligent and reasonable, it consists in the imposition of higher integrations upon what is merely coincidental as far as the laws and schemes of his psyche go. Moreover, this possibility of imposing higher integrations upon lower coincidental manifolds is not restricted to psychological investigators; it is a general possibility; and it is only in so far as this possibility has been realized that there arises the question of any free choice.

There follows an important corollary. If it happens that we discover the existence of free acts of will, at least it will not happen that we discover all the acts of all men to be free. For from the outset we are excluding from consideration any act that occurs through mere sensitive routine and that can be accounted for without appealing to the introduction of some higher integration by intelligence.

## 2.3

The Practical Insight

The second element to be considered is the practical insight. As any direct insight, it results from inquiry and it emerges upon the sensitive flow in which it grasps some intelligible unity or correlation. Again, as in any direct insight, the mere fact of grasping the unity or correlation does not imply that the unity exists or that the correlation governs actual events.

For beyond the question for intelligence that is met by insight, there is always the question for reflection. However, while the speculative or factual insight is followed by the question whether the unity exists or whether the correlation governs events, the practical insight is followed by the question whether the unity is going to be made exist or whether the correlation is going to be made to govern events. In other words, while speculative and factual insights are concerned to lead to knowledge of being, practical insights are concerned to lead to the making of being. Their objective is not what is but what is to be done. They reveal, not the unities and relations of things as they are, but the unities and relations of possible courses of action.

There follows another important corollary. When speculative or factual insight is correct, reflective understanding can grasp a relevant virtually unconditioned. But when practical insight is correct, then reflective understanding cannot grasp a relevant virtually unconditioned; for if it could, the content of the insight already would be a fact; and if it were already a fact, then it would not be a possible course of action which, as yet, is not a fact but just a possibility.

## 2.4

Practical Reflection

The third element to be considered is reflection. For the grasp of a possible course of action need not result automatically and blindly in its execution. Further questions can be raised and, commonly, their number varies with our familiarity with the situation in hand, with the seriousness of the consequences of the proposed course of action, with the uncertainties and the risks it involves, with our antecedent willingness or unwillingness to assume responsibility for the consequences and to run the risks. But the essence of the reflection does not consist in the number of questions asked or in the length of time spent in reaching answers. For further questions may regard the object; then one asks oneself just what the proposed course of action is, what are its successive steps, what alternatives it admits, what it excludes, what consequences it will have, whether the whole proposal is really possible, just how probable or certain are its various features. But in a familiar situation one may already know the answers to all these questions, and then there is no need to inquire into the object of the act; like the master of a science, one has only to advert to the issue to reach a full grasp of it and of its implications. Again, further questions may regard motives for the course of action. Would its execution be agreeable? Are there other features to

compensate for its disagreeableness? What is its utility? How desirable are the goals to which it is useful? From the greater or less satisfaction of more or fewer desires, one can turn to the consideration of intelligible order and then of value. Does the proposed act come under the accepted order? If not, is it merely egoistic, or is it a contribution to the initiation of an improvement in the accepted order? Or if it does come under the accepted order, is not that order in need of improvement? Is not this the time to begin improving things? Finally, all such questions may be superfluous. There is no need to marshal motives in the given instance, because willingness to perform such an act has become habitual. Still, is that willingness right or wrong, good or bad? The world's work would be never done unless we acted largely out of habit. But might not my habits be improved? Are the values to which they commit me true or false? Am I intelligent and reasonable enough in the short run, only to be blind to the larger implications of my way of living? Or if I advert to such larger implications, am I doing what I can to be helpful to others in this respect?

There follows a set of corollaries. First of all, the reflection consists in an actuation of rational self-consciousness. I am empirically conscious inasmuch as I am experiencing, intellectually conscious inasmuch as I am inquiring or formulating intelligently, rationally conscious inasmuch as I am seeking to grasp the virtually

unconditioned or judging on the basis of such a grasp. But I become rationally self-conscious inasmuch as I am concerned with reasons for my own acts, and this occurs when I *scrutinize* the object and investigate the motives of a possible course of action.

Secondly, though the reflection heads beyond knowing to doing, still it consists simply in knowing. Thus, it may reveal that the proposed action as concretely possible, clearly effective, highly agreeable, quite useful, morally obligatory, etc. But it is one thing to know exactly what could be done and all the reasons for doing it. It is quite another for such knowledge to issue in doing.

Thirdly, the reflection has no internal term, no capacity of its own to come to an end. For it is a knowing that heads to doing. In so far as it is a knowing, it can reach an internal term, for one can grasp the virtually unconditioned and thereby attain certitude on the possibility of a proposed course of action, on its agreeableness, on its utility, on its obligatoriness. But in so far as this knowing is practical, in so far as its concern is with something to be done and with the reasons for doing it, the reflection has not an internal but an external term; for the reflection is just knowing, but the term is an ulterior deciding and doing.

Fourthly, because the reflection has no internal term, it can expand more or less indefinitely. The proposed action can be examined in enormous detail; its certain, probable, and possible consequences can be followed far into the future; motives can be submitted to fine analysis; the variation in their appeal at different times can be noted and studied; from concrete questions one can shift to general philosophic issues to return to the concrete with inquiries about one's orientation in life and the influence upon one of unconscious factors. So the native hue of resolution is sicklied over with the pale cast of thought.

Fifthly, one can advert to the possibility of reflection expanding indefinitely, to the incompatibility between such expansion and the business of living, and to the unreasonableness of the expansion. Still such advertence is simply a transposition of the issue. Reflection on a course of action is replaced by reflection on reflection. As the former heads beyond itself to a decision, so the latter heads beyond itself to a decision to decide. As the former yields the conclusion that I should act or not act in a given manner, so the latter yields the conclusion that I should decide to decide or not decide in that manner. But it is one thing to know what I should do, and it is another to do it.

Sixthly, while there is a normal duration for



the reflection, it is not reflection but decision that enforces the norm. Reflection occurs because rational self-consciousness demands knowledge of what one proposes to do and of the reasons one has for doing it. Its normal duration is the length of time needed to learn the nature of the object of the proposed act and to persuade oneself to willingness to perform the act. Accordingly, the normal duration is a variable that is inverse to one's antecedent knowledge and willingness. But it is neither the normal duration itself nor reflection upon it that ends the process of reflecting. For that process has no internal term, no capacity to bring itself to an end. What ends the reflection is the decision. As long as I am reflecting, I have not decided yet. Until I have decided, the reflection can be prolonged by further questions. But once I have decided and as long as I remain decided, the reflection is over and done with. The proposed course of action has ceased to be a mere possibility; it has begun to be an actuality.

## 2.5

The Decision

There remains to be considered the fourth element in our analysis. It is the decision, and one will do well to distinguish between the decision itself and its manifestation whether in ~~its~~ execution, or in ~~my~~ knowledge ~~that I have decided~~, or in ~~my~~ expression of

that knowledge. For the decision itself is an act of willing. It possesses the internal alternatives of either consenting or refusing. It may also possess external alternatives, when different courses of action are considered simultaneously, and then consent to one and refusal of the others constitute a choice.

The fundamental nature of decision is best revealed by comparing it with judgment. Decision, then, resembles judgment inasmuch as both select one member of a pair of contradictories; as judgment either affirms or denies, so decision either consents or refuses. Again, both decision and judgment are concerned with actuality; but judgment is concerned to complete one's knowledge of an actuality that already exists; while decision is concerned to confer actuality upon a course of action that otherwise will not exist. Finally, both decision and judgment are rational, for both deal with objects apprehended by insight, and both occur because of a reflective grasp of reasons.

However, there is a radical difference between the rationality of judgment and the rationality of decision. Judgment is an act of rational consciousness, but decision is an act of rational self-consciousness. The rationality of judgment emerges in the unfolding of the detached and disinterested desire to know in the process towards knowledge of the universe of being. But the rationality

*emerges*

of decision emerges in the demand of the rationally conscious subject for <sup>c</sup>consistency between his knowing and his deciding and doing. Again, the rationality of judgment ~~e~~<sup>m</sup>erges if in fact a reasonable judgment occurs, but the rationality of decision emerges if in fact a reasonable decision occurs. Finally, the effective rationality of the subject of rational consciousness is radically negative, for then the subject is effectively rational if he does not allow other desire to interfere with the functioning of the pure desire to know; but the effective rationality of the subject of rational self-consciousness is radically positive, for then the subject is effectively rational only if his demand <sup>for</sup> ~~of~~ consistency between knowing and doing is followed by his deciding and doing in a manner consistent with his knowing.

In other words, there is a succession of enlargements of consciousness, a succession of transformations of what consciousness means. Waking replaces dreaming. Intelligent inquiry emerges in waking to compound intelligent with empirical consciousness. Critical reflection follows understanding and formulation to add rational consciousness to intelligent and empirical consciousness. But the final enlargement and transformation of consciousness consists in the empirically, intelligently, and rationally conscious subject 1) demanding conformity of his doing to his knowing and 2) acceding to that demand by deciding reasonably.

paragraph #  
 # Again, a set of corollaries is to be noted. For, in the first place, it is now possible to explain why practical reflection lacks an internal term. If it were concerned simply with knowing what the proposed course of action is and what are the motives in its favor, it would be an activity of rational consciousness and would possess an internal term in certain judgments upon the object and the motives of the proposed action. But practical reflection is concerned with knowing only in order to guide doing. It is an activity that involves an enlarging transformation of consciousness. In that enlarged consciousness the term is not judgment but decision. Consequently, practical reflection does not come to an end once the object and motives of a proposed action are known; it comes to an end when one decides either in favor of the proposal or against it.

Secondly, the same enlarging transformation of consciousness illuminates both the meaning and the frequent inefficacy of obligation. It is possible for practical reflection to reach with certitude the conclusion that a proposed course of action is obligatory, that either I decide in favor of the proposal or else I surrender consistency between my knowing and my doing. Now in such instances it is apparent that the emergence of an obligation is the emergence of a rational necessity in rational consciousness. I cannot prevent questions for reflection from arising; once they arise, I cannot set aside the demand

of my rationality that I assent if and only if I grasp the virtually unconditioned; and once I judge that I ought to act in a determinate manner, that I cannot both be reasonable and act otherwise, then my reasonableness is bound to the act by a link of necessity. Such is the meaning of obligation.

Yet the fact remains that I can fail to fulfil my known obligations, that the iron link of necessity can prove to be a wisp of straw. How can this be? How can necessity turn out to be contingency? The answer lies in the enlarging transformation of consciousness. The rationality that imposes an obligation is not conditioned internally by an act of will. The rationality that carries out an obligation is conditioned internally by the occurrence of a reasonable act of will. To repeat the point in other words, the rational subject as imposing an obligation upon himself is just a knower, and his rationality consists radically in not allowing other desire to interfere with the unfolding of the detached and disinterested desire to know. But the rational subject as carrying out an obligation is not just a knower but also a doer, and his rationality consists not merely in excluding interference with cognitional process but also in extending the rationality of his knowing into the field of doing. But that extension does not occur simply by knowing one's obligations. It occurs just inasmuch as one wills to meet one's obligations.

How then does necessity turn out to be contingency? Clearly, there is no change in the necessity itself, but there occurs a change in the context. Rational consciousness is being transformed into rational self-consciousness. What in the context of rational consciousness is a rational necessity, in the context of rational self-consciousness becomes a rational exigence. If a proposed action is obligatory, then one cannot be a rational knower and deny the obligation, and one cannot be a rational doer and not fulfil the obligation. But one can be a rational knower without an act of willing, and one cannot be a rational doer without an act of willing. It is the addition of the further constitutive requirement of an act of will that 1) marks the shift from rational consciousness to rational self-consciousness and 2) changes what is rational necessity in the field of knowing into rational exigence in the larger field of both knowing and doing.

Thirdly, the same enlarging transformation throws light upon the difference between the acknowledgement of actuality in judgment and the bestowal of actuality by decision. As has been seen, both judgment and decision are concerned with actuality; but judgment merely acknowledges an actuality that already exists; while decision confers actuality upon a course of action that otherwise is merely possible.

Now actuality has peculiar characteristics. It is known primarily by grasping the virtually unconditioned, the conditioned that happens to have its conditions fulfilled. Because it is unconditioned, it ranks high in the field of intelligibility. Still it merely happens to have its conditions fulfilled, and so it merely happens to be an unconditioned. Though unconditioned, it also is contingent. And this contingency appears 1) in its being, 2) in its being known, and 3) in its being willed.

It is apparent in its being. For actuality as act is existence or occurrence, and actuality as of the actuated supposes at least existence and also at times occurrence. But there is no systematic deduction of existence or occurrence. The most that understanding can do is set up ideal frequencies from which actual frequencies of existence and occurrence do not diverge systematically. But actual frequencies can and do diverge non-systematically from the ideal, and so in every instance actuality is just what happens to be.

Again, contingency is apparent in actuality as known. For it is known by grasping the virtually unconditioned. The virtually unconditioned can be grasped, if fulfilment of its conditions happens to be given. And the fulfilment can never be more than what happens, for the fulfilment consists in the occurrence of relevant data, and the occurrence of data, like all occurrence,

Insight

## Chapter XVIII: The Possibility of Ethics §2.5

is contingent. For it merely happens that I exist, that I experience in such and such a manner, etc.

Finally, the possible courses of action invented by intelligence, motivated by reason, and executed by willing, are contingent in their actuality. For the insights that reveal possible courses of action also reveal that they are not necessities but mere possibilities in need of reflective evaluation.

Reflective evaluation in turn brings to light not what must be so but merely what for such and such reasons may be chosen or rejected. Lastly, even when reflective evaluation reveals only one course of action to be reasonable, there still is needed the reasonableness of actual willing; and as the reasonableness of human acts of will is not a natural endowment but an ever uncertain personal achievement, there is a third and final contingency to the actuality of courses of action. In particular, one should note the fallacy in every argument from determinate knowing to determinate willing. For every argument of that type must postulate a conformity between knowing and willing. But such conformity exists only when in fact willing actually is reasonable. Hence, to deduce the determinate act of will one must postulate the conformity; and to verify the postulate one must already have the determinate willing that one is out to demonstrate.



is contingent. For it merely happens that I exist, that I experience in such and such a manner, etc.

Finally, the possible courses of action invented by intelligence, motivated by reason, and executed by willing, are contingent in their actuality. For the action is contingent, if willing it is contingent; and so the actuality both of willing and of the action willed is contingent. The major premise simply restates the preceding sentence, which defines the courses of action under consideration. The minor premise follows from the fact that the reasonable act of willing constitutes both the doing in question and the actuality of <sup>con</sup>consistency between knowing and doing. For there is no argument from the content of knowledge to the occurrence of willing unless one postulates some conformity or consistency between knowing and willing; but that ~~postulate~~ <sup>postulate</sup> is verified actually, not by the exigence for conformity or consistency but by the occurrence of conformity or consistency; and that occurrence consists in the act of willing. Hence necessarily one is involved in a vicious circle whenever one attempts to argue from a subject's knowing to his willing; for it is only through his willing that the subject attains to the effectively rational self-consciousness in which willing is consistent with knowing and conforms to it.

## 2.6

Freedom

Further consideration of the contingency of the act of will brings us to the notion of freedom. As this is our main topic, it may not be amiss to resume what has been said. Proportionate being, then, involves a number of explanatory genera, so that there is a series of levels of operation with each higher level making systematic what otherwise would have been merely coincidental on the previous level. It follows that there can be distinct, autonomous, yet related departments of science: distinct, because they deal with different levels of proportionate being; autonomous, because defining relations on any level constitute a closed system; related, because each higher level finds its materials in the coincidental manifold of the previous level, and each lower level supplies a coincidental manifold for the next higher level.

*see relations*

*speculates*

While this analysis <sup>goes beyond</sup> ~~excludes~~ determinism by its acknowledgement of statistical laws and of autonomous sciences, it does not imply freedom. Though classical laws are abstract, they retain their universality, so that occurrence is always according to law. Though the application of abstract laws to concrete situations involves an appeal to a non-systematic manifold of further determinations, this merely means that there can be no general procedure for establishing concrete promises of the type, If P, Q, R, ... occur, then Z must occur. But it is not

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1030

impossible to formulate such premises in particular instances, notably in the special situations created in laboratories. Nor is it impossible to make accurate predictions of the distant future, when schemes of recurrence exist and their survival is supposed.

Accordingly, an account of freedom has to turn to a study of intellect and will. In the coincidental manifolds of sensible presentations, practical insights grasp possible courses of action that are examined by reflection, decided upon by acts of willing, and thereby either are or are not realized in the underlying sensitive flow. In this process there is to be discerned the emergence of elements of higher integration. For the higher integration effected on the level of human living consists of sets of courses of action, and these actions emerge inasmuch as they are understood by intelligent consciousness, evaluated by rational consciousness, and willed by rational self-consciousness.

To grasp the significance of this emergence, one must revert to the point already made that intelligibility is intrinsic to being and that it is either spiritual or material, either an intelligibility that also is intelligent or else an intelligibility that is not also intelligent. For the distinction between the spiritual and the material emphasizes the fact that the intelligent and rational emergence of courses of action stands to the

and as static |  
level of distinctively human operations as dynamic systems on the move stand to the psychic and organic levels and <sup>as</sup> static systems stand to the chemical and physical orders of events. In other words, practical insight, reflection, and decision are a legislative function; instead of being subject to laws, as are physical and chemical events, they are what make the laws of the distinctively human level of operations. Where material reality is subject to law and thereby intelligible, spiritual reality has intelligibility, not through subjection to law, but by its native intelligence; and while spiritual reality is manifested through the higher systematization and order it imposes on lower levels of being, still that systematization and order is not imposed upon spiritual reality, as the law of inverse squares upon masses, but is generated by practical insights, rational reflection, and decision.

intelligible |  
At this point, however, there crops up the ambiguity of the notion of law. There are, then, the laws of matter and the laws of spirit. The laws of matter are investigated by empirical scientists and, when spirit is said to be legislative, one means that spirit originates intelligible orders that are parallel to the intelligibilities investigated by empirical scientists. On the other hand, the laws of spirit are the principles and norms that govern spirit in the exercise of its legislative function; and they differ radically from the laws of matter, not only in their higher point

of application, but also in their nature and content. As has been seen, the laws of matter are abstract and they can be applied concretely only by the addition of further determinations from a non-systematic manifold. But the laws of spirit reside in the dynamic structure of its cognitional and volitional operations, and their concrete application is effected through spirit's own operations within that dynamic structure. Thus, in working out the notion of the good, we discovered in the rationally self-conscious subject an exigence for consistency between his knowing and his doing, and we saw how a body of ethical precepts could be derived simply by asking what concretely was implicit in that exigence. As metaphysics is a corollary to the structure of knowing, so ethics is a corollary to the structure of knowing and doing; and as ethics resides in the structure, so the concrete applications of ethics are worked out by spirit inasmuch as it operates within the structure to reflect and decide upon the possible courses of action <sup>that</sup> it grasps.

It follows that there is a radical difference between the contingency of the act of willing and the general contingency of existence and occurrence in the rest of the domain of proportionate being. The latter contingency falls short of strict intelligible necessity, not because it is <sup>free, but because it is</sup> involved in the non-systematic character of material multiplicity, continuity, and frequency.

But the contingency of the act of the will, so far from resulting from the non-systematic, arises in the imposition of further intelligible order upon otherwise merely coincidental manifolds. Moreover, that imposition of further intelligible order is the work of intelligence, of rational reflection, and of ethically guided will. None the less, that imposition of intelligible order is contingent. For, on the one hand, even when possibility is unique, so that rational consciousness has no alternative, still the unique possibility is not realized necessarily. To claim that the sole reasonable course of action is realized necessarily is to claim that necessarily willing is consistent with knowing. But that claim is preposterous, for it contradicts the common experience of a divergence between what one does and what one knows one ought to do. Nor is it preposterous merely in fact but also in principle, for actual consistency between knowing and deciding is the result of deciding reasonably, and what results from deciding reasonably cannot be erected into a universal principle that proves all decisions to be necessarily reasonable.

necessarily  
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Freedom, then, is a special kind of contingency. It is contingency that arises, not from the empirical residue that grounds materiality and the non-systematic, but in the order of spirit, of intelligent grasp, rational reflection, and morally guided will. It has the twofold basis that its object is merely a <sup>possibility</sup> possible and that its

agent is contingent not only in his existence but also in the extension of his rational consciousness into rational self-consciousness. For it is one and the same act of willing that both decides in favor of the object or against it and that constitutes the subject as deciding reasonably or unreasonably, as succeeding or failing in the expansion of rational consciousness into an effectively rational self-consciousness.

Accordingly, freedom possesses not only the negative aspect of excluding necessity but also the positive aspect of responsibility. Intelligent grasp of a possible course of action need not result automatically in its execution, for critical reflection can intervene to scrutinize the object and evaluate the motives. Critical reflection cannot execute the proposed action, for it is simply a knowing. Knowing cannot necessitate the decision, for consistency between knowing and willing becomes an actuality only through the willing. The decision, then, is not a consequent but a new emergence that both realizes the course of action or rejects it, and realizes an effectively rational self-consciousness of fails to do so. None the less, though the act of will is a contingent emergence, it also is an act of the subject; the measure of the freedom with which the act occurs also is the measure of his responsibility for it.

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3. The Problem of Liberation

3.1 Essential and Effective Freedom

The difference between essential and effective freedom is the difference between a dynamic structure and its operational range. Man is free essentially inasmuch as possible courses of action are grasped by practical insight, motivated by reflection, and executed by decision. But man is free effectively to a greater or less extent inasmuch <sup>as</sup> this dynamic structure is open to grasping, motivating, and executing a broad or a narrow range of otherwise possible courses of action. Thus, one may be essentially but not effectively free to give up smoking.

A consideration of effective freedom is meaningless, unless essential freedom exists. None the less, the negation of full effective freedom may appear a negation of essential freedom if the proper grounds of the latter are not grasped clearly and distinctly. Accordingly, it hardly will be amiss to recall briefly the main points that already have been made.

First, then, all formal intelligibility within the domain of proportionate being is contingent. It is not what of itself must be but merely what in fact happens to be. Hence, species are not realizations of <sup>static descriptive</sup> absolute ~~ideas~~ <sup>concepts but intelligible</sup> solutions to the concrete problems of generalised emergent probability and so subject to variation with



variation of the problems. Again, natural laws are not to be determined by pure speculation but solely by an empirical method in which what is grasped by insight is mere hypothesis until confirmed by verification. Finally, the possible courses of action grasped by practical insight are merely possible until they are motivated by reflection and executed by decision.

Secondly, not only are possible courses of action contingent but also they constitute a manifold of alternatives. The sensitive flow of a man's percepts and images, feelings and conations, offers an otherwise coincidental manifold for higher systematization. In fact, that higher systematization is effected in different manners, whether one considers the same individual at different times, or different individuals, or aggregates of individuals in different environments, <sup>or</sup> ~~or~~ different epochs, or different cultures.

Thirdly, not only are possible courses of action a manifold, but man is aware of the alternatives. He does not suffer from the illusion that because a course of action is possible therefore it also is necessary. The possibilities that he grasps are submitted to reflective examination, and such examination commonly leads to a grasp of further possibilities. Nor does the examination come to an end out of its own resources but only through the intervention of the will's decision.

Fourthly, the will's decision is not determined by its antecedents. For the remote antecedents lie on the levels of physics, chemistry, biology, and sensitive psychology; and events on such lower levels determine merely the materials that admit a manifold of alternative higher systematizations. On the other hand, the proximate antecedents merely define and motivate the alternative higher systematizations; they present no more than a projected formal intelligibility which, so far from necessitating its own actuality, can attain actuality only if the will decides in its favor.

Fifthly, the most obvious bit of evidence for the freedom of man's decisions lies in the possibility of inconsistency between human knowing and doing; for if such inconsistency is possible, then there cannot be any valid argument from determinate knowing to determinate willing and doing. However, one is not to mistake the obvious for the essential. Man is not free because he can be unreasonable in his choices. Rather the root of freedom lies in the contingency of the formal intelligibility of proportionate being. Because such intelligibility is contingent, it cannot guarantee its own existence or occurrence. Again, because it is contingent, it is not unique but a manifold of alternatives. Further, because it is contingent, it is known as merely possible, as in need of motivation, as needing motivation because

it will exist or occur only if decision is forthcoming. Finally, because it is contingent, there cannot be valid motives for it that necessitate decision in its favor.

To put the point in another manner, any practical insight can be formulated in a proposition of the type, Under such and such circumstances the intelligent thing to do is to make such and such a decision. Let the totality of circumstances be denoted by P and the decision by Q. Then the content of the practical insight will be the inferential relation, If P, then Q. But such an inferential relation ceases to be a mere supposition about what might be or should be and becomes a true statement of what is, only when the act of will, Q, occurs. But any attempt to show that the act of will is necessitated by its proximate antecedents must suppose the truth of the inferential relation, If P, then Q. Therefore, it must suppose that the act of will is occurring. And so it is involved in a petitio principii or, if you prefer, in a simple appeal to the principle of identity, namely, If the act, Q, is occurring, then it must be occurring.

Sixthly, though the act of will is free, it is not arbitrary. A course of action is intelligent and intelligible if it is grasped by a practical insight. It is reasonable if it is motivated favorably by rational reflection. The act of will has the function of conferring actuality upon an intelligible, intelligent, and reasonable

course of action; and what is intelligible, intelligent, and reasonable is not arbitrary.

Seventhly, the analysis is quite general. For while there is presupposed a sensitive flow that receives a higher integration, still intelligent grasp, reflection, and decision rise from the flow as content, and that content may be not representative but symbolic. Thus, one can make decisions about deciding by having the sensitive flow present the relevant words.

## 3.2

Conditions of Effective Freedom

Conditions of effective freedom may be listed under the four headings of 1) external circumstance, 2) the subject as sensitive, 3) the subject as intelligent, and 4) the subject as antecedently willing.

Everyone is familiar with the limitations placed upon effective freedom by external constraint. But just as the prisoner is not free to go and come as he pleases, so the Eskimo is not free to mount a camel or the desert nomad to go fishing in a kayak. Whatever one's external circumstances may be, they offer only a limited range of concretely possible alternatives and only limited resources for bringing about the enlargement of that range.

In the second place, there are the limitations

that arise from one's psychoneural state. It is the proximate source of the otherwise coincidental manifold that receives its higher integration from intelligence and will. In the normal state, there is a spontaneous adaptation and adjustment between the orientations of intellectual and psychoneural development. But even perfect adjustment does not dispense one from the necessity of acquiring sensitive skills and habits and, until they are acquired, one is not free to speak a foreign language or to ~~play~~ the violin merely by taking thought. Moreover, perfect adjustment may be lacking; scotosis can result in a conflict between the operators of intellectual and of psychoneural development; and then the sensitive subject is invaded by anxiety, by obsessions, and by other neurotic phenomena that restrict his capacity for effective deliberation and choice.

Thirdly, there are the limitations of intellectual development. Once one has understood, one can reproduce almost at will the act of understanding. But until one has understood, one has to struggle through the process of learning. Moreover, the greater one's accumulation of insights, the broader is the base from one which one can move towards still further insights and, perhaps, the greater is the facility with which one can reach them. Now the same laws hold for the occurrence of practical insights as for insights generally, and so it is that the

1041

greater the development of one's practical intelligence, the greater the range of possible courses of action one can grasp and consider. Inversely, the less the development of one's practical intelligence, the less the range of possible courses of action that here and now will occur to one.

Fourthly, we have distinguished already between the conjugate potency, will, the conjugate form, willingness, and the conjugate <sup>u</sup>act, willing. Will is the bare capacity to make decisions. Willingness is the state in which persuasion is not needed to bring one to a decision. Willing, finally, is the act of deciding.

Now the function of willingness runs parallel to the function of the habitual accumulation of insights. What one does not understand yet, one can learn; but learning takes time, and until that time is devoted to learning, otherwise possible courses of action are excluded. Similarly, when antecedent willingness is lacking, persuasion can be invoked; but persuasion takes time, and until that time is devoted to persuading oneself or to being persuaded by others, one remains closed to otherwise possible courses of action.

There is a further aspect to the matter. For genetically one mounts from empirical to intellectual consciousness, from intellectual to rational consciousness, and from rational consciousness to rational self-consciousness.

As long as one is moving towards full self-possession, the detached and disinterested desire to know tends to be in control. But once one is in the state of rational self-consciousness, then one's decisions are in control, for they set the objective of one's total activity and select the actions that are to lead to the goal. So it is that a person, caught as it were unawares, may be ready for any scheme or exploit but, on the second thoughts of rational self-consciousness, settles back into the narrow routine defined by his antecedent willingness. For unless one's antecedent willingness has the height and breadth and depth of the unrestricted desire to know, the emergence of rational self-consciousness involves the addition of a restriction upon one's effective freedom.

In brief, effective freedom itself has to be won. The key point is to reach a willingness to persuade oneself and to submit to the persuasion of others. For then one can be persuaded to a universal willingness; so one becomes antecedently willing to learn all there is to be learnt about willing and learning and about the enlargement of one's freedom from external constraints and psychoneural interferences. But to reach the universal willingness that matches the unrestricted desire to know is indeed a high achievement, for it consists not in the mere recognition of an ideal norm but

in the adoption of an attitude towards the universe of being, not in the adoption of an affective attitude that would desire but not perform but in the adoption of an effective attitude in which performance matches aspiration.

Finally if effective freedom is to be won, it is not to be won easily. Just as the pure desire to know is the possibility but not in itself the attainment of the scientist's settled habit of constant inquiry, so the potency, will, is the possibility but not in itself the attainment of the genuine person's complete openness to reflection and to rational persuasion. Clearly, this confronts us with a paradox. How is one to be persuaded to genuineness and openness, when one is not yet open to persuasion?

3.3

Possible Functions <sup>of</sup> Satire and Humor

Kierkegaardian thought draws attention to an aesthetic, an ethical, and a religious sphere of existential subjectivity, and it finds in irony the means of effecting the transition from the first to the second, and in humor the means for development from the second to the third.

The aesthetic and the ethical <sup>h</sup>spheres would seem to stand to the whole man, to the existential subject, as the counter-positions and the positions stand to the cognitional subject. Inasmuch as one accepts the counter-



positions, one thinks of the real as a subdivision in the "already out there now," of objectivity as extroversion, and of knowing as taking a good look; similarly, on the counter-positions, the good is identified with objects of desire while the intelligible good of order and the rational good of value are regarded as so much ideological superstructure that can claim to be good only inasmuch as it furthers the attainment of objects of desire. On the other hand, by accepting the positions one identifies the real with being, objectivity with intelligent inquiry and rational reflection, and knowledge with the cumulative process that rises from experience through understanding to judgment; similarly, one lumps objects of desire along with objects of aversion as instances of the potential good, subordinates both to the formal good of order, and selects between alternative orders by appealing to the rational criteria that are the sources of the meaning of the name, value.

However, if the ethical sphere stands to the aesthetic, as the <sup>S</sup>positions to the counter-positions, it would be a mistake to identify the ethical sphere with acceptance of the positions and the aesthetic sphere with acceptance of the counter-positions. For the spheres are existential, but the positions and counter-positions are defined sharply. One might claim that Marxism satisfies the definition of the counter-positions, for Marxism is

a philosophy. One could not claim that Marx satisfied the same definition, for Marx was not a theory but a man.

The fact of the matter would seem to be that men commonly live in some blend or mixture of the artistic, dramatic, and practical patterns of experience, that they tend to the positions in enunciating their principles and to the counter-positions in living their lives, and that they reveal little inclination to a rigidly consistent adherence to the claims either of pure reason or of pure animality. As contemporary existentialism would put it, L'homme se définit par une exigence. Man develops biologically to develop psychically, and he develops psychically to develop intellectually and rationally. The higher integrations suffer the disadvantage of emerging later. They are the demands of finality upon us before they are realities in us. They are manifested more commonly in aspiration and in dissatisfaction with oneself than in the rounded achievement of complete genuineness, perfect openness, universal willingness. Finally, even that rounded achievement is itself not a goal but a means to a goal; for genuineness and openness and willingness name, not acts, but conditions for acts of correct understanding and good willing.

The concrete being of man, then, is being in process. His existing lies in developing. His unrestricted

desire to know heads him ever towards a known unknown. his sensitivity matches the operator of his intellectual advance with a capacity and a need to respond to a further reality than meets the eye and to grope his way towards it. Still this basic, indeterminately directed dynamism has its ground in potency; it is without the settled assurance and efficacy of form; it tends to be shouldered out of the busy day, to make its force felt in the tranquillity of darkness, in the solitude of loneliness, in the shattering upheavals of personal or social disaster.

It is in this context that the profound significance of satire and of humor comes to light. For satire breaks in upon the busy day. It puts printers to work, competes on the glossy page of advertisement, *challenges even the enclosed of* ~~rides a topper for~~ bright chatter. It enters not by argument but by laughter. For argument would presuppose premises, and premises that would be accepted easily also would be mistaken. But laughter supposes only human nature, and men there are. Moreover, as it is without logical presuppositions, so it occurs with apparent purposelessness; and that too is highly important for, if men are afraid to think, they may not be afraid to laugh. Yet proofless, purposeless laughter can dissolve honored pretense; it can disrupt conventional humbug; it can disillusion men of his most cherished illusions, for it is in league with the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know.

# *run paragraph*  
# Satire laughs at, humor laughs with. Satire would depict the counter-positions in their current concrete features, and by that serene act of cool objectification it would hurry them to their destiny of bringing about their own reversal. In contrast, humor keeps the positions in contact with human limitations and human infirmity. It listens with sincere respect to the Stoic description of the Wise Man, and then requests an introduction. It has an honest admiration for the blue-prints <sup>of</sup> ~~for~~ Utopia, but it also has a vivid imagination that puts <sup>a</sup> familiar ~~Tom~~ and Dick<sup>y</sup> and Harry<sup>y</sup> in the unfamiliar roles. It questions neither aspirations nor ideals nor high seriousness nor earnest purpose nor self-sacrificing generosity; but it knows the difference between promise and fulfillment, and it refuses to calculate without men as they are, without me as I am. For if satire becomes red with indignation, humor blushes with humility.

But the significance of satire and humor is, I suggest, out of proportion to their efficacy. Because counter-positions commonly keep shifting their ground, the satirist is likely to clip one head off the monster he attacks only to witness another sprout out in its place. Again, because the point to humor is transcendent, it is apt to be missed. But if satire and humor are weighed, not by the results they obtain, but by the potentialities they reveal, then theirs is the signal importance of marking with a chorale the chasms that divide successive orientations.

of man's polymorphic consciousness. For as satire can help man bring out of the self-centeredness of an animal in a habitat to the universal viewpoint of an intelligent and reasonable being, so humor can aid him to the discovery of the complex problem of grasping and holding the nettle of a restricted, effective freedom.

## 3.4

Moral Impotence

To assert moral impotence is to assert that man's effective freedom is restricted, not in the superficial fashion that results from external circumstances or psychic abnormality, but in the profound fashion that follows from incomplete intellectual and volitional development. For when that development is incomplete, there are practical insights that could be had if a man took time out to acquire the necessary, preparatory insights, and there are courses of action that would be chosen if a man took time out to persuade himself to willingness. There follows a gap between the proximate effective freedom he actually possesses and, on the other hand, the remote and hypothetical effective freedom that he would possess if certain conditions happened to be fulfilled. Now this gap <sup>measures</sup> one's moral impotence. For complete self-development is a long and difficult process. During that process one has to live and make decisions in the light of one's undeveloped intelligence and under the guidance of one's incomplete willingness. And the less

measures

developed one is, the less one appreciates the need of development and the less one is willing to take time out for one's intellectual and moral education.

Moreover, as the scotosis of the dramatic subject, so the moral impotence of the essentially free subject is neither grasped with perfect clarity nor <sup>is it</sup> totally unconscious. For if one were to represent a man's field of freedom as a circular area, then one would distinguish a luminous central region in which he was effectively free, a surrounding penumbra in which his uneasy conscience keeps suggesting that he could do better if only he would make up his mind, and finally an outer shadow to which he barely if ever adverts. Further, these areas are not fixed; as he develops, the penumbra penetrates into the shadow and the luminous area into the penumbra while, inversely, moral decline is a contraction of the luminous area and of the penumbra. Finally, this consciousness of moral impotence not only heightens the tension between limitation and transcendence but also can provide ambivalent materials for reflection; correctly interpreted, it brings home to man the fact that his living is a developing, that he is not to be discouraged by his failures, that rather he is to profit by them both as lessons on his personal weaknesses and as a stimulus to greater efforts; but the same data can also be regarded as evidence that there is no use trying, that moral codes ask the impossible.

that one has to be content with oneself as one is.

This inner tension and its ambivalence are reflected and heightened in the social sphere. For rational self-consciousness demands consistency between knowing and doing not only in the individual but also in the common concerns of the group. To the ethics of the individual conscience there is added an ethical transformation of the home, of the technological expansion, of the economy, and of the <sup>l</sup>polity. But just as individual intelligence and individual reasonableness lead to the individual decisions that may be right or wrong, so too common intelligence and common reasonableness lead to common decisions that may be right or wrong. Moreover, in both cases, decisions are right not because they are the pronouncements of the individual conscience, nor because they proceed from this or that type of social mechanism for reaching common decisions, but because they are in the concrete situation intelligent and reasonable. Again, in both cases, decisions are wrong, not because of their private or public origin, but because they diverge from the dictates of intelligence and reasonableness.

Now, as has been seen, common sense is subject to a threefold bias. Accordingly, we can expect that individual decisions will be likely to suffer from individual bias, that common decisions will be likely to suffer from the various types of group bias, and that all decisions

will be likely to suffer from general bias. There will result conflicts between the individual and the group, between economic and national groups within the state, and between states. But far more significant than these relatively superficial and overt conflicts, will be the underlying opposition that general bias sets up between the decisions that intelligence and reasonableness would demand and the actual decisions, individual and common, that are made. For this opposition is both profound and unnoticed. As individuals, so societies fail to distinguish sharply and accurately between positions and counter-positions. As individuals, so societies fail to reach the universal willingness that reflects and sustains the detachment and disinterestedness of the unrestricted desire to know. More or less automatically and unconsciously, each successive batch of possible and practical courses of action is screened to eliminate as impractical whatever does not seem practical to an intelligence and a willingness that not only are developed imperfectly but also suffer from bias. But the social situation is the cumulative product of individual and group decisions, and as these decisions depart from the demands of intelligence and reasonableness, so the social situation becomes, like the complex number, a compound of the rational and irrational. Then, if it is to be understood, it must be met by a parallel compound of direct and inverse insights, of direct insights that grasp its intelligibility and of



inverse insights that grasp its lack of intelligibility. Nor is it enough to understand the situation; it must also be managed. Its intelligible components have to be encouraged towards fuller development; and its unintelligible components have to be hurried to their reversal.

Still, this is only the outer aspect of the problem. Just as the social situation with its objective surd proceeds from minds and wills that oscillate between the positions and the counter-positions, so too it constitutes the materials for their practical insights, the conditions to be taken into account in their reflection, the reality to be maintained and developed by their decisions. Just as there are philosophies that take their stand upon the positions and urge the development of the intelligible components in the situation and the reversal of the unintelligible components, so too there are counter-philosophies that take their stand upon the counter-positions, that welcome the unintelligible components in the situation as objective facts that provide the empirical proof of their views, that demand the further expansion of the objective surd, and that clamor for the complete elimination of the intelligible components that they regard as wicked survivals of antiquated attitudes. But philosophies and counter-philosophies are for the few. Like Mercurio, the average man imprecates a plague on both their houses. What he wants is peace and prosperity.

By his own light he selects what he believes is the intelligent and reasonable but practical course of action; and as that practicality is the root of the trouble, the civilization drifts through successive less comprehensive syntheses to the sterility of the objectively unintelligible situation and to the coercion of economic pressures, political forces, and psychological conditioning.

Clearly, both the outward conditions and the inner mentality, prevalent in social decline, intensify to the point of desperation the tension, inherent in all development but conscious in man, between limitation and transcendence. One can agree with Christian praise of charity, with Kant's affirmation that the unqualified good is the good will, with existentialist exhortations to genuineness. But good will is never better than the intelligence and reasonableness that it implements. Indeed, when proposals and programs only putatively are intelligent and reasonable, then the good will that executes them so faithfully and energetically is engaged really in the systematic imposition of ever further evils on the already weary shoulders of mankind. And who will tell which proposals and programs truly are intelligent and reasonable, and which are not? For the only transition from the <sup>a</sup>analytic proposition to the analytic principle is through concrete judgments of fact and, alas, the facts are ambivalent. The objective situation is all fact.

but partly it is the product of intelligence and reasonableness and partly it is the product of aberration from them. The whole of man is all fact, but it also is malleable, polymorphic fact. No doubt, a subtle and protracted analysis can bring to light the components in that polymorphic fact and proceed to a dialectical criticism of any proposal or program. But to whom does it bring the light? To how many? How clearly and how effectively? Are philosophers to be kings or kings to learn philosophy? Are they to rule in the name of wisdom subjects judged incapable of wisdom? Are all the members of our democracies to be philosophers? Is there to be a provisional dictatorship while they are learning philosophy?

## 3.5

The Problem of Liberation

The elements in the problem are basically simple. Man's intelligence, reasonableness, and willingness 1) proceed from a detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know, 2) are potentialities in process of development towards a full, effective freedom, 3) supply the higher integration for otherwise coincidental manifolds on successively underlying psychic, organic, chemical, and physical levels, 4) stand in opposition and tension with sensitive and intersubjective attachment, interest, and exclusiveness, and 5) suffer from that tension a cumulative bias that increasingly

distorts immanent development, its outward products, and the outer conditions under which the immanent development occurs.

Essentially the problem lies in an incapacity for sustained development. The tension divides and disorients cognitive activity by the conflict of positions and counter-positions. This conflict issues into contrary views of the good which in turn make good will appear misdirected and misdirected will appear good. There follows the confounding of the social situation with the social surd to provide misleading inspiration for further insights, deceptive evidence for further judgments, and illusory causes to fascinate unwary wills.

The problem is radical, for it is a problem in the very dynamic structure of cognitive, volitional, and social activity. It is not a question of error on this or that general or particular issue. It is a question of orientation, approach, procedure, method. It affects concretely every issue, both general and particular, for it recurs with every use of the dynamic structure.

The problem is permanent. It vanishes if one supposes man's intelligence, reasonableness, and willingness not to be potentialities in process of development but already in possession of the insights that make learning superfluous, of the reasonableness that makes judgments correct, of the willingness that makes

*Tension* | persuasion unnecessary. Again, it vanishes if one supposes the elimination of the tension and opposition between the detached, disinterested, unrestricted desire to know and, on the other hand, attached, interested, and narrow sensitivity and intersubjectivity. But, in fact, both development and tension pertain to the very nature of man, and as long as they exist, the problem remains in full force.

The problem is independent of the underlying manifolds. No doubt, if the underlying manifolds were different, the higher cognitional and volitional integration would differ in its content. But such a change of content would leave the dynamic structure of the higher integration unmodified; and it is in the structure that the problem resides. It follows that neither physics nor chemistry nor biology nor sensitive psychology can bring forth devices that go to the root of the trouble.

The problem is not primarily social. It results in the social surd. It receives from the social surd its continuity, its aggravation, its cumulative character. But its root is elsewhere. Hence it is that a revolution can sweep away old evils and initiate a fresh effort; but the fresh effort will occur through the same dynamic structure as the old effort and lead to essentially the same results.

#new paragraph

# The problem is not to discover a correct philosophy, ethics, or human science. For such discoveries are quite compatible with the continued existence of the problem. The correct philosophy can be but one of many philosophies, the correct ethics one of many ethical systems, the correct human science an old or new view among many views. But precisely because they are correct, they will not appear correct to minds disorientated by the conflict between positions and counter-positions. Precisely because they are correct, they will not appear workable to wills with restricted ranges of effective freedom. Precisely because they are correct, they will be weak competitors for serious attention in the realm of practical affairs.

The problem is not met by setting up a benevolent despotism to enforce a correct philosophy, ethics, or human science. No doubt, if there is to be the appeal to force, then it <sup>is</sup> better that the force be directed by wisdom than by folly, by benevolence than by malevolence. But the appeal to force is a counsel of despair. So far from solving the problem, it regards the problem as insoluble. For if men are intelligent, reasonable, and willing, they do not have to be forced. Only in the measure that men are unintelligent, unreasonable, unwilling, does force enter into human affairs. Finally, if force can be used by the group against the wayward individual

and by the larger group against the smaller, it does not follow that it can be used to correct the general bias of common sense. For the general bias of common sense is the bias of all men and, to a notable extent, it consists in the notion that ideas are negligible unless they are reinforced by sensitive desires and fears. Is everyone to use force against everyone to convince everyone that force is beside the point?

The problem is real. In the present work it has been reached in the compendious fashion that operates through the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being and the consequent ethics. But the expeditiousness of the procedure must not be allowed to engender the mistake that the problem resides in some theoretical realm. On the contrary, its dimensions are the dimensions of human history, and the fourth, fifth, and sixth volumes of Arnold Toynbee's Study of History illustrate abundantly and rather relevantly the failure of self-determination, the schism in the body social, and the schism in the soul that follow from an incapacity for sustained development.

The solution has to be a still higher integration of human living. For the problem is radical and permanent; it is independent of the underlying physical, chemical, organic, and psychic manifolds; it is not met by revolutionary change, nor by human discovery, nor by the enforced

implementation of discovery; it is as large as human living and human history. Further, the solution has to take people just as they are. If it is to be a solution and not a mere suppression of the problem, it has to acknowledge and respect and work through man's intelligence, and reasonableness, and freedom. It may eliminate neither development nor tension yet it must be able to replace incapacity by capacity for sustained development. Only a still higher integration can meet such requirements. For only a higher integration leaves underlying manifolds with their autonomy yet succeeds in introducing a higher systematization into their non-systematic coincidences. And only a still higher integration than any that so far has been considered can deal with the dialectical manifold immanent in human subjects and the human situation.

There is needed, then, a further manifestation of finality, of the upwardly but indeterminately directed dynamism of generalized emergent probability. Earlier, in the chapter on Common Sense as Object, it was concluded that a viewpoint higher than the viewpoint of common sense was needed; moreover, that X was given the name, cosmopolis, and some of its aspects and functions were indicated. But the subsequent argument has revealed that, besides higher viewpoints in the mind, there are higher integrations in the realm of being; and both the initial and subsequent argument have left it abundantly clear



that the needed higher viewpoint is a concrete possibility only as a consequence of an actual higher integration.

Finally, whether the needed higher integration has emerged or is yet to emerge, is a question of fact. Similarly, its nature is not an object for speculation ~~but for empirical inquiry. But before these questions~~ can be raised and answered in a satisfactory fashion, there is a prior question that seems extremely relevant. For we have conceived metaphysics and ethics as concerned with proportionate being. But before we can ask about the ulterior finality of proportionate being, we have ~~to determine what we can know about transcendent being.~~ but for empirical inquiry. Still, what can that empirical inquiry be? Since our metaphysics and ethics have been developed under a restriction to proportionate being, we have to raise the question of transcendent knowledge before we can attempt an investigation of the ulterior finality of man.