

## (52200DTE060) Regis69 4B<sup>1</sup>

### 2 Elements of Meaning

Next, elements of meaning. We distinguish sources, acts, and terms. First, sources of meaning. All conscious acts and all intended contents from the dream state through the four levels of waking consciousness are sources of meaning. The fundamental division is between transcendental and categorial. The transcendental is the pure intending that moves us from one stage or level of consciousness to another: from experience toward understanding, in which we intend but do not yet know, and consequently question. Categorial meaning is determinate. We contrasted categorial and transcendental meanings earlier when we were talking about transcendental method.

Secondly, acts of meaning. Acts of meaning are of five kinds: potential, formal, full, active, and instrumental. Potential meaning is an elemental meaning in which there has not yet been reached the distinction between meaning and meant. It's the meaning of a smile as simply an intersubjective determinant; the meaning of a symbol as internal communication prior to its objectification, for example, in therapy and explanation; the work of art prior to the art critic's discussing interpretation.

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<sup>1</sup> The second part of the lecture of the fourth day on what was then conceived as chapter 4 of *Method in Theology*, 'Meaning.' The audio recording can be found at 52200A0E060. At the end there is included the discussion period of the same evening. The recording for the discussion can be found at 541R0A0E060, beginning about 11:30 minutes into the recording.

Again, acts of sensing and understanding of themselves have potential meaning. As Aristotle put it, the sense in act and the sensible in act are one and the same. Sounding and hearing, in potency, are distinct, but in act they are the same. Without ears you have longitudinal waves in the air, but you do not have sounding; in act you must have ears. Without eyes you have not colors in act, you have them in potency, you have light waves; to have them in act you have to have eyes in act. Similarly, *intelligibile in potentia* is distinct from the *intellectus in potentia*, but *intelligibile in actu est intellectus in actu*. The intelligible in act is the same as intellect in act, the act of understanding. And there in the act of understanding there is not yet the distinction between the act and its object. You get that distinction when you objectify your act of understanding, when you define, formulate. And if you want the term from German hermeneutics *Verstehen, Auslegung*: insofar as you understand the author, you are able to interpret him. But understanding is one thing, interpreting is a further step. You do it in one language or another, you do it in one set of meanings. Aquinas interpreted Scripture in Aristotelian categories; Bultmann interpretes the New Testament in Heidegger's categories, existential categories. Similarly, imagination objectifies what is given to sense or perception. So much for potential meaning. The distinction has not yet emerged between meaning and meant.

In formal meaning, the act of conceiving, thinking, considering, defining, supposing, formulating. The distinction between meaning and meant has emerged. What is considered is one thing, and the considering another. What is conceived is one thing, and the conceiving is another. But in formal meaning, while the distinction has emerged, the status of the object is not yet determined. Is it merely an object of thought, merely a hypothesis,

or is it something in the universe of being, is it something that is? That distinction has not yet been formed. You get the distinction at the level of full meaning, full acts of meaning, which occurs in the acts of judging; one settles the status of an object of thought; is it merely an object of thought, or is it a mathematical entity, or a real thing lying in the world of human experience, or a transcendent reality beyond that world?

Fourthly, there is active meaning, which is found in judgments of value, decisions, actions. Meaning is doing something. We will come back to this active meaning later when we distinguish the functions of meaning and speak about effective and constitutive functions of meaning.

Finally, instrumental meaning consists in expressions, the expressions externalize and exhibit for interpretation by others the potential, formal, full, or active acts of meaning of the subject.

Finally, there are terms of meaning: what is meant. In the potential act of meaning, the distinction between meaning and meant is not yet worked out. In formal acts, the distinction has emerged, but the status of the object is indeterminate. In full acts, there is a probable or certain determination of the status of the terms. One settles whether or not  $A$  is, whether or not  $A$  is  $B$ . In active acts, performative acts when they are instrumental, one settles one's attitude to  $A$ , what will do for  $B$ , whether one will endeavor to bring about  $C$ .

Now, with regard to terms of meaning, the important distinction is between spheres of being. We say the moon exists, and we say the square root of minus one exists. And 'exists' has not the same meaning in the two cases. To say that there exists a logarithm of the square root of minus one means that from certain premises you can deduce what the logarithm is. But when you say that there exists that logarithm, you do not mean you are able

to see it sailing around in the sky. And when you say that the moon exists, you do not mean that there are mathematical premises giving the moon as a conclusion. They are different spheres of being, and in what does that distinction of different spheres of being consist? Well, all judgment rests upon the grasp of the virtually unconditioned. What is affirmed in judgment is a condition whose conditions are fulfilled. But as these conditions differ, you get different spheres of being. To say that there exists some mathematical entity, what you mean is that there are acceptable coherent mathematical premises from which this can be concluded. When you say that something exists in the hypothetical sphere, you mean that this set of statements, your hypothesis, is a possibly relevant account that will fit data. You do not say that it does fit the data, or that it has permanency to explain. When you say that something is so, not just a hypothesis, you mean that the fulfilling conditions are data either of internal or external experience. Finally, when you say that God exists, you are talking about something that has no conditions at all. Our knowledge of it is through fulfilling conditions, but God's own reality is unconditioned, it is formally unconditioned, and consequently the divine belongs to a sphere of being totally distinct from the sphere of being that is this world.

I have been giving you a critical realist account of the different spheres of being. If you want an empiricist account, you set up different criteria; if you want an idealist account, you set up different criteria. The empiricist disregards the virtually unconditioned and identifies the real with what is exhibited in ostensive gestures; at least that is the current way of going about it. What is a dog? Well, here's one, take a look. The idealist is superb at revealing all the shortcomings in the empiricist position, and what he does is just draw attention to everything that understanding adds to the

data. Anyone who understands anything puts a structure on the data, an interpretation of the data, makes statements about them, etc. And none of that can be given on the sensible level or on the level of immediate experience. And consequently the idealist says that the empiricist is totally wrong. But he goes on to add to the statement, ‘therefore he is totally wrong,’ ‘therefore we do not know reality.’ What he is doing is accepting the empiricist notion of reality. And consequently there is a third position beyond idealism in which knowledge of reality comes out in judgment; and then you get the critical realist position.

So much for elements of meaning: there are sources, acts, and terms.

### **3 Functions of Meaning**

Next, functions of meaning. The first function of meaning is cognitive. It takes us out of the infant’s world of immediacy, and places us in the adult world, which is the world mediated by meaning. The world of the infant is no bigger than the nursery. It is the world of what is felt, touched, grasped, sucked, seen, and heard. It is the world of immediate experience, of the given as given, of image and affect, without any perceptible intrusion from insight or concept, reflection or judgment, deliberation or choice. It is the world of pleasure and pain, hunger and thirst, food and drink, rage and satisfaction and sleep. A psychiatrist once said to me that what most people have suppressed is rage.

However, as the command and use of language develops, one’s world expands enormously. For words denote not only what is present, but also what is absent, or past, or future, not only what is factual, but also the possible, the ideal, the normative. Words express not merely what we have

found out for ourselves, but also all we care to learn from the memories of other men, from the common sense of the community, from the pages of literature, from the labors of scholars, from the investigations of scientists, from the experience of saints, from the meditations of philosophers and theologians.

This larger world mediated by meaning does not lie within anyone's immediate experience. It is not even the sum, the integral, of the totality of all worlds of immediate experience. For meaning is an act that does not merely repeat but goes beyond experience. What is meant is what is intended in questions, and is determined, not only by experience, but also by understanding, and commonly by judgment as well. This addition of understanding and judgment is what makes possible the world mediated by meaning, what gives it its structure and unity, what arranges it in an orderly whole of almost endless differences, partly known and familiar, partly in a surrounding penumbra of things we know about but have never examined or explored, partly an unmeasured region of what we do not know at all. In this larger world we live out our lives; to it we refer when we speak of the real world. But because it is mediated by meaning, because meaning can go astray, because there is myth as well as science, fiction as well as fact, deceit as well as honesty, error as well as truth, that larger, real world is insecure.

Besides the immediate world of the infant and the adult's world of mediated by meaning, there is the mediation of immediacy by meaning when one objectifies cognitional process in transcendental method, and when discovers, identifies, and accepts one's submerged feelings in psychotherapy. Finally, there is a withdrawal from objectification and a mediated return to immediacy in the mating of lovers and the prayerful mystic's cloud of unknowing.

A second function of meaning is efficient. Men work, but their work is not mindless. What we make we first intend. We imagine, we plan, we investigate possibilities, we weigh pros and cons, we enter into contracts, we have countless orders given and executed. From the beginning to the end of the process we are engaged in acts of meaning, and without them the process would not occur or the end be achieved. The pioneers of this continent found shore and parkland, mountains and plains, but they have covered it with cities, laced it with roads, exploited it with industries, till the world man has made stands between us and nature. The whole of that patterned, man-made artificial world is the cumulative, now planned, now chaotic product of human acts of meaning.

The third function of meaning is constitutive. Just as language, the *ens iuridicum*, is constituted by articulate sound and meaning, so social institutions and human cultures have meanings as intrinsic components. Religions and art-forms, languages and literatures, sciences, philosophies, histories, all are inextricably involved in acts of meaning. What is true of cultural achievements no less is true of social institutions: the family, the state, the law, the economy are not fixed and immutable entities. They adapt to changing circumstances, they can be reconceived in the light of new ideas, they can be subjected to revolutionary change. But all such change involves change of meaning: a change of idea or concept, a change of judgment or evaluation, a change of the order or request. The state can be changed by rewriting its constitution. More subtly, but no less effectively, it can be changed by reinterpreting the constitution; or again, by working on men's minds and hearts to change the objects that command their respect, hold their allegiance, fire their loyalty.

A fourth function of meaning is communicative. What one man means is communicated to another: intersubjectively, artistically, symbolically, linguistically, or by incarnate meaning. So individual meaning becomes common meaning. It is a rich store of common meaning, but a rich store of common meaning is not the work of isolated individuals or even of single generations. Common meanings have histories. They originate in single minds; they become common only through successful and widespread communication. They are transmitted to successive generations only through training and education. Slowly and gradually, they are clarified, expressed, formulated, defined, only to be enriched and deepened and transformed, and, no less often, to be impoverished, emptied out, deformed.

The conjunction of both the constitutive and communicative functions of meaning yield the three key notions of community, existence, and history. A community is not just a number of men within a geographical frontier. It is an achievement of common meaning, and there are kinds and degrees of achievement. Common meaning is potential when there is a common field of experience, and to withdraw from that common field is to get out of touch. Common meaning is formal when there is common understanding, and one withdraws from that common understanding by misunderstanding, incomprehension, mutual incomprehension. Common meaning is actual inasmuch as there are common judgments, areas in which all affirm and deny in the same manner, and one withdraws from that common judgment when one disagrees, when one considers true what others hold false and false what they claim true. Common meaning is realized by decisions and choices, especially by permanent dedication: in the love that makes families, in the loyalty that makes states, in the faith that makes religions.



Community coheres or divides, begins or ends, just where the common field of experience, common understanding, common judgments, common commitments, begin and end. So communities are of many kinds: linguistic, religious, cultural, social, political, domestic; they vary in extent, in age, in cohesiveness, in their oppositions to one another.

As it is only within communities that men are conceived and born and reared, so too it is only with respect to the available common meanings of the community that the individual grows in experience, understanding, judgment, and so comes to find out for himself that he has to decide for himself what to make of himself. This process, to the schoolmaster is education; for the sociologist it is socialization; for the cultural anthropologist it is acculturation; but for the individual in the process, it is coming to be a man, it is existing as a man in the fuller sense of that name.

Such existing may be authentic or unauthentic, and this may occur in two different ways. There is a minor authenticity or unauthenticity of the subject with respect to the tradition that nourishes him. There is a major authenticity that justifies or condemns the tradition itself. In the first case, there is passed a human judgment on subjects; in the second case, history and ultimately divine providence passes judgment on traditions. As Kierkegaard asked whether he was a Christian, so diverse men can ask themselves whether or not they are genuine Catholics or Protestants, Muslims and Buddhists, Platonists or Aristotelians, Kantians or Hegelians, artists or scientists, and so forth. Now they can answer that they are, and their answers may be correct; but they can also answer affirmatively, and still be mistaken. In that case there will exist a series of points in which they are what the ideals of the tradition demand. But there will be another series in which there is greater or less divergence. These points of divergence are

overlooked: from selective inattention, from a failure to understand, from an undetected rationalization. What I am is one thing, what a genuine Christian is or Buddhist is, is another, and I am unaware of the difference. My unawareness is unexpressed; I have no language to express what I am, so I use the language of the tradition I unauthentically appropriate, and thereby I devalue, distort, water down, corrupt that language.

Such devaluation, distortion, corruption may occur only in scattered individuals. But it may occur on a more massive scale, and then the words are repeated but the meaning is gone. The chair was still the chair of Moses, but it was occupied by the scribes and Pharisees. The theology was still Scholastic, but the Scholasticism was decadent. The religious order still read out the rules, but one wonders whether the home fires were still burning. The sacred name of science is still invoked, but as Edmund Husserl will argue, all significant scientific ideals can vanish to be replaced by the conventions of a clique. So the unauthenticity of individuals becomes the unauthenticity of a tradition. Then in the measure a subject takes the tradition as it exists for his standard, in that measure he can do no more than authentically realize unauthenticity.

History, then, differs radically from nature. Nature unfolds in accord with laws, but the shape and form of human knowledge, work, social organization, cultural achievement, communication, community, personal development are involved in meaning. Meaning has its invariant structures and elements, but the contents and the structures are subject to cumulative development and cumulative decline. So it is that man stands outside the rest of nature, that he is a historical being, that each man shapes his own life, but does so only in interaction with the traditions of the communities in

which he happens to have been born, and in turn these traditions themselves are but the deposit left him by the lives of his predecessors.

So, finally, it follows that hermeneutics and the study of history are basic to all human science. Meaning enters into the very fabric of human living, but varies from place to place and from one age to another.

So much for functions of meaning. It is cognitive, effective, constitutive, and communicative. And insofar as it is constitutive and communicative, you get such fundamental notions as community, existence, history.

#### **4 Realms of Meaning**

Next, realms of meaning. Different exigencies give rise to different modes of conscious and intentional operations. And different modes of such operation give rise to different realms of meaning. There is a systematic exigence that separates the realm of common sense from the realm of theory. Both of these realms, by and large, regard the same real objects. But the objects are viewed from such different standpoints that they can be related only by shifting from one standpoint to the other. The realm of common sense is the realm of persons and things in their relations to us. It is the visible universe peopled by relatives, friends, acquaintances, fellow citizens, and the rest of humanity. We come to know it, not by applying some scientific method, but by a self-correcting process of learning in which insights gradually accumulate and coalesce, qualify and correct one another, till the point is reached where we are able to meet situations as they arise, size them up by adding a few more insights to the acquired store, and so deal with them in an appropriate fashion.

Of the objects in this realm we speak in everyday language, in which words have the function, not of naming the intrinsic properties of things, but of completing the focusing of our conscious intentionality on the thing, of crystallizing our attitudes, expectations, intentions, of guiding all our actions.

The intrusion of the systematic exigence into the realm of common sense is beautifully illustrated by Plato's early dialogues. Socrates would ask for the definition of this or that virtue. No one could afford to admit that he had no idea of what was meant by courage or temperance or justice. No one could deny that such common names must possess some common meaning found in each instance of courage or temperance or justice. And no one, not even Socrates, was able to pin down just what that common meaning was. If from Plato's dialogues, one shifts to Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, one can find definitions worked out both for virtue and vice in general, and for a series of virtues, each flanked by two opposite vices, one sinning by excess and the other by defect. But these answers to Socrates' questions have now ceased to be the single objective. The systematic exigence not merely raises questions that common sense cannot answer, but also demands a context for its answers, a context that common sense cannot supply or comprehend. That context is theory, and the objects to which it refers are in the realm of theory. To these objects one can ascend from commonsense starting points, but they are properly known, not by this ascent, but their internal relations, their congruences and differences, the functions they fulfill in their interactions. As one may approach theoretical objects from a commonsense starting point, so too one can invoke common sense to correct theory. But the correction will not be effected in commonsense language, but in theoretical language. And its implications

will be the consequences, not of the commonsense facts that were invoked, but of the theoretical correction that was made.

My illustration was from Plato and Aristotle, but any number of others could be added: mass, temperature, the electromagnetic field are not objects of the world of common sense. Mass is neither weight nor momentum. A metal object will feel colder than a wooden one beside it, but both will be of the same temperature. Maxwell's equations for the electromagnetic field are magnificent in their abstruseness. The biologist takes his young son to the zoo; both pause to look at a giraffe. The boy will wonder whether it bites or kicks, but the father will see another manner in which skeletal, locomotive, digestive, vascular, nervous systems combine and interlock.

There are, then, a realm of common sense and a realm of theory. We use different languages to speak of them. The differences in the languages involve social differences: specialists can speak to their wives about many things, but not about their specialties. And finally, what gives rise to these quite different standpoints, methods of coming to know, languages, communities, is the systematic exigence.

However, to meet fully the systematic exigence only reinforces the critical exigence. Is common sense just primitive ignorance to be brushed aside in an acclaim to science as the dawn of intelligence and reason? Or is science merely of pragmatic value, teaching us how to control nature, but failing to reveal what nature is? Or, for that matter, is there any such thing as human knowing? So man is confronted with the three basic questions: What am I doing when I am knowing? Why is doing that knowing? and What do I know when I do it? With these questions, one turns from the outer realms of common sense and theory to the appropriation of one's own interiority, one's subjectivity, one's operations, their structure, their norms,

their potentialities. Such appropriation, in its technical expression, resembles theory. But in itself it is a heightening of intentional consciousness, an attending, not merely to objects, but also to the intending subject and his acts. And as this heightened consciousness constitutes the evidence for one's account of knowledge, such an account, by the proximity of the evidence, differs from all other expression.

The withdrawal into interiority is not an end in itself. From it, one returns to the realms of common sense and theory, with the ability to meet the methodical exigence. For self-appropriation of itself is a grasp of transcendental method; and that grasp provides one with the tools, not only for an analysis of commonsense procedures, but also for the differentiation of the sciences and the construction of their methods.

Finally, there is the transcendent exigence. There is to human inquiry an unrestricted demand for intelligibility. There is to human judgment a demand for the unconditioned. There is to human deliberation a criterion that criticizes every finite good. So it is, as we shall attempt to show in the next chapter, that man can reach basic fulfillment, peace, joy, only by moving beyond the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority, into the realm in which God is known and loved.

It is, of course, only in a rather highly developed consciousness that the distinction between realms of meaning is to be carried out. Undifferentiated consciousness uses indiscriminately the procedures of common sense, and so its explanations, its self-knowledge, its religion, as expressed, are rudimentary. Classical consciousness is theoretical, as well as commonsense, but the theory is not sufficiently advanced for the sharp opposition between the two realms of meaning to be adequately grasped; it is distinguished as the *priora quoad se* and the *priora quoad nos*.

Troubled consciousness emerges when an Eddington contrasts his two tables: the bulky, solid, colored desk at which he worked, and the manifold of colorless wavicles so minute that the desk is mostly empty space. Differentiated consciousness appears when the critical exigence turns its attention upon interiority, when self-appropriation is achieved, when the subject relates his different procedures to the several realms, relates the several realms to one another, and consciously shifts from one realm to another by consciously changing his procedures.

The unity, then, of differentiated consciousness is, not the homogeneity of undifferentiated consciousness, but the self-knowledge that understands the different realms and knows how to shift from any one to any other. It remains, however, that what is easy for differentiated consciousness appears very mysterious to undifferentiated or to troubled consciousness. Undifferentiated consciousness insists on homogeneity: if the procedures of common sense are correct, then theory must be wrong; if theory is correct, then common sense must be just an antiquated relic from the pre-scientific age; if both common sense and theory are correct, still the procedures that reveal interiority, reveal self-appropriation, must be illegitimate. Finally, if the legitimacy of all three sets of procedures is granted, still none of them yields knowledge of God, and so that must be fallacious. Such objections are common. From the viewpoint of differentiated consciousness they are fallacious. But to attain the viewpoint of differentiated consciousness calls for considerable development. Only in the measure that such development actually occurs in a given subject are the requisite viewpoints attained and the fallacies evidently resolved.

So much, then, for the realms of meaning.

## 5 Stages of Meaning

Finally, stages of meaning. The stages in questions are ideal constructs, and the key to the constructing is undifferentiated or differentiated consciousness. In the main we have in mind the Western tradition, and we distinguish three stages. In a first stage, conscious and intentional operations follow the mode of common sense. In a second stage, besides the mode of common sense there also is the mode of theory, where the theory is controlled by a logic. In the third stage, the modes of common sense and theory remain, science asserts its autonomy from philosophy, and there occur philosophies that leave theory to science and take their stand on interiority. Such is the theoretical division. It is temporal in the sense that one has to be in the first stage to advance to the second, and one has to be in the second to advance to the third. But it is not chronological: large segments of the population may have undifferentiated consciousness though a culture is in the second or third stage. And many learned people may remain in the second stage when the culture has reached the third. Accordingly, our treatment will not follow the theoretical division. On the first stage there will be two sections, namely, early language and the Greek discovery of mind. A third section will treat the second and third stages together. A fourth will regard undifferentiated consciousness in the second and third stages.

### *5.1 Early Language*

In the first stage, there occurs the development of language. But if we have referred to language as an instrumental act of meaning and contrasted it with potential, formal, full, and active acts, still this must not be taken to imply



that language is some optional adjunct that may or may not accompany other acts. On the contrary, some sensible expression is intrinsic to the pattern of our conscious and intentional operations. Just as inquiry supposes sensible data, just as insight occurs with respect to some schematic image, just as the reflective act of understanding occurs with respect to a convincing summation of relevant evidence, so inversely, the interior acts of conceiving, of judging, and of deciding demand a sensible and proportionate substrate we call expression. So rigorous is this demand that Ernst Cassirer has been able to put together a pathology of symbolic consciousness. Motor disturbances that result in aphasia, inability to speak, are accompanied with disturbances in perception, in thought, and in action. This you will find in the third volume of his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, pp. 205-277. When people suffer from aphasia, it not merely prevents them from talking, it disturbs their perception, their thought, and their action.

The development of proportionate expression involves three key steps. The first is the discovery of indicative signification. One tries to grasp but fails, but the failure at least points. When pointing is understood *as* pointing, then one no longer tries to grasp: one does point so someone will give it to you.

The second step is generalization. Not only does insight rise upon the basis of a schematic image, it can also use the pattern discerned in the image to guide bodily movements, including vocal articulation. Such movements may be mere imitation of another's movements; but mimesis can be employed to signify, and then it means the other's movements: you act it out, people know what you mean. From mimesis, one may advance to analogy; one repeats the pattern, but the movements that embody it are quite

different; and as mimesis may be used to signify what is imitated, so analogy may be used to signify its original.

The third step is the development of language. It is the work of the community that has common insights into common needs and common tasks, and, of course, already is in communication through intersubjective, indicative, mimetic, and analogical expression. Just as its members understand one another's smiles and frowns, their gestures, mimesis, and analogies, so too they can come to endow vocal sounds with signification. So words come to refer to data of experience, sentences to the insights that shape the experience, and the mood of the sentence varies to express assertions, commands, and wishes.

This account of the genesis of language has the advantage of explaining both the strength and the weakness of early language. For gestures occur with respect to objects present in space; insights occur with respect to perceptual presentations and imaginative representations. So it is that early language had little difficulty in expressing all that can be pointed out or directly perceived or directly represented. But the generic cannot be pointed out or directly perceived or directly represented. So in Homer there were words for such specific activities as glancing, peering, staring, but no generic word for seeing. Again, in various American Indian languages, one cannot simply say that the man is sick; one also has to retail whether he is near or far, whether he can or cannot be seen, and often the form of the sentence will also reveal his place, position, and posture. Primitive language is extremely concrete. Again, since time involves a synthesis that orders all events in a single continuum of earlier and later, it is not something that can be directly perceived. It can be represented only by a highly sophisticated geometrical image. So early language may have an abundance of tenses, but

they are found to express different kinds of modes of action, and not a synthesis of temporal relationships.

Further, the subject and his inner experience are on the side, not of the perceived but of the perceiving. To point to oneself is to point to one's head or neck or chest or stomach or hands or arms or feet or one's whole body. So there is no reason for surprise if possessive pronouns, that refer to visible possessions, develop before personal pronouns. There is a way of saying 'my axe and my bow and my arrows' before there is a way of saying 'I.' Again in Homer, inner mental processes are represented by personified interchanges; where we would expect an account of the hero's thoughts and feelings, Homer has him converse with a god or goddess, with his horse or with a river, or with some part of himself such as his heart or his temperament. Again, among the Hebrews, moral defect was first experienced as defilement, then conceived as the people's violation of the covenant with God, and finally felt as personal guilt before God; where, however, each later stage did not eliminate the earlier, but took it over to correct it and to complement it.

Finally, the divine is the objective of the transcendental notions in their unrestricted and absolute aspects. It cannot be perceived and it cannot be imagined, but it can be associated with the object or event, the ritual or recitation, that occasion religious experience, and so there arise the hierophanies.

Even in its first stage, meaning fulfills its four functions. It is communicative, constitutive, efficient, and cognitive. However, these functions are not clearly apprehended, sharply defined, carefully delimited. Insights into gestures and percepts easily generate the names of different plants and animals. Insights into human relationships bring about the

constitution of tribes and clans and other groupings. But to name the groups that are not perceptibly different from one another calls for a certain ingenuity; as American sports writers name teams Bruins, Hawks, Seals, Bears, Colts, and Lions, so too primitive groups are associated with the names of plants and animals.

As the constitutive, so too the cognitive function of meaning is exercised. Man moves from the infant's world of immediacy into a world mediated by meaning. However, the mediating meaning is not purely cognitive; it blends insensibly with the constitutive, and the result is myth. And man constitutes not only his social institutions and their cultural significance, but also the story of the world's shape and origin and destiny. As the constitutive function of meaning intrudes into the field of speculative knowledge, so the efficient intrudes into that of practical knowledge. The result is magic: words bring about results, not only by directing human actions, but also by a power of their own which myth explains. As Malinowski has insisted, while myth and magic envelop and penetrate the whole fabric of a primitive living, they do not prevent the thorough understanding of the practical tasks of daily life. Moreover, it is the development of practical understanding that takes man beyond fruit-gathering, hunting, fishing, gardening, to large-scale agriculture, to the social organization of the temple-states, and later of the empires of the ancient high civilizations in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, the Valleys of the Indus, Huang-Ho, Mexico, and Peru. There, there emerge great works of irrigation, vast structures of stone and brick, armies and navies, complicated processes of bookkeeping, the beginnings of geometry, arithmetic, astronomy. But if the poverty and weakness of the primitive were replaced by the wealth and power of great states, if the area over which man exercised

practical intelligence increased enormously, the whole achievement stood upon the cosmological myth, that depicted as continuous and solidary the order of society, the order of the cosmos, and divine being.

That will do it for today. We will finish off the stages of meaning tomorrow. The purpose of these stages of meaning is to have constructs, things you can define and use in accounting for different ways people look at things. You can have merely descriptive approaches and talk about the Hebrew mind, the Greek mind. But the Greek mind is something that existed from about 1300 B.C. to about 1300 A.D. and contained all sorts of different things; and what precisely you mean by any such expression becomes much more precise if you can construct the principles on which you can work. Why is it that Homer has not got a word for seeing but has all sorts of words like peering, staring, glaring, etc.? It is because you can point to a specific act, but you can't point to the genus.

There follows the discussion period of the same evening. The recording can be found at 541R0A0E060, beginning about 11:30 minutes into the recording.

*We talked a good deal about the notion of self-appropriation, and the validity of the word 'conversion' in its regard, and then we were wondering to what extent this conversion is possible, for how many people it is possible, in what sense it is related to Christian conversion, how is an intellectual conversion related to that, and to what extent is a person involved in a practical way with people aim at this kind of conversion?*

Conversion in general is a change of horizon. There are developments that can occur within a horizon, and there is decline that occurs within a horizon;

the horizon remains the same. The literal meaning of horizon is the line where the earth and sky meet. In other words, within the horizon there are visible objects; beyond it there are no visible objects. By analogy or metaphor or what you please, similarly our interests and our knowledge are limited. The range of our interests and knowledge is limited. What is beyond that we don't know anything about and we care less. Now horizons are organized; they are not just chance collections; they are built up the way we've developed, and so on. When the organization of a horizon changes in a radical way you have a conversion. I distinguish different conversions: intellectual, moral and religious. On religious conversion we will be talking tomorrow. Moral conversion is a shift from a life in which satisfactions are the main consideration to a life in which values are the main consideration. Intellectual conversion is in regard to what you mean by 'real'; and in childhood we get our first approximation to it, in terms of what is 'out there,' what we can feel, and so on. When we reach the use of reason, develop mentally, de facto our criteria change, but they change implicitly. When people start to do philosophy, they will use the implicitly changed criteria as long as they are not thinking about what is real. When they want to get down to the really real with themselves they are apt to resort to their childhood notions of reality. The problem of intellectual conversion is to purge that, to recognize that childhood notion for what it is. The result is that you take out of your attitudes a vector, a component, that is always pulling you to a distortion in your reflective estimates and fundamental judgments.

With regard to helping practical people, well, practical people usually denote people who are caught rather badly in that cognitional trap. It is one way they have of describing themselves. Intellectual conversion does not

hinder you at all in dealing with simple people or ordinary people; it helps one understand them better, what their difficulties may be. It isn't anything narrowing; it is something broadening, simplifying, clarifying. It isn't necessarily connected with religious conversion. There was religious conversion from the very beginning of the history of the Church. But the beginnings of intellectual conversion appear with Nicea, with Athanasius and all the row that went on with the Arians and the semi-Arians and all those different groups. It was fifty years of controversy from 330 A.D. to 380 A.D. The fundamental issue was with notions of reality. I document this in the first part of my *De Deo trino*.

Again, this intellectual conversion is not something to be demanded. Then, on the other hand, insofar as the Church teaches, it has to communicate. The main thing it has to do is to communicate. But reflections on the communications are not simply communication. That is something more complex, and you can be more exigent when people start deciding what good communications are and so on. But that, I think, is one of the fundamental issues at the present time. There was an imposed Thomism, and no one is holding that today, but we haven't got anything else in its place that is generally accepted, and that creates a vacuum underneath theology. These are the growing pains of the twentieth century in the Catholic Church.

*Would you say that a main problem is the failure on the part of theologians to effect such an intellectual conversion?*

Well, it is not quite as simple as that. The issue has not been put to them in those terms, has it? And what I describe, what it simply is, is that things can seem to be merely formulae, and if you look on verbal expression as merely

formulae and formulae as something rather extrinsic, you are describing a certain attitude that has been current among the type of dogmatic theologian who has been mostly aligned with the canonists and lawyers; and that sort of thing is not particularly religious. There is a concept of truth that conceives that the context of any proposition is a set of logical antecedents and consequences and interprets Vatican I in terms of that kind of context, which only exists in a highly formalized presentation of some very abstract system such as the formalization of quantum theory. To think that statements go into that sort of a context and that people have implications to their statements that would follow if they were said in that context, and consequently they must mean this when they say that; that sort of thing. This sort of systematic misinterpretation that has been associated with the dogmas, that is the thing that has to be cleared out.

One of the points of studying method is that one discovers that the context of statements is an ongoing process: the ongoing process of the development of theology; the ongoing process of the development of dogma, and the ongoing process of the development of culture. There are many angles to it.

I think this business of truth, the significance of the true statement, is something that has to be – you cease to be human if you lose it, and you are throwing out all the dogmas if you throw it out. But to provide people with philosophic underpinnings for it is not an easy thing. It is a matter of intellectual conversion, and it takes a long time to make people really see it and to be convinced of it. It is not a simple thing, and it is not anything that can be forced down peoples' throats.



*There is a problem that the younger people have with the theologians who are aligned with the canonists. That's an anachronism as far as we are concerned.*

There have been people, I think, in a hurry with oversimplifications and so on. There are real problems, too, and perhaps a weakness of the theologians who were more or less in the center of the stream was that they did not want to be identified with the far right; and they would be if they criticized the far left. Rather than waste time trying to explain themselves to the far left they just let things slide. There may be something to that rough diagnosis, but to apply it to a particular situation is something I cannot do. It is a very rough diagnosis. This is a very central issue that will be very hard to clarify and define.

*I would like to have you go further on the point that intellectual conversion can't be required.*

Education at the present time is that the child must understand. Education fifty years ago was a matter of giving the child the formula, and as he grows older he will be able to fit what he understands into this formula. When you ask a child for reasons for everything he holds at the age of seven, I think you are destroying him. That sort of education comes from people who do not understand the role of belief in human living, even in the life of a highly cultured, highly educated, highly skeptical person.

That educational problem is one aspect of the thing. With regard to communication, you have to talk to people in such a way that they will understand something, but you can't expect everyone to know the difference between the world of theory and the world of common sense. You do not use expressions from the world of theory when talking to people who only

have a world of common sense. But you can say it in commonsense language. If you read the decree of Chalcedon you will see that the words 'person' and 'nature' are incidental. What is fundamental to the statement of Chalcedon is 'one and the same.' One-and-the-Same was born eternally from the Father, and in time from the Virgin Mary; One-and-the-Same was true God and true man; One-and-the-Same, etc. It just goes on; it keeps repeating itself. That is what is meant by the unity. At Chalcedon they did not realize that the 'one-and-the-same' was divine. It was only with the third council of Constantinople that it comes out that this Person, this 'one-and-the-same,' is divine; it is a divine person. It is only seventy-five years after Chalcedon that they discovered to their amazement that if they had one person in two natures then there was a nature without a person; and that gave rise to *physis anhypostatos*. However, they were not thinking metaphysically. The Greek Fathers were not philosophers, by and large; the nearest to it were Gregory of Nyssa and Origen. The meaning of those decrees, the meaning people impose upon them, the interpretations of what they imagine people meant by person and nature is fantastically anachronistic. What did Augustine mean by person? He said, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: there are three. There are not three Gods or three Fathers or three Sons or three Holy Ghosts. What are there three of? Three persons. What is a person? What there are three of in God. That was it: a heuristic notion, something perfectly sensible. The first person with a definition was Boethius, and you get another definition from Richard of St Victor in the twelfth century. Then there is the Thomistic definition. And once there are these different definitions of person you have to go into metaphysics to sort things out. You get into the metaphysics with Scotus, Capreolus, and so on. With Descartes they start going into the psychological subject, and with the

phenomenologists they go into such things as the ‘I and Thou,’ the conversation. This notion of person is developed down the ages, and it is by knowing your theology very well that you are able to talk to simple people and say exactly what the church means. But if you think Harnack knew what he was talking about when he spoke of the church councils as a *transposition* of the Gospels from the religious soil of Palestine into a Greek mentality, you are very much mistaken. There is no Greek philosopher that has any notion comparable to the *homoousios* as understood by Athanasius. There is no Greek philosopher that has any notion of person comparable to that ‘One-and-the-Same’ which we find in Chalcedon. They would have had to have a culture in which people had linguistic feedback to be able to say that what is meant by ‘person’ is what there are three of in God. There has to be linguistic feedback to handle language in that way; it isn’t ordinary discourse, ordinary commonsense discourse.

*You spoke about the shift from classical to historical consciousness with the new notion of science, with science as probable rather than certain. To what extent is the Church exempt from this inability to be true and certain.*

The statement of the Church has to be taken in its context; that is the problem. Just as you say that the Church went out of the context of scripture and set up things in a different context – in other words, doctrine is not the same as inspired statement. The inspired statements follow the individuality of each of the different authors, and we don’t put on all the different authors. We learn from them, and we express it in our own language.

*I would be concerned not so much about past statements as with the possibility of the Church making a statement now.*

If you want it to be contradictory then I don’t think it is easy to defend.

*What do you mean by contradictory?*

A contradictory difference. The Council of Trent says that transubstantiation is an excellent way to express the truth about the Eucharist; but there are difficulties about ‘substance’ at the present time that did not exist at the Council of Trent. Solving those difficulties in a convenient way, and so on, is one thing; but deserting what was meant at the Council of Trent is another. What was meant at the Council of Trent was not terrifically difficult: this is my body; my body is not bread; this is not bread.

*Is the notion of substance at Trent a heuristic notion?*

I think it is more determinate than that. You can say it is a heuristic notion with respect to what is not *species*, it is something distinct from *species*, and I don’t think you can say it is more determinate than that. Remember, there were nominalists, Scotists, and Thomists, and so on, at the Council of Trent, and they made it perfectly plain that they were not condemning themselves or any one of themselves.

*The question had to do with the transcendentals in relation to the pure desire to know, with beauty as a transcendental, and with the absence of Crowe’s complacentia from what we’ve done so far?*

The *complacentia boni* as opposed to *concupiscentia*?

*As opposed to concern.*

We have been making a fundamental contrast between values and satisfactions. We have not been talking about the intellect or the will; we have been talking in terms of intentionality analysis, if you want that expression. Beauty as a transcendental, yes. But it’s in terms of developing consciousness, and consciousness at a level in which the higher reaches, the

higher concerns, such as truth, reality, value are apprehended through the sensible and are, as it were, a sort of plus to the harmony, the unity, the balance, and so on, that is found in the sensible or the denial of them.

The pure desire to know: that is the transcendentals generally or the first one and then moving on to the second and then moving on to the third. Really, that desire is value as opposed to satisfaction – that is what makes it pure. To know value you have to know reality; and to know reality you have to know truth; to know truth you have to grasp intelligibility; and to grasp intelligibility you have to attend to the data; and so it is all one thrust.

Beauty is self-transcendence expressed through the sensible.

*Beauty then [not clear]?*

It is something very human; it is the whole put together. Here what we have been doing is analytical.

*What about complacentia?*

The *complacentia* is what you want insofar as what you want is value; you are moving towards what is to be loved.

*What is the rest of complacentia?*

That is after you have achieved; that is after you are in love. The dynamic state of being in love: we will hear more about that tomorrow.

*If I make a statement such as ‘That is a good tree,’ without committing myself one way or the other, what sort of judgment is that? What level would it belong to?*

A good tree? Because it gives you apples, and you like eating apples? Or it’s a beautiful tree? Or it’s a good thing that there are trees? What do you mean? You approve the order of the universe?

*I'm trying to take the bland use of the word 'value' in contemporary terms about value judgments and to see whether the schema that you've given us can handle it, and if so how.*

Well, it is by self-appropriation. The man who answers it is the man that has moved to self-appropriation on the level of the question for deliberation. Is it worthwhile? You don't mean, Is it good to eat? Will it favor us white, English-speaking North Americans, and so on? Those are all things that are beside that. It's what you don't mean. What is this 'Is it worthwhile?' It expresses a transcendental notion, something towards which one is tending and one does not get to it yet. Just as when you ask why and you don't know why; but you want to know why. And you will know whether you have arrived at the answer or not. If the proposed answer is not answering the question, then you will have further questions that will push on to it. Similarly, with regard to answers to questions like, Is it worthwhile? By asking those questions and developing those questions you are developing yourself, and as you develop you become a better judge of values. The judgment of value depends upon the judge, and the thing to do is to make yourself a good judge; and you do that by climbing the mountain, not by sliding down a rope.

*Essentially, then, everything that can legitimately be called a value judgment belongs on the fourth level.*

Yes.

*So you weren't joking there: the value judgment would be that you approve the order of the universe in saying this is a good tree.*

Yes.

*Would that imply that really my place in the order is good?*

Well, if you get into the order of the universe, you take the whole thing.

*You mentioned performative. Is that the same as effective and constitutive?*

Performative meaning is in the words. It is in linguistic analysis that the word 'performative' occurs. The fourth-level meanings insofar as they are interior I call active meanings to avoid any confusion with that sacred domain.

*What about evil, when you say the order of the universe is good?*

Do you mean that the universe is ordered to have evil, or evil interferes with the order of the universe? The unintelligible is a surd.

*Does one approve of evil? (Question not clear.)*

You mean 'approve' means that I'm going to do nothing for the rest of my life? Are you taking 'approve' in that sense? I don't think 'approve' is meant in that sense. You mean there should be a lot of feeling and fuss about it? By 'disinterested' I mean real self-transcendence as opposed to a self-centered person; that is what is meant by disinterested.

*What about the artistic and the symbolic?*

The artistic and the symbolic are quite distinct. St George and the Dragon happens to have become artistic because Raffaello treated it. Jonah and the whale is hardly artistic but it is very good symbolism. In general, the monsters of mythology are bizarre, not artistic. But they are symbolic; and in the symbol you convey the sort of thing that is quite different; you're revealing or mediating conflicts and that sort of thing.

*What about the function of art?*

It is an enrichment of human living. And also a stop, to stand and stare; it is pulling you out of the routines; and when you are pulled out of the routines there is something of a fresh start from it.

*Could you clarify what are the realms of meaning as distinct from stages of meaning?*

Stages are constructs and useful for the study of history; they are more detailed: they are more concerned with language, literature, things like humanism. They are concerned with the literary humanism that comes out of the ancient classical culture and the scientific humanism that could be developed today, that sort of topic.

Of course, it is not historical study; it is just constructs, things that are not hypotheses nor descriptions; we can use the word 'models' if it helps you; they are useful in an investigation, to guide an investigation, to suggest questions and even to notice differences that otherwise you would not notice; they help you develop hypotheses or make descriptions. The main feature of it is that it is closely knit together, that it is explanatory.

Realms of meaning are – when you have the four, you have differentiated consciousness in the contemporary sense. When you have just two realms of meaning, you have differentiated consciousness as it existed up till fairly recently. Subjectivity is described very well by Augustine, for example. A recent thesis published at the Gregorian on consciousness in the *De Trinitate* of St Augustine: Biolo's thesis, in the *Analecta Gregoriana*. With the self-appropriation of one's cognitional and moral activities and with the fact of psychotherapy helping people through sensitivity groups and so on, we have evidence of a terrific interest in interiority in a large scale. This had its forerunners but it is being exploited or developed in a more



intensive fashion at the present time that previously. There are the different stages of consciousness: consciousness as just common sense; consciousness moving into a realm of theory as well as common sense, the two of them more or less fusing, the distinction between them minimalized. There is the example of the gentleman who didn't have any strict scientific knowledge and who is not taught strict philosophy but a simplification of the philosophers, not rigorous philosophy.

*You have much richer definition of symbol earlier. Why did you not use it today?*

Well, I don't keep up with my past writings very well.

*You called it an affect-laden image which conveys a meaning and mediates a judgment of value. You haven't rejected that, have you?*

No.

*Having emphasized so much on values yesterday, why did you not include this and instead define a symbol as an image that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling?*

I didn't think about it; I was just thinking what do they do and how do they come together, and so on. In the last seven years I've learnt more technical stuff about symbols and their relations to one another and their development, and so on.

*It's very obvious it's a carrier of meaning.*

It is a carrier of meaning, yes, and it is true that it has some relation to value. I would not deny that; I may develop it yet.

*Can we grasp the meaning of the past by only studying, as we have done to a great extent, just the linguistic carriers of meaning, and not paying attention to the other carriers of meaning?*

I don't think they have been neglected totally. There are the writings of Hugo Rahner on Greek mysteries in Christian interpretation. They haven't all been Catholics at the Eranos Jahrbuch, but it has been on that, terrifically. Again, there is Morel's work on St John of the Cross. There is the history of spirituality and, again, the sociological aspects of these things. The Monophysite heresy was not simply an intellectual issue. The Syrians and the Egyptians did not like the Byzantines and Byzantine rule; and all these angles have to be brought out.

*Is there more to be done in this area?*

There is always a lot more to be done in these areas and to be made available. It is a matter of more intensive work. The linguistic work is more precise, and the other illuminates in various ways. But one wants to get the backbone before you start deciding how big the framework of muscles was.

*At certain stages you say that certain carriers are more important than others.*

In the earlier meaning, it is the figure and the suggestiveness that is important. There are earlier meanings to light that do not mean merely material light. Merely material light is a much more modern notion; earlier meaning covers light but also includes what light can suggest. Similarly for other things. Insofar as language, the language of a common sense type, operates it does so by metaphor and suggestion, by the riddle and the paradox, and so on, it can convey a profundity of wisdom that we wouldn't

attempt to convey in that manner today. The wise man speaks his riddles and people listen and meditate on them and try to find out what he means.

*Can you distinguish between self-transcendence and self-appropriation?*

Authenticity is having achieved cognitional and real self-transcendence.

Self-appropriation is a step; it consists in that enlargement of consciousness which when objectified makes you know what you are conscious of.

Knowing is something more than being conscious, experiencing; it also is understanding and affirming. What are you conscious of? You are conscious of your cognitional operations; you are conscious of your feelings. But to know them presupposes a heightening of consciousness, singling them out, distinguishing them, naming them, being able to produce in yourself the experience when you name it, and so on. Self-appropriation is a technical development; it is the movement from the worlds of common sense and theory into the world of interiority. You can have authenticity, real self-transcendence, cognitive self-transcendence without self-appropriation. However, when you have them without self-appropriation you can easily be trapped when asked questions that presuppose self-appropriation.

*The self in the two phrases is a different self, right?*

Yes, there's the self qua transcended and the self qua transcending.

*And the self that appropriates itself is the transcending self.*

Yes.

*What is the self that is transcended.*

It is the self that isn't yet in love; it is the self that seeks satisfactions and doesn't worry too much about values; it's qua seeking satisfaction and neglecting value; it is the self insofar as it is trapped by some image about

what it is to know. Knowing is something you can imagine, and you imagine the eye and the microphone, and the eye knows and the microphone is the object known, and objectivity is seeing what is out there to be seen and not anything that isn't there. If you try to impose that on your cognitional processes, you will hardly find anything. You will create difficulties that are not there; you will have an intellect that does not have insights but intuits as though it were another eye; it intuits something abstract.

*A question about George Herbert Mead that is not clear.*

I'm not familiar enough with the man. I've started on him, and I liked him on process; but the next chapter was on science, and that was not so good; that is as far as I got.

*Are the transcendental notions of being and value and the kind of thing in Heidegger about a call from the authentic self to the inauthentic self?*

Yes. That would be true. The transcendental notions are the call. There is the further call of God's grace.

*Is there any sense in which you can speak of being as the goal of your intelligent inquiry and value as the goal of your search for the good, and of the experience of those goals as an experience of God?*

I think an experience of (I would say) mystery lies in a fulfillment of the transcendental notions, of what you are in virtue of the transcendental notions. The experience described by St Paul when he says in Romans 5.5, 'God's love has flooded our hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us.' In chapter 8 of Romans St Paul goes on to explain that there is nothing in heaven or on earth that can separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ. The Old Testament and the New talk about loving God with one's whole

heart and soul and mind and strength. The gift of that that love is something conscious but we cannot say what it is; it is mystery. But it is loving, and it is loving in an unrestricted manner; it corresponds to the unrestricted character of the transcendental notions.

*But you wouldn't care to associate the notions with God?*

They are associated, yes, and from them I get the question of God: not the experience of God, the experience of the divine.

*Rahner seems to speak of that at times as an experience of God?*

Have you read Rahner on St Ignatius and consolation without a cause? Well, that's the sort of thing I would call an experience of God.

*Is this an adequate notion of meaning: Meaning is the world established by intentional acts?*

I would answer the question, What is meaning? by saying that we have to get out of the Aristotelian notion that definition by genus and specific difference is helpful. Any time I try to present any notion whatever, I set up a kind of relational scheme between a circle of notions. When you ask me, What is meaning? I say meaning is what has these different carriers, these elements, these functions, these realms and these stages. Any smaller, briefer answer to the question of meaning is merely verbal.

*What about incarnate meaning versus the definition of man as a rational animal?*

Well, incarnate meaning; man is a symbolic animal; it is that notion turned upside down.

*Does this make man the source of meaning?*

No. It is the revealer of meaning. Benedict Arnold reveals the traitor; and Judas Iscariot reveals the traitor; they embody the notion. Christ crucified reveals the importance of suffering, the role of suffering, that it isn't an expression of God's hatred. There is a call to the infinite.

*In Insight you said that meaning is the relation of sign to signified.*

OK. That still holds, but it is abstract. It tells you how to use the word but it doesn't tell you what the thing is. You can walk around it; tell about its different stages, and so on; how it develops. That is knowing what meaning is as distinct from how to use the word.

*Is that a shallow (?) definition?*

Well, no. It is verbal definition. There occurs the question, What do you mean by sign and signification? When further questions arise you see the need for a circle into which you accumulate insights and get understanding.

*In what realm of meaning do are and symbol and subjectivity belong?*

I would say they occur within commonsense realm of meaning; but they can carry meanings that with further development may very well be centered in other spheres. The transcendent can be expressed in the symbol.

*While we're doing method and not theology during these weeks, many of us are in contact with your theological thinking, for example you work on the Trinity and the Incarnate Word. Would you be willing sometime over the weekend to get together with some of us to discuss questions of that sort? There have been many questions I've wanted to propose to you that I didn't have the possibility.*

I think it would be possible. I can't take much more than an hour. Say from 5:45 to 6:45 Saturday or Sunday afternoon.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> This is the discussion that is recorded at 533R0A0E060