

## 593BCDTE070

### BC70-2A<sup>1</sup>

## 2 The Human Good, Values, Beliefs

First, the structure of the human good. Secondly, operational development, mainly from Piaget. Thirdly, the development of feelings. On feelings there is Von Hildebrand's *Christian Ethics*. Fourthly, progress and decline. Fifthly, the notion of value. Sixthly, judgments of value. Seventhly, beliefs.

### 1 The Structure of the Human Good<sup>2</sup>

Instead of saying *bonum est id quid omnia appetunt*, the good is what everyone wants, we have a more concrete scheme, a model. We distinguish individual, social, and final aspects. The individual is divided into potentiality and actuation.

<i>I n d i v i d u a l</i>		<i>S o c i a l</i>	<i>E n d s</i>
<i>P o t e n t i a l i t y</i>	<i>A c t u a t i o n</i>		
capacity, need	operation	cooperation	particular good
plasticity,	development,	institution,	good of order
perfectibility,	skill	role, task	
liberty	orientation,	personal	terminal value
	conversion	relations	

Now, we will relate those terms to one another and build up a model of the human good.

Individuals have capacities for operating. Operating procures instances of the particular good. An instance of the particular good is any entity, any action or object that

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<sup>1</sup> June 15 1970 part 1; audio may be found at 59300A0E070. Lonergan begins with some comments and possible bibliography on the subject of meaning, anticipating the next day's lecture.

<sup>2</sup> Lonergan begins by putting the scheme on the board.

meets a need. Needs are understood in the broadest possible sense, not just necessities. And so we have related four terms on the first line. Capacity for operating results in a particular good that meets a need.

Now, we will take four terms from the third column. Individuals live in groups; their operating is mostly cooperating. Their cooperating occurs within a pattern. Their cooperating is performing a task or fulfilling a role within a institution. An institution is the already understood and accepted manner of cooperating. Such frameworks of cooperating are the family and manners, society and education, the state and the law, the economy and technology, the church or the sect. Each of those constitutes a commonly understood and already accepted basis and mode of cooperation. Institutions tend to change slowly. They can break down suddenly, just be eliminated; you can move back two-hundred-thousand years overnight, if you put your mind to it. But they develop or change only slowly, for change, unlike breakdown, involves a new common understanding and a new common consent.

Now, the remaining terms in the second row. The capacities of individuals are plastic and perfectible. The human infant is endlessly plastic, has everything to learn, unlike the offspring of the animal which in a few days is doing everything almost on its own. And because the human individual is so plastic at birth he can develop in all sorts of ways; and the whole body can be governed by acts of meaning. Because of its plasticity and perfectibility, there is the possibility of the development of skills, and, indeed, of the very skills demanded by the institutional roles and tasks. But besides the institutional basis of cooperation there is the concrete manner in which cooperation is working out here and now, and that is the good of order. It is something way beyond the institution; the institution is the possibility of cooperation without explaining everything to everyone. But the same institution can work well in this instance and badly in another; the same institution of marriage may produce bliss in one case and misery in another. You can have the same type of constitution, the same type of polity, that is an enormous success in

one country and a disaster in another. The difference there is the way in which the things are functioning. That is the good of order.

The good of order is not distinct from instances of the particular good; but it is concerned with those instances, not as the good of this or that individual, but as a constant flow of those instances. My dinner for me today is an instance of the particular good. But dinner for everyone that earns it everyday, the setup that causes that to keep recurring, is the good of order. It is constituted by a set of 'if-then' relationships that guide operators and cooperators, that ensure that these instances of the particular good keep on recurring. One man's education is a particular good; but an educational system that provides education for all the young people in a nation: that is a good of order. Don't think of the good of order as some design for Utopia, some theoretical ideal, some set of ethical precepts, some code of laws, some super-institution – it is none of those. Its basis is the skill, the know-how, the industry, the resourcefulness, the ambition and fellow-feeling of a whole people, adapting to each change of circumstance, meeting each new emergency, struggling against every tendency to disorder. That is the good of order, and it is something extremely concrete and something extremely real. It is things working in precisely the way they work; the extent to which particular goods keep recurring or fail to keep recurring: that is the concrete good of order that is existing.

The terms in the third row. Liberty. Liberty means not indeterminism but self-determination. Any course of action is finite. And because it is finite it is open to criticism; it has alternatives, limitations, risks, drawbacks. The process of deliberation and evaluation is not itself decisive. You can always say something against any project and always something for any project. What settles the matter is the active thrust of the subject settling the issue: this is what we are going to do, and that's it. You can't demonstrate a course of action. Insofar as this thrust of the self regularly opts, not for the merely apparent good, but for what truly is good, for what really is worth while, the subject is an originating value and bringing about terminal values, things that are

worthwhile. Insofar as what one is deciding is to promote originating value in others, one's terminating and originating values can coincide. Parents want their children to be good; they are working not only for a terminal value but aiding an originating value.

Liberty is exercised within a matrix of personal relations. In the cooperating community, persons are bound together by their needs, by the common good of order that meets their needs; they are related by commitments freely undertaken, by expectations aroused in others by the commitments, by the roles they have assumed, by the tasks they meet to perform. These personal relations are alive with feeling. Common or opposed feelings about qualitative values and scales of preference; mutual feelings: one responds to another as an ontic value or simply as a source of satisfaction. Beyond these feelings, in the personal relations, there is the substance of community. People are joined together by common experience, by common or complementary insights, by similar judgments of fact and of value, by parallel orientations in life. They are separated, estranged, rendered hostile, when they get out of touch, when they misunderstand one another, when they judge in opposed fashions, when they opt for contrary social goals. So personal relations vary from intimacy to ignorance, from love to exploitation, from respect to contempt, from friendliness to enmity. Personal relations can bind a community together, or divide it into factions, or tear it apart.

On that business of personal relations as an ongoing dialectic there is the dialectic of master and slave in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*; of Jew and Greek in Fessard's *De l'actualité historique*; very concretely, Rosemary Haughton *The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community* (London: G. Chapman, and Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1967).

Terminal values are values that are chosen: true instances of the particular good, a true good of order, a true scale of preferences regarding values and satisfactions. Correlative to the terminal values are the originating value of liberty, with an orientation that is converted to what truly is good.

Now, this structure of the good is the sort of thing that you can find anywhere, in any stage of human development. The good of order will be enormously more complex in a highly developed civilization than in a primitive tribe, but the same things are there.

So now we turn to talk about process. First of all, a little more about orientation.

We are going to speak of the orientation of the community as a whole in a moment, and then of progress and decline. Our present concern is the orientation of the individual in the orientated community. The root of the orientation is the transcendental notions that enable and require us to advance in understanding, to judge truthfully, to respond to values. This possibility and exigence become effective only through development. One must acquire the skills and the learning of a competent human being in some walk of life. One has to grow in sensitivity and responsiveness to values if one's humanity is to be authentic. Development is not inevitable, and so results vary. There are human failures, mediocrities. But there also is the continually developing person, with achievement varying according to initial background, opportunities, luck in avoiding pitfalls, and the pace of advance.

Orientation is the direction of development, and conversion is change of that direction and a change for the better. In conversion one frees oneself from the unauthentic. One grows in authenticity. Harmful, dangerous, misleading satisfactions are dropped. Fears of discomfort, pain, privation have less power to deflect one from one's course. Values are apprehended where before they were overlooked. Scales of preference shift. Errors, rationalizations, ideologies fall and leave one open to what he should be.

On various aspect of human growth see Abraham Maslow, *Toward a Psychology of Being*, Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1962.

The human good, then, is at once individual and social. You can't think of it simply in terms of the individual. Individuals do not just operate to meet their needs but cooperate to meet one another's needs. As the community develops its institutions to facilitate cooperation, so individuals develop skills to fulfil the roles and perform the

tasks within the institutional framework. Though the roles are fulfilled and the tasks are performed that the needs be met, still all is done not blindly but knowingly, not necessarily but freely. The process is not merely the service of man; it is above all the making of man, his advance in authenticity, the fulfilment of his affectivity.

Next, then, development as operational. Moving beyond that scheme. What we have been saying so far is very general. It is presented simply as a model, which we described yesterday, but it has its roots in the fundamental terms that we set up: our transcendental notions, and so on.

## **2 Development as Operational**

This depends largely on Jean Piaget, on whom the best work in English is by Flavell, I forget the title. [John H. Flavell, *The Developmental Psychology of Jean Piaget*, New York: D. Van Nostrand Company, 1963.] Piaget started off as a biologist, spent about twenty years in child psychology, moved on to epistemology, and so on. Then he became – he had always been a professor at Geneva – a professor at the Sorbonne; and I think it was Rockefeller's money that he attracted. Now he has about four people, the four best people in the world, working with him in Geneva during the year. And he brings about twenty others at the end of the year to go over their work, criticize it, and turn out two or three volumes.

There are three notions I want to take from Piaget: adaptation, group, and mediation. Adaptation: according to Piaget development is learning new operations. The element in such learning is an adaptation to some new object or situation. The adaptation consists of two parts, assimilation and adjustment. Assimilation is employing the operations that already have been learnt and that are appropriate to a somewhat similar object. The adjustment modifies and supplements previously learned operations. So learning new operations is, first of all, a matter of employing old operations in a manner

that is not totally relevant, and gradually improving them and becoming perfect on the job.

As adaptations to ever more objects occurs, a twofold process goes forward. There is an increasing differentiation of operations. You can deal with more and more objects, and in a different way for each one. And secondly, there is an ever greater multiplication of combinations of differentiated operations. You can think of it in terms of playing the piano, for example, striking any key and striking several keys at the same time, the tempo in which you do it, and so on. When the person learns to play the piano, what is he doing? He is differentiating his operations and combining differentiated operations. Every piece of music is a different combination of differentiated operations. Or St Thomas's *Summa Contra Gentiles*: if you compare a series of chapters there, you will find that you will have twenty-six arguments in the first and forty-three in the second, and thirty-nine in the third, and so on. The arguments seem very, very similar. What is he doing? He is differentiating operations and combining them in different ways to deal with different topics in the successive chapters.

Piaget studied the first two years of his three children, and it is a two-volume work: what they did, day by day. It is a thoroughgoing study, and he speaks of, he studies, their development in terms of this combining operations, of learning to differentiate operations and combine them, and so on. The baby, when he first feeds at the breast, can't find the nipple. After twenty-four hours, if his cheek touches the breast anywhere he will have his mouth right on it. He treats everything like this with regard to the development of his children.

He also astounded pedagogues by predicting levels of development in children up to the age of about thirteen. He said at what age approximately they would be able to do this, and up to that age they wouldn't be able to do it, and so on. They didn't pay any attention to his theory but they tried all his experiments and found that they worked marvelously. This book by Flavell goes into the theoretical side.

He was able to make these predictions by introducing the notion of group. Now, group is a mathematical notion, and we won't take all the properties of it but just a few. A group: you have a group when – a group is a set of operations in which every operation is matched by an opposite operation that will take you back to your starting point. And every combination of operations is matched by an opposite combination that will bring you back to the starting point. When a person is able to perform unhesitatingly any of the operations in the group he has achieved mastery. What Piaget did was to find out the different types of mastery that children gradually advance through as they learn. The baby develops oral, visual, manual, bodily skills. When the oral, visual, and manual have developed, everything the baby sees he grabs and he puts in his mouth. This grouping of the combinations of differentiated operations. The grouping defines levels of mastery, levels of development.

Finally, there is the notion of mediation. Operations are immediate when their objects are present. The seen is present to the seeing; the touched is present to the touching; the hearing is present to the sound. But operations are mediate when they are operations on images, symbols, signs, and so on. What is attained immediately is the image, the symbol, the sign. But what is attained mediately is what is signified by the sign, what is represented by the image. Now these mediated operations make it possible for operations to deal with what is absent, what is past, what is future, what is merely fantastic, what is normative, what is possible. It is through mediate operations that one moves out of the world of immediacy into a far larger world mediated by meaning.

By learning to speak, a child moves out of the world of immediate surroundings to a larger world revealed by memories of other men, the common sense of community, the pages of literature, the labors of scholars, the investigations of scientists, the experience of saints, the mediations of philosophers and theologians. So we have there a distinction between a world of immediacy in which the infant lives and the world mediated by meaning, which is our real world.



Now, this world mediated by meaning can ground a distinction between lower and higher cultures. In the lower culture meaning has no control except immediate experience. Consequently, the culture will be penetrated by magic and myth. There is an effective function to meaning: you give orders to get something done. But when you don't know how to control that, the aberration is magic. There is a constitutive function to meaning; meaning constitutes a society, its laws, and so on. If you make meaning constitute the world you get myth; in other words, meaning does mediate the world, but when it does so in an uncontrolled fashion you are open to myth. The higher culture has a reflexive technique for the control of meaning; it operates on mediate operations to safeguard meaning. Alphabets replace vocal with visual signs, dictionaries fix meanings, grammars control inflections and the conjunction of words, logics promote clarity, coherence, and rigor of discourse, hermeneutics studies the varying relationships between meaning and meant, and philosophies explore the differences between worlds mediated by meaning.

Finally, among the higher cultures there are two types of control. There is the classical control that sets up ideal norms, standardizes man; and there is the modern control where the controls themselves are ongoing processes.

On that topic see my article on 'Dimensions of Meaning.'

Consequently, the relevance of Piaget goes far beyond the field of educational psychology. It enables us to distinguish not only stages in the development of the individual but also stages in the development of man. His analysis of development can be applied to any type of operational achievement, either of an individual or a team or an orchestra, and so on. It provides an analysis but simply on the operational level.

### **3 Feelings**

Besides operational development there is also the development of feeling, our third topic. On this topic there is Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*. Also see Manfred Frings, *Max Scheler*. Hildebrand, following Scheler in this, distinguishes between nonintentional states and trends and intentional responses. Nonintentional states: they do not result from the perception of an object. You don't feel hungry when you see food; you feel hungry and you discover that what's wrong is that I need something to eat. Feeling tired is not the result of the apprehension of an object; you feel tired and you discover that what you need is a rest. These are nonintentional states: fatigue, irritability, bad humor, anxiety. Or nonintentional trends or urges: hunger, thirst, sexual discomfort. States and trends, then, have causes or are effects but they are not directly related to an object. You have to discover the object to which they are relevant.

On the other hand, there are intentional responses, feelings that arise in connection with objects. Either they summon the object to the imagination or result from the apprehension or imagining of the object. These are of two kinds. The pleasure and pain type – you want the pleasure and you don't want the pain – but that fact doesn't settle the question whether this is or is not truly good, whether it is or is not worth while. The right thing can be to put up with the pain. People accept unpleasant work, and so on, because of other good. On the other hand, there are intentional responses that reveal what is truly good. They are responses to values. And the responses occur in a hierarchy, with a hierarchy. There are vital values: health, strength, grace, vigor. Social values, the good of order conditioning vital values, and the vital values of the group are superior to the vital values of the individual. Cultural values presuppose vital and social values. But not on bread alone doth man live. There is the meaning of life, the value of life, the cultural values. Personal values: self-transcendence, incorporating in oneself an orientation towards value. Finally, religious values, on which we will be speaking the day after tomorrow.

Now just as skills develop, so also do feelings develop. They are fundamentally spontaneous; they are not like the motion of our hands, something that we control with our will, just as we please. But once they arise they can be reinforced or curtailed; we can advert to them, approve them, or distract ourselves from them, turn our attention elsewhere. The development of our feelings can modify spontaneous scales of preference, and the education of feelings is brought about by creating a climate of discernment in which people's feelings are enriched and refined. If you are living with thugs, well, you have to be pretty well a thug yourself if you are going to survive. If you are living with beautiful people who are considerate and generous and thoughtful, and so on, you can be that way yourself without too great a difficulty. But there is that development of feelings that is part of one's education.

Feelings as intentional responses are not merely transient; many of them are, but there can be extremely deep feelings that transform a person, of which the most obvious is love.

Further there are aberrations of feelings. Nietzsche borrowed a word from French, *ressentiment*, and gave it an interpretation; and Max Scheler took the same word and reinterpreted it. On Max Scheler's view, *ressentiment* is a re-feeling of a specific clash with someone else's value-qualities, someone superior to oneself physically, intellectually, morally, or spiritually. It is not aggressive but it is a lifetime reaction; it is hostility, anger that is never repudiated and never directly expressed; it attacks the value quality that is superior to one's own; it is manifested in a continuous belittling. There results a distortion of one's whole scale of values. It can be found not only in an individual but spread throughout a whole social class, a people, an epoch. Consequently, ethical, social, historical criticism can analyze and expose instances of such resentment.

In general, it is known today that it is better to take full cognizance of one's feelings, no matter how deplorable, because it is the possibility of knowing oneself and it is the possibility of correcting what is wrong.

We have spoken, then, of two dynamic processes: operational development and development of feelings. Both occur in the individual. But there is development in the social group as a whole. There is progress and its opposite, decline.

#### **4 Progress and Decline**

Progress proceeds from originating value. Insofar as there is originating value, the subject is observing the transcendental precepts: Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. His attention will be directed to human affairs; his intelligence will discover better ways of doing things; his judgment will reject anything proposed that will not work; he has to weigh the long and the short-term benefits, and so on. But, in general, there is the process of situation, understanding, policy, execution of the policy, new situation; and then correction of what was wrong in the previous policy, and you get an ongoing process that is progressive. Progress, then, is a continuous flow of improvements. Intelligence is exercised, first, on the situation, then on the changed situation, and so on.

But the precepts may be violated. They may be violated because of the dynamic unconscious, as it is called, what in *Insight* is called scotosis; by egoism, the individual who knows the social institutions and the good of order simply as something to be preyed on, to be got around, so that he can get the maximum for himself out of it. Group egoism, which is much better disguised, because the group finds excuses to explain why the other people are suffering, why it is their fault and why he is so happy and well off is because he is so good; and it creates an ideology and is quite surprised when a contrary ideology comes up from the other group. Finally, there is the general bias where common sense considers itself omniscient and is very difficult to instruct. All this is in chapter 7 of *Insight*, with further elements in chapters 18 and 20.

So, on the one hand, there is the possibility of progress insofar as people are attentive, intelligent, reasonable, and responsible, an ongoing improvement of the human situation. And there is decline insofar as there is individual, group, and general bias. So much for that aspect.

## **5 The Notion of Value**

As we said yesterday, there is the transcendental notion of value, namely, the notion contained in the question, Is this worth while? What I am doing or what I am planning to achieve, is it worth while? This question can be put to the individual or to the group. It is not knowing what is worth while, it is wanting to find out what is worth while. The mere fact that you are able to ask that question about anything is itself a notion. To find its content is something further.

These transcendental notions, as was said yesterday, are the dynamism of conscious intentionality. Questions for intelligence move us from sense experience to understanding, questions for reflection move us from understanding to judgment of fact and possibility, questions for deliberation move us from the true and the real to what is good.

The transcendental notion of value is concrete. The good is never an abstraction. Just as questions for reflection are what brings you to confront the whole universe of reality, so the good is concrete and what you head for is a good that is beyond criticism. This transcendental notion of value is revealed in the disenchantment that asks whether what we are doing is worth while, that brings to light limitations in every finite achievement, in every flawed perfection, that so invites, presses, harries us, that we could rest only in an encounter with a goodness completely beyond its powers of criticism. There is that divine discontent that is often spoken of.

## 6 Judgments of Value

Judgments of value are simple or comparative. A simple judgment of value:  $x$  is truly good;  $x$  is worthwhile, or it is only apparently good, not worthwhile. Comparative judgment:  $x$  is better than  $y$ , more important than  $y$ , more urgent than  $y$ . Judgments of value are objective or subjective according as they proceed from a self-transcending subject. The judgment of value means that some  $x$  is truly good or it is better than a  $y$ ; that is its meaning. Its criteria: how do you know that that judgment is correct? There is the proximate criterion in the good conscience; and the good conscience has to be the good conscience of the virtuous man; the remote criterion is the virtuous man. The vicious man will have a good conscience when he is performing vicious deeds; that doesn't mean that they are not vicious. So the criterion of the judgment of value is the good conscience of a virtuous man. And we have to become virtuous men; we are not born that way. One has to develop morally before one has a sound moral judgment. This is very Aristotelian, of course. Aristotle is able to talk empirically about ethics by postulating the existence of virtuous men. The good is what the virtuous man does; and it is not merely doing it, it is doing it the way he does it.

The judgment of value differs in content but not in structure from the judgment of fact. It differs in content: it says that something ought to be, something is truly good, something should be, while the other simply states fact or possibility. It does not differ in structure because in both there is what is meant by the judgment, the meaning of the judgment, the state of affairs; and the criterion of the judgment, which is man's capacity to judge. Just as your question for intelligence, why, is also the criterion by which you know whether this is a satisfactory answer to the question, why? Intelligence is satisfied; if intelligence is not satisfied by the answer you will have further questions coming up, and you will be pushed by still further questions. But, similarly, your question, Is that so? You can tell whether that answer has sufficient evidence or not; we won't go into the

details about how that is possible, it is treated in chapter 10 in *Insight*. Similarly, with regard to questions for deliberation: Is this worth while? there is the recognition of something as worth while that is manifested in the good or the uneasy conscience.

Intermediate between judgments of fact and judgments of value lie apprehensions of value. As we have said, these apprehensions of value are intentional responses that are not on the level of pleasure and pain, but are with regard to vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values. Those apprehensions: to take an instance, a person is ruining his health for the sake of pleasure, for example, and spontaneously there is a feeling of contempt for that. And so on. Social values: there is a spontaneous recognition in feeling; man's being is something attuned to self-transcendence and manifest in feeling that attunement.

There are three components, then, in the judgment of value. There is knowledge. You have to have knowledge of human reality, of what the human situation is in a given place and time, what is possible there, what would be the probable results of a given course of action. If you don't know that you can have very fine moral feelings, be a magnificent moral idealist, and reek complete havoc, because you don't know what you are doing, what you are effecting. So you have to have knowledge of human reality. You have to have intentional responses to values, recognize the potential and the actual values in the situation. Thirdly, you have to have that initial thrust to real self-transcendence that occurs in the judgment of value itself: this is something worthwhile. The judgment of value goes beyond the level of fact and possibility, of judgments that are simply true or false as opposed to what ought to be, what is truly good. You can't deduce judgments of value from judgments of fact or possibility. Consequently, that fourth level is a new level. It is the level of conscience, of existence, of being practical. The realization of moral self-transcendence is not only in the judgment of value but in following it through, in carrying out the actions to which it leads. However, because this judgment of value is

already in the moral realm it is the beginning of moral self-transcendence and the possibility of its completion.

Judgments of value occur in different contexts. They can occur in the context of growth: one's knowledge, operation, responses are advancing. One is open to further achievement; at the summit, one has the power and vigor of being in love with God, the supreme value. St Augustine said, 'Love God and do what you please.' If that is your supreme value really and operatively, then your affectivity can be all of a single piece. That is the context of growth. According to Abraham Maslow, people like that are less than 1% of the population, people who are continuously developing.

Judgments of value can occur in a context of deviations: meeting neurotic needs, refusing to take risks, distortions of the scale of preference, feelings soured, bias, rationalization, ideology, hatred of the good, hatred of the individual and hatred of the community. Human authenticity is always a withdrawal from unauthenticity, where our being is dialectical. I spoke of the context of growth. But the context of growth is always attaining truth by correcting one's mistakes, being good by getting over one's sins and failings, and so on. Human authenticity is precarious; it is ever ready to fall and shatter.

On human liberty there is Joseph de Finance, *Essai sur l'agir humain*, An Essay on Human Action, Rome: Presses de l'Université Gregorienne, 1962, pp. 287 ff. He draws a distinction between vertical and horizontal liberty. Horizontal liberty is the exercise of liberty within an already established horizon, outlook upon the world. The vertical exercise of liberty selects a new stance, a new horizon, it effects the movement from one horizon to another. It may consist in several choices, a long series of them; a process of conversion may be slow and manifested finally in some key judgment or decision. It may be implicit or explicit. You may be aware that you are changing your horizon or you may not.



The foundations of judgments of value are to be found in vertical liberty. One becomes morally good, the morally good man, the virtuous man whose good conscience is a criterion of true judgments of value only through the exercise of vertical liberty.