

### CHAPTER THREE

#### M E A N I N G

Meaning is embodied or carried in human intersubjectivity, in art, in symbols, in language, and in the lives and deeds of persons. It can be clarified by a reduction to its elements. It fulfils various functions in human living. It opens upon quite different realms. Its techniques vary in the successive stages of man's historical development. To say something on each of these topics not only will prepare the way for an account of such functional specialties as interpretation, history, systematics, and communications, but also will yield some insight into the diversity of the expressions of religious experience.

##### 1. Intersubjectivity

Prior to the "we" that results from the mutual love of an "I" and a "thou", there is the earlier "we" that precedes the distinction of subjects and survives its oblivion. This prior "we" is vital and functional. Just as one spontaneously raises one's arm to ward off a blow against one's head, so with the same spontaneity one reaches out to save another from falling. Perception, feeling, and bodily movement are involved, but the help given another is not deliberate but spontaneous. One adverts to it not before it occurs but while it is occurring. It is as if "we" were members of one another prior to our distinctions of each from the others.

Intersubjectivity appears not only in spontaneous mutual aid but also in some of the ways in which feelings are communicated. Here we shall be reporting Max Scheler who distinguished community of feeling, fellow-feeling, psychic contagion, and emotional identification.<sup>1</sup>

Both community of feeling and fellow-feeling are intentional responses that presuppose the apprehension of objects that arouse feeling. In community of feeling two or more persons respond in parallel fashion to the same object. In fellow-feeling a first person responds to an object, and a second responds to the manifested feeling of the first. So community of feeling would be illustrated by the sorrow felt by both parents for their dead child, but fellow-feeling would be felt by a third party moved by their sorrow. Again, in community worship, there is community of feeling inasmuch as worshippers are similarly concerned with God, but there is fellow-feeling inasmuch as some are moved to devotion by the prayerful attitude of others.

In contrast, psychic contagion and emotional identification have a vital rather than an intentional basis. Psychic contagion is a matter of sharing another's emotion without adverting to the object of the emotion. One grins when others are laughing although one does not know what they find funny. One becomes

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1) See Manfred Frings, Max Scheler, Pittsburgh and Louvain 1965, pp. 56-66.

sorrowful when others are weeping although one does not know the cause of their grief. An on-locker, without undergoing another's ills, is caught up in the feeling of extreme pain expressed on the face of the sufferer. Such contagion seems to be the mechanism of mass-excitement in panics, revolutions, revolts, demonstrations, strikes, where in general there is a disappearance of personal responsibility, a domination of drives over thinking, a decrease of the intelligence level, and a readiness for submission to a leader. Needless to say, such contagion can be deliberately provoked, built up, exploited by political activists, by the entertainment industry, by religious and especially pseudo-religious leaders.

In emotional identification either personal differentiation is as yet undeveloped or else there is a retreat from personal differentiation to vital unity. Undeveloped differentiation has its basic illustration in the emotional identification of mother and infant. But it also appears in the identifications of primitive mentality and, again, in the earnestness of a little girl's play with her doll; she identifies herself with her mother and at the same time projects herself into the doll. Retreat from differentiation is illustrated by Scheler in various ways. It is his account of hypnosis. It occurs in sexual intercourse when both partners undergo a suspension of individuality and fall back into a single stream of life. In the group mind members identify with their leader and spectators with their team; in both cases the group coalesces in a single stream of instinct and feeling. In the ancient mysteries the

mystic in a state of ecstasy became divine; and, in the writings of later mystics, experiences with a pantheist implication are not infrequently described.

## 2. Intersubjective Meaning

Besides the intersubjectivity of action and of feeling, there also are intersubjective communications of meaning. This I propose to illustrate by borrowing a phenomenology of a smile proximately from my notebook but remotely from sources I have been unable to trace.

First, then, a smile does have a meaning. It is not just a certain combination of movements of lips, facial muscles, eyes. It is a combination with a meaning. Because that meaning is different from the meaning of a frown, a scowl, a stare, a glare, a snicker, a laugh, it is named a smile. Because we all know that that meaning exists, we do not go about the streets smiling at everyone we meet. We know we should be misunderstood.

Next, a smile is highly perceptible. For our perceiving is not just a function of the impressions made on our senses. It has an orientation of its own and it selects, out of a myriad of others, just those impressions that can be constructed into a pattern with a meaning. So one can converse with a friend on a noisy street, disregard the meaningless surrounding tumult, and picking out the band of sound waves that has a meaning. So, too, a smile, because of its meaning, is easily perceived. Smiles occur in an enormous range of variations of facial movements, of lighting, of angle of vision. But even an incipient, suppressed

smile is not missed, for the smile is a Gestalt, a patterned set of variable movements, and it is recognized as a whole.

Both the meaning of the smile and the act of smiling are natural and spontaneous. We do not learn to smile as we learn to walk, to talk, to swim, to skate. Commonly we do not think of smiling and then do it. We just do it. Again, we do not learn the meaning of smiling as we learn the meaning of words. The meaning of the smile is a discovery we make on our<sup>own</sup>, and that meaning does not seem to vary from culture to culture, as does the meaning of gestures.

There is something irreducible to the smile. It cannot be explained by causes outside meaning. It cannot be elucidated by other types of meaning. Some illustration of this will be had by comparing the meaning of the smile with that of language.

Linguistic meaning tends to be univocal, but smiles have a wide variety of different meanings. There are smiles of recognition, of welcome, of friendliness, of friendship, of love, of joy, of delight, of contentment, of satisfaction, of amusement, of refusal, of contempt. Smiles may be ironic, sardonic, enigmatic, glad or sad, fresh or weary, eager or resigned.

Linguistic meaning may be true in two ways: true as opposed to mendacious and true as opposed to false. A smile may be simulated and so it may be true as opposed to mendacious, but it cannot be true as opposed to false.

Linguistic meaning contains distinctions between what we feel, what we desire, what we fear, what we think, what we know, what we wish, what we command, what we intend. The meaning of a smile is global; it expresses what one person means to another;

it has the meaning of a fact and not the meaning of a proposition.

Linguistic meaning is objective. It expresses what has been objectified. But the meaning of the smile is intersubjective. It supposes the interpersonal situation with its antecedents in previous encounters. It is a recognition and an acknowledgement of that situation and, at the same time, a determinant of the situation, an element in the situation as process, a meaning with its significance in the context of antecedent and subsequent meanings. Moreover, that meaning is not about some object. Rather it reveals or even betrays the subject, and the revelation is immediate. It is not the basis of some inference, but rather in the smile one incarnate subject is transparent or, again, hidden to another, and that transparency or hiddenness antedates all subsequent analysis that speaks of body and soul, or of sign and signified.

From smiles one might go on to all the facial or bodily movements or pauses, to all the variations of voice in tone, pitch, volume, and in silence, to all the ways in which our feelings are revealed or betrayed by ourselves or are depicted by actors on the stage. But our purpose is not to exhaust the topic but rather to point to the existence of <sup>a</sup> special carrier or embodiment of meaning, namely, human intersubjectivity.

### 3. Art

Here I borrow from Suzanne Langer's Feeling and Form where art is defined as the objectification of a purely experiential pattern, and each term in this definition is carefully explained.

A pattern may be abstract or concrete. There is an abstract pattern in a musical score or in the indentation in the grooves of a phonograph record. But there is a concrete pattern in these colors, these tones, these volumes, these movements. The concrete pattern consists in the internal relations of colors, tones, volumes, movements. It does not consist in, say, the colors as unrelated and it does not consist in the colors as representative of something else.

Now the pattern of the perceived is also the pattern of the perceiving, and the pattern of the perceiving is an experiential pattern. But all perceiving is a selecting and organizing. Precisely because the perceived is patterned, it is easily perceived. So one can repeat a tune or melody but not a succession of street noises. So verse makes information memorable. Decoration makes a surface visible. Patterns achieve, perhaps, a special perceptibility by drawing on organic analogies. The movement is from root through trunk to branches, leaves, and flowers. It is repeated with varying variations. Complexity mounts and yet the multiplicity is organized into a whole.

A pattern is said to be pure inasmuch as it excludes alien patterns that instrumentalize experience. One's senses can become merely an apparatus for receiving and transmitting signals. At the red light the brake goes on and at the green the accelerator is pressed down. So there results the behavior of the ready-made subject in his ready-made world. Again, sense may function simply in the service of scientific intelligence. It submits to the alien pattern of conceptual genera and species,

of theoretical schemes and models, of judgmental concern for  
 evidence that confirms or opposes an opinion. Finally, sense  
 may be reshaped by an a priori theory of experience. Instead  
 of having its own proper life, sense is subordinated to some  
 view drawn from physics, physiology, or psychology. It is  
 divided by an epistemology that thinks of impressions as  
 objective and of their pattern as subjective. It is alienated  
 by a utilitarianism that attends to objects just in the measure  
 there is something in them for me to get out of them.

Not only are alien patterns to be excluded but also  
 the pattern must be purely experiential. It is of the colors  
 that are visible and not of the stereotypes that are anticipated.  
 It is of shapes as visible and so in perspective and not of  
 shapes as really constructed, as known perhaps to touch but not  
 to sight. So too it is of the sounds in their actual tone,  
 pitch, and volume, their overtones, harmonics, dissonances.  
 To them accrue their retinue of associations, affects, emotions,  
 incipient tendencies. Out of them may rise a lesson, but into  
 them a lesson may not be intruded in the manner of didacticism,  
 moralism, or social realism. To them also there accrues the  
 experiencing subject with his capacity for wonder, for awe and  
 fascination, with his openness to adventure, daring, greatness,  
 goodness, majesty.

The required purity of the existential pattern aims  
 not at impoverishment but at enrichment. It curtails what is  
 alien to let experiencing find its full complement of feeling.  
 It lets experiencing fall into its own proper patterns and



take its own line of expansion, development, organization, fulfilment. So experiencing becomes rhythmic, one movement necessitating another and the other in turn necessitating the first. Tensions are built up to be resolved; variations multiply and grow in complexity yet remain within an organic unity that eventually rounds itself off.

Meaning, when fully developed, intends something meant. But the meaning of an experiential pattern is elemental. It is the conscious performing of a transformed subject in his transformed world. That world may be regarded as illusion, but it also may be regarded as more true and more real. We are transported from the space in which we move to the space within the picture, from the time of sleeping and waking, working and resting, to the time of the music, from the pressures and determinisms of home and office, of economics and politics to the powers depicted in the dance, from conversational and media use of language to the vocal tools that focus, mould, grow with consciousness. As his world, so too the subject is transformed. He has been liberated from being a replaceable part adjusted to a ready-made world and integrated within it. He has ceased to be a responsible inquirer investigating some aspect of the universe or seeking a view of the whole. He has become just himself; emergent, ecstatic, originating freedom.

It is possible to set within the conceptual field this elemental meaning of the transformed subject in his transformed world. But this procedure reflects without reproducing the elemental meaning. Art criticism and art history are like the

thermodynamic equations, which guide our control of heat but, of themselves, cannot make us feel warmer or cooler.

The proper expression of the elemental meaning is the work of art itself. That meaning lies within the consciousness of the artist but, at first, it is only implicit, folded up, veiled, unrevealed, unobjectified. Aware of it, the artist has yet to get hold of it; he is impelled to behold, inspect, dissect, enjoy, repeat it; and this means objectifying, unfolding, making explicit, unveiling, revealing.

The process of objectifying involves psychic distance. Where the elemental meaning is just experiencing, its expression involves detachment, distinction, separation from experience. While the smile or frown expresses intersubjectively the feeling as it is felt, artistic composition recollects emotion in tranquillity. It is a matter of insight into the elemental meaning, a grasp of the commanding form that has to be expanded, worked out, developed, and the subsequent process of working out, adjusting, correcting, completing the initial insight. There results an idealization of the original experiential pattern. Art is not autobiography. It is not telling one's tale to the psychiatrist. It is grasping what is or seems significant, of moment, concern, import, to man. It is truer than experience, leaner, more effective, more to the point. It is the central moment with its proper implications, and they unfold without the distortions, interferences, accidental intrusions of the original pattern.

As the proper expression of the elemental meaning is the

work of art itself, so too the proper apprehension and appreciation of the work of art is not any conceptual clarification or judicial weighing of conceptualized evidence. The work of art is an invitation to participate, to try it, to see for oneself. As the mathematician withdraws from the sciences that verify to explore possibilities of organizing data, so the work of art invites one to withdraw from practical living and to explore possibilities of fuller living in a richer world.<sup>2</sup>

#### 4. Symbols

A symbol is an image of a real or imaginary object that evokes a feeling or is evoked by a feeling.

Feelings are related to objects, to one another, and to their subject. They are related to objects: one desires food, fears pain, enjoys a meal, regrets a friend's illness. They are related to one another through changes in the object: one desires the good that is absent, hopes for the good that is sought, enjoys the good that is present; one fears absent evil,

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a/ 2) Again, let me stress that I am not attempting to be exhaustive. For an application of the above analysis to different art forms in drawing and painting, statuary and architecture, music and dance, epic, lyric, and dramatic poetry, the reader must go to S.K. Langer, Feeling and Form, New York 1953. The point I am concerned to make is that there exist quite distinct carriers or embodiments of meaning.

### MEANING

are such sequences as offense, contumacy, judgment, punishment and, again, offense, repentance, apology, forgiveness. Further, feelings may conflict yet come together: one may desire despite fear, hope against hope, mix joy with sadness, love with hate, gentleness with harshness, tenderness with violence, intimacy with cruelty, union with alienation. Finally, feelings are related to their subject: they are the mass and momentum and power of his conscious living, the actuation of his affective capacities, dispositions, habits, the effective orientation of his being.

The same objects need not evoke the same feelings in different subjects and, inversely, the same feelings need not evoke the same symbolic images. This difference in affective response may be accounted for by differences in age, sex, education, state of life, temperament, existential concern. But, more fundamentally, there is in the human being an affective development that may suffer aberrations. It is the history of that process that terminates in the person with a determinate orientation in life and with determinate affective capacities, dispositions, and habits. What such affective capacities, dispositions, habits are in a given individual can be specified by the symbols that awake determinate affects and, inversely, by the affects that evoke determinate symbols. Again, from assumptions about normality one can go on to conclude that the responses of a given individual are normal or not.

Symbols of the same affective orientation and disposition are affectively undifferentiated. Hence, they are interchangeable and they may be combined to increase their intensity and reduce their ambiguity. Such combination and organization reveal the difference between the aesthetic and the symbolic; the monsters of mythology are just bizarre. Further, compound affects call for compound symbols, and each member of the compound may be a conglomeration of undifferentiated or only slightly differentiated symbols. So St. George and the Dragon present at once all the values of ascensional symbolism and all the disvalues of its opposite. St. George is seated yet high on his horse; he is in the light and is free to use his arms; one hand guides the horse and the other manipulates the spear. But he could fall, be pressed

Page 92  
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Affective development, or aberration, involves a transvaluation and transformation of symbols. What before was moving no longer moves; what before did not move now is moving. So the symbols themselves change to express the new affective capacities and dispositions. So the conquest of terror can relegate the Dragon to insignificant fancy, but now it brings forth the meaning of Jonah's whale: a monster that swallowed a drowning man and three days later vomited him unharmed upon the shore. Inversely, symbols that do not submit to transvaluation and transformation seem to point to a block in development. It is one thing for a child, another for a man, to be afraid of the dark.

Symbols obey the laws not of logic but of image and feeling. For the logical class the symbol uses a representative figure. For univocity it substitutes a wealth of multiple meanings. It does not prove but it overwhelms with a manifold of images that converge in meaning. It does not bow to the principle of excluded middle but admits the coincidentia oppositorum, of love and hate, of courage and fear, and so on. It does not negate but overcomes what it rejects by heaping up all that is opposite to it. It does not move on some single track or on some single level, but condenses into a bizarre unity all its present concerns.

The symbol, then, has the power of recognizing and expressing what logical discourse abhors: the existence of internal tensions, incompatibilities, conflicts, struggles, destructions. A dialectical or methodical viewpoint can embrace, of course, what is concrete, contradictory, and dynamic. But the symbol did this before either logic or dialectic were conceived. It does this for those unfamiliar with logic and dialectic. Finally, it does it in a way that complements and fills out logic and dialectic, for it meets a need that these refinements cannot meet.

This need is for internal communication. Organic and psychic vitality have to reveal themselves to intentional consciousness and, inversely, intentional consciousness has to secure the collaboration of organism and psyche. Again, our apprehensions of values occur in intentional responses, in feelings: here too it is necessary for feelings to reveal

their objects and, inversely, for objects to awaken feelings. It is through symbols that mind and body, mind and heart, heart and body communicate.

In that communication symbols have their proper meaning. It is an elemental meaning, not yet objectified, as the meaning of the smile prior to a phenomenology of the smile, or the meaning in the purely experiential pattern prior to its expression in a work of art. It is a meaning that fulfils its function in the imagining or perceiving subject as his conscious intentionality develops or goes astray or both, as he takes his stance to nature, with his fellow men, and before God. It is a meaning that has its proper context in the process of internal communication in which it occurs, and it is to that context with its associated images and feelings, memories and tendencies that the interpreter has to appeal if he would explain the symbol.

To explain the symbol, of course, is to go beyond the symbol. It is to effect the transition from an elemental meaning in an image or percept to a linguistic meaning. Moreover, it is to use the context of the linguistic meaning as an arsenal of possible relations, clues, suggestions in the construction of the elemental context of the symbol. However, such interpretative contexts are many and, perhaps, this multiplicity only reflects the many ways in which human beings can develop and suffer deviation.

There are, then, the three original interpretative systems: the psychoanalysis of Freud, the individual psychology of Adler, the analytic psychology of Jung. But the initial

rigidities and oppositions are less and less maintained by their successors.<sup>3</sup> Charles Baudouin has introduced a psychagogy that considers Freud and Jung to be not opposed but complementary: *n/cuu* he uses Freud in reverting to causal objects and Jung in attending to subjective development;<sup>4</sup> and this complementarity would seem to be supported by Paul Ricoeur's long study that concludes Freudian thought to be an archeology of the subject that necessarily implies but does not explicitly acknowledge a forward-moving teleology.<sup>5</sup> Again, there are marked tendencies among therapists to develop their own systems of interpretation<sup>6</sup> or to treat interpretation as an art to be learnt.<sup>7</sup> Finally,

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3) There are, of course, notable exceptions. I mention only Antoine Vergote who follows Freud's genetic psychology quite strictly though he does not accept Freud's philosophical speculations. See Winfrid Huber, Herman Piron, et Antoine Vergote, La psychanalyse, science de l'homme, Bruxelles (Dessart) 1964.

4) Charles Baudouin, L'oeuvre de Jung, Paris (Payot) 1963. Gilberte Aigrisse, "Efficacité du symbole en psychothérapie," Cahiers internationaux de symbolisme, no. 14, pp. 3-24.

5) Paul Ricoeur, De l'interprétation, Essai sur Freud, Paris (du Seuil) 1965.

6) Karen Horney's books exhibit a cumulative development. The Neurotic Personality of our Time, 1937; New Ways in Psychoanalysis, Self-analysis, 1942; Our Inner Conflicts, 1945; Neurosis and Human Growth, 1950. Published by W.W. Norton, New York.

7) Erich Fromm, The Forgotten Language, chapter six, The Art of Dream Interpretation, New York (Grove Press) 1957.



there are those that feel that therapeutic goals can be more effectively attained by pretty well withdrawing from the interpretation of symbols. So Carl Rogers makes it his aim to provide his client with an interpersonal situation in which the client can gradually come to self-discovery.<sup>8</sup> At an opposite pole Frank Lake gets his theory from Pavlov and administers LSD 25 to clients thereby enabled to recall and confront traumata suffered in infancy.<sup>9</sup>

Concomitant with the foregoing movement there has been a parallel development outside the therapeutic context.<sup>10</sup> Freud proposed not merely a method of therapy but also highly speculative accounts of man's inner structure and of the nature of civilization and of religion. But this extension of the therapeutic context over the whole of human concern has been met by the erection of non-therapeutic contexts in which symbols are studied and interpreted. Gilbert Durand has proceeded from a physiological

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8) Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, Boston (Houghton, Mifflin) 1961.

9) Frank Lake, Clinical Theology, London (Darton, Longman & Todd) 1966. In similar vein but without any use of drugs Arthur Janov encourages his clients to free themselves of their tensions by accepting consciousness of the pains hitherto they have repressed. See his The Primal Scream, New York (Putman) 1970.

10) Varying viewpoints in Irwin G. Sarason, editor, Science and Theory in Psychoanalysis, Princeton, N.J. (Van Nostrand) 1965.

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basis in three dominant reflexes, maintaining one's balance, swallowing food, and mating, to organize vast masses of symbolic data, to balance the organization with a contrary organization, and to effect synthesis by alternation of the two.<sup>11</sup> In a great number of works Mircea Eliade has collected, compared, integrated, explained the symbols of primitive religions.<sup>12</sup> Northrop Frye has appealed to the cycles of day and night, the four seasons, and the course of an organism's growth and decline to construct a matrix from which might be derived the symbolic narratives of literature.<sup>13</sup> Psychologists have turned from the sick to the well, indeed, to those that keep growing over a long lifetime,<sup>14</sup> and

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11) Gilbert Durand, Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire, Introduction a l'archétypologie générale, 2nd edition, Paris (Presses Universitaires de France) 1963.

12) Mircea Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism," in Mircea Eliade and Joseph Kitagawa, editors, The History of Religions, Essays in Methodology, Chicago (University of Chicago Press) 1959, <sup>2</sup>1962.

13) Northrop Frye, Fables of Identity, Studies in Poetic Mythology, New York (Harcourt, Bruce & World) 1963.

14) There exists what is named a "Third Force" in psychology. It is described by A. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, Princeton, N.J. (Van Nostrand) 1962, p. vi.

there has even been raised the question whether mental illness really pertains to a merely medical context, whether the trouble is real guilt and not merely mistaken feelings of guilt.<sup>15</sup> Finally, and most significant from a basic viewpoint, there is the existential approach that thinks of the dream, not as the twilight of life, but as its dawn, the beginning of the transition from impersonal existence to presence in the world, to constitution of oneself in one's world.<sup>16</sup>

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15) O.H. Mowrer, The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion, Princeton, N.J. (Van Nostrand) 1961.

16) Ludwig Binswanger, Le rêve et l'existence, Desclée 1954, Introduction (128 pp.) et notes de Michel Foucault. Rollo May, Ernest Angel, Henri F. Ellenberger, editors, Existence, A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology, New York (Basic Books) 1958. Rollo May, editor, Existential Psychology, Random House, 1961. Rollo May, "The Significance of Symbols," in Symbolism in Religion and Literature, New York (Braziller) 1961. V.E. Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, New York (Knopf) 1955. Man's Search for Meaning, New York (Washington Square Press) 1959, 1963. The Will to Meaning, Cleveland (World) 1969. V.E. Frankl with others, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, New York (Washington Square Press) 1967

## 5. Linguistic Meaning

By its embodiment in language, in a set of conventional signs, meaning finds its greatest liberation. For conventional signs can be multiplied almost indefinitely. They can be differentiated and specialized to the utmost refinement. They can be used reflexively in the analysis and control of linguistic meaning itself. In contrast intersubjective and symbolic meanings seem restricted to the spontaneities of human <sup>people</sup> living together and, while the visual and aural arts can develop conventions, still the conventions themselves are limited by the materials in which colors and shapes, solid forms and structures, sounds and movements are embodied.

The moment of language in human development is most strikingly illustrated by the story of Helen Keller's discovery that the successive touches made on her hand by her teacher conveyed names of objects. The moment when she first caught on was marked by the expression of profound emotion and, in turn, the emotion bore fruit in so powerful an interest that she signified her desire to learn and did learn the names of about twenty objects in a very short time. It was the beginning of an incredible career of learning.

In Helen Keller's emotion and interest one can surmise the reason why ancient civilizations prized names so highly. It was not, as sometimes is said, that for them the name was the essence of the thing named. Concern with essences is a later Socratic concern seeking universal definitions. Prizing

names is prizing the human achievement of bringing conscious intentionality into sharp focus and, thereby, setting about the double task of both ordering one's world and orientating oneself within it. Just as the dream at daybreak may be said to be the beginning of the process from an impersonal existence to the presence of a person in his world, so listening and speaking are a major part in the achievement of that presence.

So it is that conscious intentionality develops in and is moulded by its mother tongue. It is not merely that we learn the names of what we see but also that we can attend to and talk about the things we can name. The available language, then, takes the lead. It picks out the aspects of things that are pushed into the foreground, the relations between things that are stressed, the movements and changes that demand attention. So different languages develop in different manners and the best of translations can express, not the exact meaning of the original, but the closest approximation possible in another tongue.

The action is reciprocal. Not only does language mould developing consciousness but also it structures the world about the subject. Spatial adverbs and adjectives relate places to the place of the speaker. The tenses of verbs relate times to his present. Moods correspond to his intention to wish, or exhort, or command, or declare. Voices make verbs now active and now passive and, at the same time, shift subjects to objects and objects to subjects. Grammar almost gives us Aristotle's categories of substance, quantity, quality, relation, action, passion, place, time, posture, habit, while Aristotle's logic

and theory of science are deeply rooted in the grammatical  
function of predication.<sup>17</sup>

As language develops there emerges a distinction between ordinary, technical, and literary language. Ordinary language is the vehicle in which the human community conducts its collaboration in the day-to-day pursuit of the human good. It is the language of home and school, of industry and commerce, of enjoyment and misfortune, of the mass media and casual conversation. Such language is transient; it expresses the thought of the moment at the moment for the moment. It is elliptical. It knows that a wink is as good as a nod, that full statement is superfluous and would only irritate. Its basis is common sense, where by common sense is meant a nucleus of habitual insights such that the addition of one or two more will bring one to the understanding of any of an open series of concrete situations. By that understanding one will grasp how to behave, what to say, how to say it, what to do, how to do it, in the currently emerging situation. Such a nucleus of insights is centered in the subject; it regards his world as related to him, as the field of his behavior, influence, action, as colored by his desires, hopes, fears, joys, sorrows. When such a nucleus of insights is shared by a group, it is the common sense of the group; when it is just personal, it is thought odd; when it

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17) In mathematical logic predication yields place to propositional combination. Elsewhere I have argued that the form of inference is the "if - then" relation between propositions. Collection. Papers by Bernard Lonergan. Edited by F.R. Crouse. London and New York, 1967.

pertains to the common sense of a different group, it is considered  
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 strange.

The commonsense development of human intelligence yields not only common but also complementary results. Primitive fruit gatherers differentiate into gardeners, hunters, and fishers. New groups and ends and tasks and tools call forth new words. The division of labor continues and, with it, the specialization of language. Eventually there arises a distinction between words in common use that refer to what is generally known about particular tasks and, on the other hand, the technical words employed by craftsmen, or experts, or specialists, when they speak among themselves. This process is carried much further, when human intelligence shifts from commonsense to theoretical development, when inquiry is pursued for its own sake, when logic and methods are formulated, when a tradition of learning is established, different branches are distinguished, and specialties multiply.

Literary language is a third genus. While ordinary language is transient, literary is permanent: it is the vehicle of a work, a poiēma, to be learnt by heart or to be written out. While ordinary language is elliptical, content to supplement the common understanding and common feeling already guiding common living, literary language not only aims at fuller statement but also attempts to make up for the lack of mutual presence. It would have the listener or reader not only understand but also feel. So where the technical treatise aims at conforming to the laws

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18) On common sense, Insight, chapters six and seven.

of logic and the precepts of method, literary language tends to float somewhere in between logic and symbol. When it is analysed by a logical mind, it is found to be full of what are termed figures of speech. But it is only the intrusion of non-literary criteria into the study of literature that makes figures of speech smack of artifice. For the expression of feeling is symbolic and, if words owe a debt to logic, symbols follow the laws of image and affect. With Giambattista Vico, then, we hold for the priority of poetry. Literal meaning literally expressed is a later ideal and only with enormous effort and care can it be realized, as the tireless labors of linguistic analysts seem to show.

#### 6. Incarnate Meaning

Cor ad cor loquitur. Incarnate meaning combines all or at least many of the other carriers of meaning. It can be at once intersubjective, artistic, symbolic, linguistic. It is the meaning of a person, of his way of life, of his words, or of his deeds. It may be his meaning for just one other person, or for a small group, or for a whole national, or social, or cultural, or religious tradition.

Such meaning may attach to a group achievement, to a Thermopylae or Marathon, to the Christian martyrs, to a glorious revolution. It may be transposed to a character or characters in a story or a play, to a Hamlet or Tartuffe or Don Juan. It may emanate from the whole personality and the total performance of an orator or a demagogue.



Finally, as meaning can be incarnate, so too can be the meaningless, the vacant, the empty, the vapid, the insipid, the dull.

7. Elements of Meaning

Distinguish (1) sources, (2) acts, and (3) terms of meaning.

Sources of meaning are all conscious acts and all intended contents, whether in the dream state or on any of the four levels of waking consciousness. The principal division of sources is into transcendental and categorial. The transcendental are the very dynamism of intentional consciousness, its capacity that consciously and unceasingly both heads for and recognizes data, intelligibility, truth, reality, and value. The categorial are the determinations reached through experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding. The transcendental notions ground questioning. Answers develop categorial determinations.

Acts of meaning are (1) potential, (2) formal, (3) full, (4) constitutive or effective, and (5) instrumental. In the potential act meaning is elemental. There has not yet been reached the distinction between meaning and meant. Such is the meaning of the smile that acts simply as an intersubjective determinant, the meaning of the work of art prior to its interpretation by a critic, the meaning of the symbol performing its office of internal communication without help from the therapist. Again, acts of sensing and of understanding of themselves have only potential meaning. As Aristotle put it, the

*signal*

sensible in act and intelligence <sup>^</sup> in act are one and the same. Thus, sounding and hearing are an identity: without ears there can be longitudinal waves in the atmosphere but there cannot be sound. Similarly, data are potentially intelligible, but their intelligibility in act coincides with an intelligence in act.

The formal act of meaning is an act of conceiving, thinking, considering, defining, supposing, formulating. There has emerged the distinction between meaning and meant, for the meant is what is conceived, thought, considered, defined, supposed, formulated. However, the precise nature of this distinction has not as yet been clarified. One is meaning precisely what one is thinking about, but one has yet to determine whether the object of one's thought is merely an object of thought or something more than that.

The full act of meaning is an act of judging. One settles the status of the object of thought, that it is merely an object of thought, or a mathematical entity, or a real thing lying in the world of human experience, or a transcendent reality beyond that world.

CS/ Active and ~~performative~~ <sup>signal</sup> meaning <sup>^</sup> come with judgments of value, decisions, actions. ~~It~~ <sup>This</sup> is a topic to which we revert when we treat, in a later section, the effective and constitutive functions of meaning in the individual and the community.

Instrumental acts of meaning are expressions. They externalize and exhibit for interpretation by others the potential, formal, full, constitutive, or effective acts of

19  
 meaning of the subject. As the expression and the interpretation may be adequate or faulty, instrumental acts of meaning provide the materials for a special chapter on hermeneutics.

A term of meaning is what is meant. The potential acts of meaning, meaning and meant are not yet sorted out. In formal acts, the distinction has emerged but the exact status of the term remains indeterminate. In full acts of meaning there occurs the probable or certain determination of the status of the term; one settles whether or not A is, or whether or not A is B. In constitutive or effective acts of meaning one settles one's attitude to A, what one will do for B, whether one will endeavor to bring about C.

With regard to full terms of meaning one has to distinguish different spheres of being. We say that the moon exists. We also say that there exists the logarithm of the square root of minus one. In both cases we use the same verb, exist. But we do not mean that the moon is just a conclusion that can be deduced from suitable mathematical postulates, and we do not mean that the logarithm in question can be inspected sailing around the sky. A distinction, accordingly, has to be drawn between a sphere of real being and other restricted spheres such as the mathematical, the hypothetical, the logical, and so on. While these spheres differ enormously from one another, they are not simply disparate. The contents of each sphere are

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19) Performative meaning is constitutive or effective meaning linguistically expressed. It has been studied by the analysts, notably by Donald Evans, The Logic of Self-involvement, London (SCM Press) 1963.

rationally affirmed. The affirmation is rational because it proceeds from an act of reflective understanding in which is grasped the virtually unconditioned, that is, a conditioned whose conditions are fulfilled.<sup>20</sup> But the spheres differ so vastly because the conditions to be fulfilled differ. The fulfilling conditions for affirming real being are appropriate data of sense or consciousness, but the fulfilling condition for proposing an hypothesis is a possible relevance to a correct understanding of data, while the fulfilling conditions for correct mathematical statement do not explicitly include even a possible relevance to data. Finally, beyond restricted spheres and the real sphere there is the transcendent sphere of being; transcendent being is the being that, while known by us through grasping the virtually unconditioned, is itself without any conditions whatever; it is formally unconditioned, absolute.

The foregoing, of course, is the realist account of full terms of meaning. To transpose to the empiricist position, one disregards the virtually unconditioned and identifies the real with what is exhibited in ostensive gestures. What is a dog? Well, here you are, take a look. To move from empiricism to idealism, one draws attention to the empiricist's failure to note all the structuring elements that are constitutive of human knowing yet not given to sense. However, while the

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20) On the virtually unconditioned, Insight, chapter ten.

idealist is correct in rejecting the empiricist's account of human knowledge, he is mistaken in accepting the empiricist notion of reality and so in concluding that the object of human knowledge is not the real but the ideal. Accordingly, to move beyond idealism to realism, one has to discover that man's intellectual and rational operations involve a transcendence of the operating subject, that the real is what we come to know through a grasp of a certain type of virtually unconditioned.

21

#### 8. Functions of Meaning

A first function of meaning is cognitive. It takes us out of the infant's world of immediacy, and places us in the adult's world, which is a 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, heard. It is a 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.

However, as the command and use of language develop, 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. Again, words express not merely what we have found out for

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21) I have treated this topic in the last two chapters of Collection.

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 experiencing. For what is meant, is what is intended in questioning 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 mediated by meaning, there is the mediation of immediacy by meaning when one objectifies cognitional process

in transcendental method and when one discovers, identifies, 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 in 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 pro's and con's, 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 on this continent found shore and heartland, 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 added, man-made, artificial world is the cumulative, now planned, now chaotic, product of human acts of meaning.

A third function of meaning is constitutive. Just as language 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, <sup>incarnately.</sup> So individual meaning becomes 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, and 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, by incomprehension, by 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 think 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 judgment, 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 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 for the schoolmaster is education, for the sociologist is socialization, for the cultural anthropologist is acculturation. But for the individual in the process it is his coming to be a man, his existing as a man in the fuller sense of the name.

Such existing may be authentic or unauthentic, and this

may occur in two different ways. There is the minor authenticity or unauthenticity of the subject with respect to the tradition that nourishes him. There is the 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 pass judgment on traditions.

As Kierkegaard asked whether he was a Christian, so divers men can ask themselves whether or not they are genuine Catholics, or Protestants, Muslims or Buddhists, Platonists or Aristotelians, Kantians or Hegelians, artists or scientists, and so forth. Now they may 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 a greater or less divergence. These points of divergence are overlooked from a selective inattention, or from a failure to understand, or from an undetected rationalization. What I am is one thing, what a genuine Christian 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 may still be invoked but, as Edmund Husserl has argued, 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 law. 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 in 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.

9.        Realms of Meaning

Different exigences give rise to different modes of conscious and intentional operation, 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, coalesce, qualify and correct one another, until a 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 things, 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 Nicomachean 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. This context is theory, and the objects to which it refers are in the realm of theory. To these objects one can ascend from common-sense starting-points, but they are properly known, not by this ascent, but by their internal relations, their congruences, and differences, the functions they fulfil in their interactions. As one may approach theoretical objects from a commonsense starting-point, so too one can invoke commonsense to correct theory. But the corrections 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 in 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. If a biologist takes his young son to the zoo and 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, and 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 difference in the languages involves social differences: specialists can speak to their wives about many things but not about their specialties. 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 with an acclaim to science as the dawn of intelligence and reason? Or is science of merely 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? 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 fulfilment, peace, joy, only by moving beyond the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority and into the realm<sup>in</sup> which God is known and loved. ✓

It is, of course, only in a rather highly developed consciousness that the distinction between the 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 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. 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 was mostly empty space. Differentiated consciousness appears when the critical exigence turns 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 consciousness 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 a pre-scientific age. If the transition from the undifferentiated to troubled consciousness cannot be avoided when it is clear that common sense and theory, though disparate, must both be accepted, an entirely different set of procedures <sup>now</sup> have to be learnt before interiority can be



revealed and the self-appropriation of differentiated consciousness achieved.

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No doubt, we have all to begin from undifferentiated consciousness, from commonsense cognitional procedures, from some one of the multitudinous "ordinary languages" in which the endless varieties of common sense express themselves. No doubt, it is only by a humble and docile process of learning that anyone can move beyond his original ordinary language and its common sense and come to understand other ordinary languages and their varieties of common sense. It is only by knowledge making its bloody entrance that one can move out of the realm of ordinary languages into the realm of theory and the totally different scientific apprehension of reality. It is only through the long and confused twilight of philosophic initiation that one can find one's way into interiority and achieve through self-appropriation a basis, a foundation, that is distinct from common sense and theory, that acknowledges their disparateness, that accounts for both and critically grounds them both.

#### 10. Stages of Meaning

The stages in question are ideal constructs, and the key to the constructing is undifferentiation or differentiation of consciousness. In the main we have in mind the Western tradition and we distinguish three stages. In the first stage conscious and intentional operations follow the mode of common sense. In a second stage besides the mode of common sense there is also the mode of theory, where the theory is controlled by a

logic. In a 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 a 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 of the second and third stages together. A fourth will regard undifferentiated consciousness in the second and third stages.

#### 10.1 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 the 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 the relevant evidence, so inversely the interior acts of conceiving, of judging, and of deciding demand the sensible and proportionate substrate we call expression. Indeed, 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 are accompanied with<sup>22</sup> disturbances in perception, in thought, and in action.

The development of proportionate expression involves three key steps. The first is the discovery of indicative signification. For instance, 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.<sup>23</sup> One just points. The second step is generalization. Not only does insight rise upon the basis of a schematic image, it also can use the pattern discerned in the image to guide bodily movements<sup>24</sup> including vocal articulation. Such movements may be mere

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22) Ernst Cassirer, The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms, three volumes, New Haven 1953, 1955, 1957, III, pp. 205-277.

23) Ibid., I, 181 f. More adequately in Gibson Winter, Elements for a Social Ethic, New York (Macmillan) 1968, pp. 99 ff., cf. 17 ff.

24) Ibid., I, 12 - 15.

imitation of another's movements, but mimesis may be employed to signify, and then it means the other's movements. 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.<sup>25</sup> 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, while 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.<sup>26</sup> For gestures occur with respect to perceptual presentations and imaginative representations. So it is that early language has 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,

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25) Ibid., I, 186 ff.

26) Ibid., I, 198-277; II, 71-151.

or directly represented. So in Homer there were words for such specific activities as glancing, peering, staring, but no generic word for seeing.<sup>27</sup> 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.<sup>28</sup> Again, since time involves a synthesis that orders all events in a single continuum of earlier and later, it cannot be directly perceived, and it can be represented only by<sup>a</sup> highly sophisticated geometrical image. So early language may have an abundance of tenses, but they are found to express different kinds or modes of action, and not a synthesis of temporal relationships.<sup>29</sup> 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 arms or legs or feet or hands or whole body. So there is no reason for surprise that possessive pronouns, that refer to visible possessions develop before personal pronouns.<sup>30</sup> Again, in Homer, inner mental processes are represented by personified interchanges.

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27) J. Russo and B. Simon, "Homeric Psychology and the Oral Epic Tradition", Journal of the History of Ideas, 29 (1968), p. 484.

28) E. Cassirer, op. cit., I, p. 199 ff.

29) Ibid., I, p. 215 ff.

30) Ibid., I, p. 251.

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 a river, or with some part of himself such as his heart or his temper.<sup>31</sup> Again, among the Hebrews, moral defect was first experienced as defilement, then conceived as the people's violation of its 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.<sup>32</sup> 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 occasions religious experience;<sup>33</sup> and so there

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31) Russo and Simon, op. cit., p. 487.

32) Paul Ricoeur, Finitude et culpabilité, II., La symbolique du mal, Paris (Aubier) 1960

33) See Ernst Benz on Shintoism as a living, ever developing polytheism in his essay "On Understanding Non-Christian Religions", in The History of Religions, Essays in Methodology, edited by M. Eliade and J. Kitagawa, Chicago (Chicago University Press) 1959, 1962, pp. 121-124. Also in the same collection, M. Eliade, "Methodological Remarks on the Study of Religious Symbolism". On the apprehension of divinity in the patriarchs of the Old Testament, N. Lohfink, Bibelauslegung im Wandel, Frankfurt a. M. (Knecht) 1967, pp. 107-128.

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arise the hierophanies.

Even in its first stage meaning fulfils its four functions: it is communicative, constitutive, efficient, 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 which are not perceptibly different from one another, calls for a certain ingenuity. As American sportswriters name teams Bruins and Hawks and Seals, Bears and 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. Man constitutes not only his social institutions and their cultural significance but also the story of the world's shape and origin and destiny.

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34.) Note that here we are touching on the nature of projection, i.e., the transfer of subjective experience into the field of the perceived or imagined. The transfer occurs to make insight into the experience possible. At a higher level of linguistic development, the possibility of insight is achieved by linguistic feed-back, by expressing the subjective experience in words and as subjective.

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 action 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 primitive living, they do not prevent a thorough understanding of the practical tasks of daily life.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, it is the development of practical understanding that takes man beyond fruit-collecting, hunting, fishing, gardening to large-scale agriculture with 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 and the Hoang-ho, Mexico and Peru. There| there emerged great works of irrigation, vast structures of stone or brick, armies and navies, complicated processes of book-keeping, 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

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35) B. Malinowski, Magic, Science and Religion, New York (Doubleday, Anchor) 1954, pp. 17 ff.



order of the cosmos, and the divine being.

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## 10.2 The Greek Discovery of Mind

As technique advances, it reveals by contrast the inefficacy of magic and turns man in his weakness from magical incantation to religious supplication. However, if myth is to be broken, more is needed. Man must discover mind. He has to sort out and somehow detach from one another feeling and doing, knowing and deciding. He has to clarify just what it is to know and, in the light of that clarification, keep the cognitive function of meaning apart from its constitutive and efficient functions and from its role in the communication of feeling.

How the Greeks discovered mind, has been told by Bruno Snell. On a first level there was the literary revelation of man to himself. Homeric simile drew on the characteristics of inanimate nature and of plants and animals to illuminate and objectify and distinguish the varied springs of action in the epic heroes. The lyric poets worked out expressions of personal human feeling. The tragedians exhibited human decisions, their conflicts and interplay, and their consequences.

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36) On cosmological symbolism, see Eric Voegelin, Order and History, I. Israel and Revelation, Louisiana State University Press, 1956. A definition of the symbolism is to be found on page 27, its distribution on page 14.

37) B. Snell, The Discovery of the Mind, New York (Harper Torchbook) 1960. Chapters one, three, five, and nine.

Within the literary tradition there occurred reflection  
 38 on knowledge. For Homer, knowledge comes by perception or by hearsay. Man's knowledge is always partial and incomplete. But the Muses are omnipresent. They perceive everything. They are the ones that enable the bard to sing as if he had been present or as if he had heard the tale from an eyewitness. But for Hesiod the Muses do not inspire but teach; and they are far less trustworthy than Homer claimed. They may teach the truth but they also may teach plausible falsehood. They singled Hesiod out on Mount Helicon and taught him not to repeat the folly and the lies of his predecessors but to tell the truth about the struggle in which man ekes out his livelihood.

G/uc. Xenophanes was still more critical. He rejected the multitude of anthropomorphic gods; for him, god was unity, perfect in wisdom, operating without toil, merely by the thought of his mind. In contrast, human wisdom was imperfect, caught in semblance, but still the best of the virtues and, indeed, to be attained by long seeking. Similarly, for Hecataeus, the stories of the Greeks were many and foolish. Man's knowledge is not the gift of the gods; stories of the past are to be judged by everyday experience; one advances in knowledge by inquiry and search, and the search is not just accidental, as it was in Odysseus, but deliberate and planned.

This empirical interest lived on in Herodotus, in the physicians, and in the physicists. But a new turn emerged with Heraclitus. He maintained that the mere amassing of information did not make one grow in intelligence. Where his

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 38) Ibid., chapter seven.

predecessors were opposed to ignorance, he was opposed to folly. He prized eyes and ears but thought them bad witnesses for men with barbarian souls. There is an intelligence, a logos, that steers through all things. It is found in god and man and beast, the same in all though in different degrees. To know it, is wisdom.

Where Heraclitus emphasized process, Parmenides denied both multiplicity and motion. Though his expression revived the myth of revelation, his position at its heart was a set of arguments. While he could not be expected to formulate the principles of excluded middle and of identity, he reached analogous conclusions. For he denied the possibility of "becoming" as an intermediary between being and nothing; and he denied a distinction <sup>between "being"</sup> ~~"being"~~ and "being" and so precluded any multiplicity of beings. While his specific achievement was only a mistake, still it provided a carrier for a breakthrough. Linguistic argument had emerged as an independent power that could dare to challenge the evidence of the senses.<sup>39</sup> The distinction between sense and intellect was established. The way lay open for Zeno's paradoxes, for the eloquence and scepticism of the Sophists, for Socrates' demand for definition, for Plato's distinction between eristic and dialectic, and for the Aristotelian Organon.

Earlier we had occasion to speak of the limitation of early language. Because the development of thought and language depends upon insights, because insights occur with respect to

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39) See F. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, Volume I, chapter six, London ( ) 1946. There are many editions. (Dumas, Oates & Washburne)

sensible presentations and representations, early language can come to dominate the spatial field yet remain unable to handle adequately the generic, the temporal, the subjective, the divine. But these limitations recede in the measure that linguistic explanations and statements provide the sensible presentations for the insights that effect further developments of thought and language. Moreover, such advance for a time can occur exponentially: the more language develops, the more it can develop still more. Eventually, there begins the reflex movement in which language comes to mediate and objectify and examine the linguistic process itself. Alphabets make words visible. Dictionaries collect their meanings. Grammars study their inflections and syntax. Literary criticism interprets and evaluates compositions. Logics promote clarity, coherence, and rigor. Hermeneutics studies the varying relations of acts of meaning to terms of meaning. Philosophers reflect on the world of immediacy and the many worlds mediated by meaning.

To grasp the significance of this superstructure, one must return to the limitations of mythic consciousness. As Ernst Cassirer states, it lacks any clear dividing line between mere "representation" and "real" perception, between wish and fulfilment, between image and thing. He goes on immediately to mention the continuity of dream and waking consciousness and, later, he adds that no less than the image, the name tends to merge with the thing.<sup>40</sup> It would seem, despite his later retraction, to be the same absence of distinction that Lucien Lévy-Bruhl wished to describe when he spoke of a law of

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40) E. Cassirer, *op. cit.*, II, p. 36 and p. 40 f.

participation governing the common representations and the institutions of primitives, a participation that made the content of their representations appear mystical while it made relations between representations largely tolerant of contradictions.<sup>41</sup>

Now these characteristics of the primitive mind seem very mysterious. But one is not to conclude that they argue any lack of intelligence or reasonableness on the part of primitives. For, after all, to draw distinctions is not a simple matter, and to acknowledge the import of the distinctions, once they are drawn, is not a simple matter. What is a distinction? Let us say that A and B are distinct, if it is true that A is not B. Let us add that A and B may stand either for mere words, or for the meaning of words, or for the realities meant by words, so that distinctions may be merely verbal, or notional, or real. Let us note that the reality in question is the reality that becomes known, not by sense alone, but by sense and understanding and rational judgment.

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41) L. Lévy-Bruhl, Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures, Paris (P.U.F.)<sup>9</sup> 1951, pp. 78 ff.

E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Theories of Primitive Religion, Oxford (Clarendon) 1965, pp. 78-99, discusses the value of Lévy-Bruhl's work.

### 10.3      The Second and Third Stages

The discovery of mind marks the transition from the first stage of meaning to the second. In the first stage the world mediated by meaning is just the world of common sense. In the second stage the world mediated by meaning splits into the realm of common sense and the realm of theory. Corresponding to this division and grounding it, there is a differentiation of consciousness. In the first stage the subject, in his pursuit of the concrete good, also attends, understands, judges. But he does not make a specialty of these activities. He does not formulate a theoretical ideal in terms of knowledge, truth, reality, causality. He does not formulate linguistically a set of norms for the pursuit of that ideal goal. He does not initiate a distinct economic and social and cultural context within which the pursuit of the ideal goal could be carried out by human animals. But in the second stage of meaning the subject continues to operate in the commonsense manner in all his dealings with the particular and concrete, but along with this mode of operation he also has another, the theoretical. In the theoretical mode the good that is pursued is the truth and, while this pursuit is willed, still the pursuit itself consists only in operations on the first three levels of intentional consciousness: it is the specialization of attending, understanding, and judging.

Now just as the second stage comes out of developments occurring in the first, so the third stage comes out of developments occurring in the second. Accordingly, it will help clarify what is proper to the second stage if at once we

characterize the third. In the third stage, then, the sciences have become ongoing processes. Instead of stating the truth about this or that kind of reality, their aim is an ever better approximation towards the truth, and this is attained by an ever fuller and exacter understanding of all relevant data. In the second stage, theory was a specialty for the attainment of truth; in the third stage scientific theory has become a specialty for the advance of understanding. Further, the sciences are autonomous. They consider questions scientific if and only if they can be settled by an appeal to sensible data. As they have evolved, they have developed ever more effective ways of using this criterion in settling issues. In other words, they have worked out their respective methods, and there is no higher discipline that could discover their proper methods for them. Finally, since they are ongoing processes, their unification has to be an ongoing process; it cannot be some single well-ordered formulation; it has to be a succession of different formulations; in other words, unification will be the achievement not of logic but of method.

Now the emergence of the autonomous sciences has repercussions on philosophy. Since the sciences between them undertake the explanation of all sensible data, one may conclude with the positivists that the function of philosophy is to announce that philosophy has nothing to say. Since philosophy has no theoretic function, one may conclude with the linguistic analysts that the function of philosophy is to work out a hermeneutics for the clarification of the local variety of

n/ everyday language. But there remains the possibility -- and it is our option -- that philosophy is neither a theory in the manner of science nor a somewhat technical form of common sense, nor even a reversal to <sup>PRES</sup>pre-Socratic wisdom. Philosophy finds its proper data in intentional consciousness. Its primary function is to promote the self-appropriation that cuts to the root of philosophic differences and incomprehensions. It has further, secondary functions in distinguishing, relating, grounding the several realms of meaning and, no less, in grounding the methods of the sciences and so promoting their unification.

But what in the third stage are differentiated, specialized, moving towards an integration, in the second stage are more or less undifferentiated. We have spoken of the world mediated by meaning splitting into a world of theory and a world of common sense. At a certain stage in Plato's thought there seem to be asserted two really distinct worlds, a transcendent world of eternal Forms, and a transient world of appearance.<sup>42</sup> In Aristotle, there are not two sets of objects but two approaches to one set. Theory is concerned with what is prior in itself but posterior for us; but everyday human knowledge is concerned with what is prior for us though

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42) For a careful statement of this very complex issue, see F. Copleston, op. cit., chapter twenty.



posterior in itself. But, though Aristotle by beguilingly simple analogies could set up a properly systematic metaphysics, his contrast was not between theory and common sense as we understand these terms but between epistēmē and doxa, between sophia and phronēsis, between necessity and contingency.

Again, in Aristotle the sciences are conceived not as autonomous but as prolongations of philosophy and as further determinations of the basic concepts philosophy provides.<sup>43</sup> So it is that, while Aristotelian psychology is not without profound insight into human sensibility and intelligence, still its basic concepts are derived not from intentional consciousness but from metaphysics. Thus "soul" does not mean "subject" but "the first act of an organic body" whether of a plant, an animal, or a man.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, the notion of "object" is not derived from a consideration of intentional acts; on the contrary, just as potencies are to be conceived by considering their acts, so acts are to be conceived by considering their objects, i.e., their efficient or final causes.<sup>45</sup> As in psychology, so too in physics, the basic

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43) See Aristotle, Metaphysics, Theta, 6, 1048a p. 25 ff.  
Aquinas, In IX Metaphys., lect. 5 1828 ff. Insight, p. 432, gives the basis for the generality of the terms, potency, form, act.

44) Aristotle, De Anima, II, 1, 412b, p. 4 ff.

45) Ibid., II, 4, 415a, pp. 14-20. Aquinas, In II de Anima, lect. 6 # 305.

concepts are metaphysical. As an agent is principle of movement in the mover, so a nature is a principle of movement in the moved. But agent is agent because it is in act. The nature is matter or form and rather from than matter. Matter is pure potency.

*N/for form* Movement is incomplete act, the act of what is in potency still.

This continuity of philosophy and science has often been the object of nostalgic admiration. But if it had the merit of meeting the systematic exigence and habituating the human mind to theoretical pursuits, it could be no more than a transitional phase. Modern science had to develop its own proper basic concepts and thereby achieve its autonomy. In doing so it gave a new form to the opposition between the world of theory and the world of common sense. This new form, in turn, evoked a series of new philosophies: Galileo's primary qualities, which admitted geometrization and so were real, and his refractory secondary qualities, which were pronounced merely apparent; Descartes' mind in a machine; Spinoza's two known attributes; Kant's a priori forms and a posteriori filling of the sensibility.<sup>46</sup> But Kant's Copernican revolution marks a dividing line. Hegel turned from substance to the subject. Historians and philologists worked out their autonomous methods for human studies. Will and decision, actions and results, came up for emphasis in Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Blondel, the pragmatists.

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46) The interaction of science and philosophy has been studied in detail by Ernst Cassirer, Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit, three volumes, Berlin 1906, 1907, 1920.

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 Brentano inspired Husserl, and intentionality analysis routed faculty psychology. The second stage of meaning is vanishing, and a third is about to take its place.

#### 10.4 Undifferentiated Consciousness in the Later Stages

*ml* Our outline of the development and the eclipse of the second stage would be very incomplete if no mention were made of the mode of survival of undifferentiated consciousness in the later stages. For it is not the philosophic or scientific theorist that does the world's work, conducts its business, governs its cities and states, teaches most of its classes and runs all of its schools. As before the emergence of theory, so too afterwards all such activities are conducted in the commonsense mode of intellectual operation, in the mode in which conscious and intentional operations occur in accord with their own immanent and spontaneous norms. However, if the mode and much of the scope of commonsense operation remain the same, the very existence of another mode is bound to shift concerns and emphases.

It was on a rising tide of linguistic feed-back that logic and philosophy and early science emerged. But such technical achievements may repel rather than impress. One may be content to marvel at the fact of language, the fact that makes man unique among the animals. One may with Isocrates trace cities and laws, arts and skills and, indeed, all aspects of culture to man's powers of speech and persuasion. One may go on to urge one's fellow townsmen to seek eloquence through education and thereby to excel among men in the very respect

in which man excels among the animals. So to be educated linguistically and to become human are found to be interchangeable. So there emerged one strand of humanism that spread from Greece to Rome and from antiquity to the late middle ages.<sup>47</sup>

Another strand was moral, and its name was philanthropia. It was respect and devotion to man as man. It rested not on kinship, or noble blood, or common citizenship and laws, or even on education, but on the fact that another, particularly a sufferer, was a human being. Practice of philanthropia could, of course, be quite modest: credit for it was given conquerors that showed some restraint in plundering and enslaving the vanquished. But, at least, it was an ideal that inspired education and fostered the gracious urbanity, the ease and affability, the charm and taste exhibited in Menander's comedies and their Latin counterparts in Plautus and Terence.

A third strand came from the world of theory. For if creative thought in philosophy and science is too austere for general consumption, creative thinkers are usually rare. They have their brief day, only to be followed by the commentators, the teachers, the popularizers that illuminate, complete, transpose, simplify. So the worlds of theory and of common sense partly interpenetrate and partly merge. The results are ambivalent. It will happen that the exaggerations of philosophic error are abandoned, while the profundities of philosophic truth find a vehicle that compensates for the loss of the discredited myths. But it will also happen that theory fuses more with

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47) Bruno Snell, op. cit., chapter eleven.

common nonsense than with common sense, to make the nonsense pretentious and, because it is common, dangerous and even disastrous.

Finally, literature moved into a quite different phase. Bruno Snell has contrasted the pre-philosophical with the post-philosophical poets.<sup>48</sup> The earlier poetry, he remarked, was ever intent to stake out new areas of the mind. The epic sagas opened the way to history, the cosmogonies to Ionian speculation on the first principle, the lyric to Heraclitus, the drama to Socrates and Plato.<sup>49</sup> The later poetry is acquainted with the literary critics and with theories of poetry. Poets have to select their genre, style, tone. They can be content, as was Callimachus, to be playful and artistic or, with Virgil in his Eclogues, to express a complex civilization's nostalgia for earlier times and simpler living.<sup>50</sup>

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48) Bruno Snell, op. cit., pp. 266 ff.

49) Science was foreshadowed by the similes in Empedocles' hexameters, e.g., "the light of the sun was thrown back by the moon like an echo; the moon revolves about the earth like the fellow of a wheel about the axle....." ibid., p. 217.

50) Ibid., chapters twelve and thirteen.

That simpler living, of course, continues. The humanism we have been describing belongs to an educated class. In a people united by common language, common loyalties, common moral and religious traditions as well as by economic interdependence, the culture of the educated may affect many of the uneducated, much as theory affected pre-theoretical common sense. So by successive adaptations the innovations of theory can penetrate in ever weaker forms through all layers of a society to give it some approximation to the homogeneity necessary for mutual comprehension.

But such ideal conditions need not obtain. Discontinuities may arise. The better educated become a class closed in upon themselves with no task proportionate to their training. They become effete. The less educated and the uneducated find themselves with a tradition that is beyond their means. They cannot maintain it. <sup>they</sup> They lack the genius to transform it into some simpler vital and intelligible whole. It degenerates. The meaning and values of human living are impoverished. The will to achieve both slackens and narrows. Where once there were joys and sorrows, now there are just pleasures and pains. The culture has become a slum.

Just as philosophic theory begot humanism of common sense, so too modern science has its progeny. As a form of knowledge, it pertains to man's development and grounds a new and fuller humanism. As a rigorous form of knowledge, it calls forth teachers and popularizers and even the fantasy

of science fiction. But it also is a principle of action, and so it overflows into applied science, engineering, technology, industrialism. It is an acknowledged source of wealth and power, and the power is not merely material. It is the power of the mass media to write for, speak to, be seen by all men. It is the power of an educational system to fashion the nation's youth in the image of the wise man or in the image of a fool, in the image of a free man or in the image prescribed for the Peoples' Democracies.

In its third stage, then, meaning not merely differentiates into the realms of common sense, theory, and interiority, but also acquires the universal immediacy of the mass media and the moulding power of universal education. Never has adequately differentiated consciousness been more difficult to achieve. Never has the need to speak effectively to undifferentiated consciousness been greater.