

### Horizons

It is a common enough observation that each of us lives in a world of his own, and the word, horizon, has come to be employed to denote such differences.<sup>1</sup> Literally the horizon

1) The usage stems from Edmund Husserl. At first, however, he used the word, Horizont, in the sense of William James' "fringes," i. e., the marginal acts and contents surrounding the thematic core of the field of intentional consciousness. But gradually "he came to see that even these horizons were not merely open areas of decreasing clarity, but parts of the comprehensive horizon of a world as their encompassing frame of reference, without which any account of even a single perception would be incomplete." See Herbert Spiegelberg, The Phenomenological Movement, 2 vols., The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960, pp. 161, 718. From Husserl and Heidegger horizon in this comprehensive, encompassing sense, has come to Scholastic circles through Karl Rahner and Emerich Coreth.

is the boundary of the field of vision, the line drawn by the meeting of earth and sky. But even in this literal sense for different standpoints there are different horizons, and for different horizons there are different totalities of visible objects. So if one proceeds by analogy from different standpoints to different subjects and from totalities of visible objects to totalities of objects of any form of apprehension or appretition

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Horizon, literally, is the boundary of the field of vision at the line where earth and sky apparently meet. This boundary, it happens, divides the totality of visible objects into two groups. Beyond the horizon are the visible objects that cannot now be seen. Within the horizon are the visible objects that could possibly now be seen. Still, horizon is not unique. There are as many different horizons as there are different standpoints from which one might look, and so there are as many different divisions of visible objects as there are different standpoints and different horizons.

Now this notion of horizon may be generalized. Restriction to the ~~minimum~~ field of vision is dropped, and in its place there comes the field of interests. As the field of vision varies with standpoint, so the field of interests tends to vary from one subject to another. As variations in standpoint yield different divisions of the field of visible objects, so variations in <sup>the</sup> subject reveal different fields of interests and so different divisions of the totality of ~~possible~~ objects of possible interest. About objects that lie beyond one's horizon in its generalized sense one could not care less. But objects that lie within one's horizon are objects of interest. In one way or another they concern us. Of them we have some knowledge and, perhaps, we have an effective desire to know them more accurately and more fully.

One's horizon, then, determines one's world. It is the part of the world with which one is familiar, the part ~~in which one is master of most situations that arise.~~

in which one is able to cope with most situations that arise. But subject differs from subject, and so each tends to live in a world of his own, within a totality of objects selected by his interests, which, since they are limited, constitute his horizon.

Differences of horizon may be absolute or relative.

What is beyond one's absolute horizon, just does not exist, or it cannot be possibly be known, or it is simply worthless. Others may and do draw the line of absolute horizon differently. But for me their doing so only ~~reveals~~ reveals their wishful thinking, their indulgence in myth, their subjection to fallacy, their ignorance, their illusions, their backwardness, their lack of maturity, their blindness to <sup>Absolute horizon,</sup> truth, or their refusal of God's grace. <sup>Against their</sup> ~~then, means absolute closure.~~ ~~position, then, one is just closed.~~ The closure may be passionate and the suggestion that openness is desirable may make one furious. But the closure may also have the firmness of ice without any trace of passion or even any show of feeling except perhaps a ~~may~~ wan smile. Genocide and palmistry may both be beyond the pale, but the former will be execrated, the latter ignored. ~~Between~~ Between such extremes any intermediate position is possible, and in all it is true that man is mutable.

What is beyond one's relative horizon is quite a different matter. Different ranges of knowledge, different skills, different fields of competence give rise to different horizons. But the existence of such differences can be acknowledged. The validity and value of the other fellow's can be recognized. Workers and industrialists, scientists and technicians, doctors and lawyers, educators and writers live in different worlds.

But each can recognize the ~~need~~ need for the others and their value and, at least grudgingly, concede that it takes all sorts to make a world.

Both relative and absolute horizons are subject to change.

Change of relative horizon is development or regression. Development is a matter of differentiating tasks and operations, of specializing in the differentiated areas, and of integrating the specializations. Regression is reversal ~~in~~ from more to less differentiated procedures.

Such development or regression occurs ~~when~~ in the way we operate with others within a tradition. Its dimensions, then, are psychological, social, and historical: psychological, because the way we operate depends on the education and training we have had and the manner in which we have profited from them; social, for we operate with others within the potentialities and limitations of a social set-up; historical, for the social ~~set-up~~ set-up itself is the deposit of a historical tradition.

So in principle at least relative horizons may be specified, compared, classified in terms of psychological, social, and historical development or regression.

Change of absolute horizon is a conversion or a collapse. Comprehensive terms such as <sup>living,</sup> knowledge, experience, understanding, knowledge, truth, reality, value, freedom, history, universe, take on new and enriched meanings to effect a radical shift of one's <sup>basic</sup> orientation and one's <sup>so of</sup> field of interests. One finds oneself transported into a world quite different from the one in which hitherto one had lived.

in the group is matched by an opposite operation, and every combination of operations is matched by an opposite  $\bar{\phantom{x}}$  operation. Hence, inasmuch as operations form a group, the operator or the cooperators can always return to their starting-point and, they <sup>can</sup> do so unhesitatingly, mastery at some level of development has been reached. Moreover, ~~low~~ lower groups can be meshed together to form a single higher group, and similarly higher groups can be grouped.

The significance of this concept of group for Piaget was that it enabled him to mark off successive stages in child development and to predict what operations children of various ages would be able or unable to perform. But even where the group of operations can hardly be specified ~~with any detailed~~ in any exact and detailed manner, the analysis of performance in terms of a group of combinations of differentiated operations may provide an illuminating account of what is going forward. For instance, if one reads a sequence of chapters in the Contra Gentiles of St. Thomas Aquinas, one will find, say, twenty-six arguments or considerations in one, thirty in the next, twenty-four in ~~the~~ a third. Moreover, while the successive chapters deal with distinct topics, while ~~are~~ all the arguments or considerations are relevant to their distinct topics, still there also is a great similarity between them. In fact, they are adaptations, conjunctions of assimilation and adjustment. They proceed from a group of combinations of differentiated operations, and that group is at the service of the master-plan of the Contra Gentiles.

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Horizon -- the line where apparently earth and sky meet -- bounds one's field of vision. As one moves about, the boundary recedes in front and closes in behind, so that for different standpoints there are different horizons. Moreover, for each different standpoint and horizon, there are different divisions of the totality of visible objects. Beyond the horizon lie objects that, for the moment, cannot be seen. Within the horizon lie the objects that can now be seen.

As our field of vision, so too the range of our interests and our knowledge is bounded. As fields of vision vary with one's standpoint, so too their range of interests and of knowledge varies from one subject to another. There is, then, an analogous meaning of the word, horizon. ~~So there is~~ In this analogous sense what lies beyond one's horizon is simply outside the range of one's interests and knowledge; and what lies within one's horizon is in some measure, great or small, an object of interest and of knowledge.

~~It has often enough been said that each of us lives in a world of his own, and it is to explore this suggestion that the analogous notion of horizon has been introduced.~~

Differences in horizon may be complementary, genetic, or dialectical. ~~Workers, supervisors~~ Workers, foremen, supervisors, engineers, technicians, managers, lawyers, doctors, teachers, clergymen have different interests. They live, in a sense, in different worlds. Yet each knows about the others; each recognizes some need for the others;

*Knowledge is relative to the horizon*

none is ready to take over the other's task. So their many ~~horizons, while different, in some measure include one another~~ horizons in some measure include one another and, for the rest, complement one another. Together they may make up a single, communal world.

Next, ~~horizon~~ horizons may differ genetically. They are related as different stages in some process of development. The later presupposes the earlier ~~to~~ partly to include it and partly to transform it. But precisely because ~~thence~~ one is earlier and the other later, the two cannot be simultaneous. ~~There~~ They are parts, not of a single, communal world, but of a single history.

Finally, horizons may be opposed dialectically. Each has some awareness of the other, and so each in a manner includes the other. But the inclusion is also rejection and negation. For the other's horizon, in some measure, is attributed to wishful thinking, to an acceptance of myth, ~~to subject to~~ to fallacy, to <sup>ignorance,</sup> ~~ignorance,~~ to illusion, to <sup>immaturity,</sup> ~~immaturity,~~ to infidelity, backwardness, to ~~a lack of maturity,~~ to blindness, to bad <sup>or</sup> will, <sup>^</sup> to a refusal of God's grace. Such rejection of the other may be passionate, and the suggestion that openness is desirable may make one furious. But, again, rejection may ~~be~~ have the firmness of ice without any trace of passion or even any show of feeling except perhaps a wan smile. Both genocide and palmistry can be beyond the pale but, while the former is execrated, the latter is ignored.

So much for the distinction of complementary, genetic, and dialectical differences of horizon. Let us now attempt a slightly fuller characterization. Some account of social structure will be relevant to a grasp of complementary differences. Some account of psychological development has a bearing on genetic differences. Some account, finally, of ~~the~~ philosophic, religious, and historical ~~the~~ oppositions will illuminate dialectical ~~the~~ differences.

#### Psychological Development

In his celebrated studies of genetic psychology Jean Piaget has given us a theory of development that, despite its great generality, is highly illuminating and, in its conclusions, ~~it~~ is confirmed by pedagogical observation. It will not be possible in the present context to convey <sup>or even to indicate</sup> the wealth of detail set forth in Piaget's reports of his investigations and so, for that, I must refer the reader to Piaget's own writings. My efforts will centre on presenting ~~the~~ three basic notions Piaget has put together, a biological notion of adaptation, a mathematical notion of group, and a philosophic notion of mediation.

An adaptation consists in two parts: assimilation and adjustment. Assimilation relates the object, to which adaptation is occurring, to other more or less similar objects, and thence brings into play the operations employed in dealing <sup>similar</sup> with such objects. Adjustment, by something like a process of trial and error, gradually modifies and supplements previously learned operations and thereby comes to deal more and more efficiently with the the new object.