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~~CHAPTER II~~

THE HUMAN GOOD

What is good, always is concrete. But definitions are abstract. Hence, if one attempts to define the good, one runs the risk of misleading one's readers. The present chapter, then, aims at assembling the various components that enter into the human good. So it will speak of skills, feelings, values, beliefs, cooperation, progress, and decline.

1. Skills

Jean Piaget analyzed the acquisition of a skill into elements. Each new element consisted in an adaptation to some new object or situation. In each adaptation there were distinguished two parts, assimilation and adjustment. Assimilation brought into play the spontaneous or the previously learned operations employed successfully on somewhat similar objects or in somewhat similar situations. Adjustment by a process of trial and error gradually modified and supplemented previously learned operations.

As adaptation to ever more objects and situations occurs, there goes forward a twofold process. There is an increasing differentiation of operations so that more and more different operations are in one's repertory. There also is an

ever greater multiplication of different combinations of differentiated operations. So the baby gradually develops oral, visual, manual, bodily skills, and he increasingly combines them in ever varying manners.

Skill begets mastery and, to define it, Piaget invoked the mathematical notion of group. The principal characteristic of the group of operations is that every operation in the group is matched by an opposite operation and every combination of operations is matched by an opposite combination. Hence, inasmuch as operations are grouped, the operator can always return to his starting-point and, when he can do so unhesitatingly, he has reached mastery at some level of development. It was by distinguishing and defining different groups of operations and successive grouping of groups that Piaget was able to mark off stages in child development and to predict what operations school children of various ages would be able or unable to perform.

Finally, there is the notion of mediation. Operations are said to be immediate when their objects are present. So seeing is immediate to what is being seen, hearing to what is being heard, touch to what is being touched. But by imagination, language, symbols, we operate in a compound manner; immediately with respect to the image, word, symbol; mediately with respect to what is represented or signified. In this fashion we come to operate not only with respect to the present and actual but also with respect to the absent, the past, the future, the merely possible or ideal or normative or fantastic. As the child learns to speak, he moves out of the world of his immediate

surroundings towards the far larger world revealed through the memories of other men, through the common sense of community, through the pages of literature, through the labors of scholars, through the investigations of scientists, through the experience of saints, through the meditations of philosophers and theologians.

This distinction between immediate and mediate operations has quite a broad relevance. It sets off the world of immediacy of the infant against the vastly larger world mediated by meaning. Further, it provides a basis for a distinction between lower and higher cultures. The lower regards a world mediated by meaning but it lacks controls over meaning and so easily indulges in magic and myth. The higher culture develops reflexive techniques that operate on the mediate operations themselves in an effort to safeguard meaning. So alphabets replace vocal with visual signs, dictionaries fix the meanings of words, grammars control their inflections and combinations, logics promote the clarity, coherence, and rigor of discourse, hermeneutics studies the varying relationships between meaning and meant, and philosophies explore the more basic differences between worlds mediated by meaning. Finally, among high cultures one may distinguish classical and modern by the general type of their controls: the classical thinks of the control as a universal fixed for all time; the modern thinks of the controls as themselves involved in an ongoing process.

Corresponding to different degrees of development and different worlds mediated by meaning, there are similar differences in the differentiation of consciousness. It is only in the process of development that the subject becomes aware of

himself and of his distinction from his world. As his apprehension of his world and as his conduct in it develop, he begins to move through different patterns of experience. When children imitate or play, they are living in a world mediated by their own meanings; it is not for "real" but just for fun. When their elders shift from the world mediated by meaning to the reflexive techniques in which they operate on the mediating operations, they are moving from "real" life to a world of theory or, as many say, of abstractions that, despite the rare atmosphere, has a mysterious relevance to successful performance in the "real" world. When they listen to music, gaze upon a tree or landscape, are stopped by beauty of any kind, they are freeing their sensitivity from the routines imposed by development and allowing it to follow fresher and deeper rhythms of apprehension and feeling. When finally the mystic withdraws into the ultima solitudo, he drops the constructs of culture and the whole complicated mass of mediating operations to return to a new, mediated immediacy of his subjectivity reaching for God.[1]

The relevance, then, of Piaget's analysis goes far beyond the field of educational psychology. It enables one to

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1) On patterns of experience, see Insight, pp. 181 ff. On peak experiences, A.H. Maslow, Toward a Psychology of Being, Princeton, N.J., 1962; A Reza Aresteh, Final Integration in the Adult Personality, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965; William Johnston, The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing, New York, Rome, Paris, Tournai: Desclée, 1967; Christian Zen, New York: Harper and Row, 1971; A. H. Maslow, Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences, New York: Viking Press, 1970.

distinguish stages in cultural development and to characterize man's breaking loose from it in play, in the climax of making love, in aesthetic experience, and in contemplative prayer. Moreover, any technical proficiency can be analysed as a group of combinations of differentiated operations. That does not define the concert pianist's ability to project a sonata, but it does say in what his technical skill consists. Again, it does not reveal the grand plan of Aquinas' Contra Gentiles. But if one reads a series of successive chapters, one finds the same arguments recurring over and over in ever slightly different forms; what was going forward when the Contra Gentiles was being written, was the differentiation of operations and their conjunction in ever fresh combinations. Finally, as there is the technical proficiency of the individual, so too there is the technical proficiency of a team whether of players or artists or skilled workers, the possibility of their learning new operations, and of the coach, the impresario, the entrepreneur bringing them together in new combinations to new ends.

2. Feelings

Distinct from operational development is the development of feeling. On this topic I would draw on Dietrich von Hildebrand and distinguish non-intentional states and trends from intentional responses. The former may be illustrated by such states as fatigue, irritability, bad humor, anxiety, and the latter by such trends or urges as hunger, thirst, sexual discomfort. The states have causes. The trends have goals.

But the relation of the feeling to the cause or goal is simply that of effect to cause, of trend to goal. The feeling itself does not presuppose and arise out of perceiving, imagining, representing the cause or goal. Rather, one first feels tired and, perhaps belatedly, one discovers that what one needs is a rest. Or first one feels hungry and then one diagnoses the trouble as a lack of food.

Intentional responses, on the other hand, answer to what is intended, apprehended, represented. The feeling relates us, not just to a cause or an end, but to an object. Such feeling gives intentional consciousness its mass, momentum, drive, power. Without these feelings our knowing and deciding would be paper thin. Because of our feelings, our desires and our fears, our hope or despair, our joys and sorrows, our enthusiasm and indignation, our esteem and contempt, our trust and distrust, our love and hatred, our tenderness and wrath, our admiration, veneration, reverence, our dread, horror, terror, we are oriented massively and dynamically in a world mediated by meaning. We have feelings about other persons, we feel for them, we feel with them. We have feelings about our respective situations, about the past, about the future, about evils to be lamented or remedied, about the good that can, might, must be accomplished.[2]

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2) A wealth of analysis of feelings is to be had in Dietrich von Hildebrand's Christian Ethics, New York: David McKay, 1953. See also Manfred Frings, Max Scheler, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1965.

Feelings that are intentional responses regard two main classes of objects: on the one hand, the agreeable or disagreeable, the satisfying or dissatisfying; on the other hand, values, whether the ontic value of persons or the qualitative value of beauty, understanding, truth, virtuous acts, noble deeds. In general, response to value both carries us towards self-transcendence and selects an object for the sake of whom or of which we transcend ourselves. In contrast, response to the agreeable or disagreeable is ambiguous. What is agreeable may very well be what also is a true good. But it also happens that what is a true good may be disagreeable. Most good men have to accept unpleasant work, privations, pain, and their virtue is a matter of doing so without excessive self-centered lamentation.[3]

Not only do feelings respond to values. They do so in accord with some scale of preference. So we may distinguish vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values in an ascending order. Vital values, such as health and strength, grace and vigor, normally are preferred to avoiding the work, privations, pains involved in acquiring, maintaining, restoring them. Social values, such as the good of order which conditions the vital values of the whole community, have to be preferred to the vital values of individual members of the community. Cultural values do not exist without the underpinning of vital and social values, but none the less they rank higher. Not on

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3) The next two sections of this chapter will endeavor to clarify both the notion of value and judgments of value.

bread alone doth man live. Over and above mere living and operating, men have to find a meaning and value in their living and operating. It is the function of culture to discover, express, validate, criticize, correct, develop, improve such meaning and value. Personal value is the person in his self-transcendence, as loving and being loved, as originator of values in himself and in his milieu, as an inspiration and invitation to others to do likewise. Religious values, finally, are at the heart of the meaning and value of man's living and man's world, but to this topic we return in Chapter ~~Eleven~~ Four.

No less than of skills, there is a development of feelings. It is true, of course, that fundamentally feelings are spontaneous. They do not lie under the command of ~~the will~~ decision as do the motions of our hands. But, once they have arisen, they may be reinforced by advertence and approval, and they may be curtailed by disapproval and distraction. Such reinforcement and curtailment not only will encourage some feelings and discourage others but also will modify one's spontaneous scale of preferences. Again, feelings are enriched and refined by attentive study of the wealth and variety of the objects that arouse them, and so no small part of education lies in fostering and developing a climate of discernment and taste, of discriminating praise and carefully worded disapproval, that will conspire with the pupil's or student's own capacities and tendencies, enlarge and deepen his apprehension of values, and help him towards self-transcendence.

I have been conceiving feelings as intentional responses but I must add that they are not merely transient, limited to the time that we are apprehending a value or its opposite, and vanishing the moment our attention shifts. There are, of course, feelings that easily are aroused and easily pass away. There are too the feelings that have been snapped off by repression to lead thereafter an unhappy subterranean life. But there are in full consciousness feelings so deep and strong, especially when deliberately reinforced, that they channel attention, shape one's horizon, direct one's life. Here the supreme illustration is loving. A man or woman that falls in love is engaged in loving not only when attending to the beloved but at all times. Besides particular acts of loving, there is the prior state of being in love, and that prior state is, as it were, the fount of all one's actions. So mutual love is the intertwining of two lives. It transforms an "I" and "thou" into a "we" so intimate, so secure, so permanent, that each attends, imagines, thinks, plans, feels, speaks, acts in concern for both.

As there is a development of feelings, so too there are aberrations. Perhaps the most notable is what has been named "ressentiment", a loan-word from the French that was introduced into philosophy by Friedrich Nietzsche and later in a revised form employed by Max Scheler.[4] According to Scheler,

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4) On various applications of the analysis of ressentiment, see Manfred Frings, Max Scheler, Chapter Five, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, and Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1965.

ressentiment is a re-feeling of a specific clash with someone else's value-qualities. The someone else is one's superior physically or intellectually or morally or spiritually. The re-feeling is not active or aggressive but extends over time, even a life-time. It is a feeling of hostility, anger, indignation that is neither repudiated nor directly expressed. What it attacks is the value-quality that the superior person possessed and the inferior not only lacked but also feels unequal to acquiring. The attack amounts to a continuous belittling of the value in question, and it can extend to hatred and even violence against those that possess that value-quality. But perhaps its worst feature is that its rejection of one value involves a distortion of the whole scale of values and that this distortion can spread through a whole social class, a whole people, a whole epoch. So the analysis of ressentiment can turn out to be a tool of ethical, social, and historical criticism.

More generally, it is much better to take full cognizance of one's feelings, however deplorable they may be, than to brush them aside, overrule them, ignore them. To take cognizance of them makes it possible for one to know oneself, to uncover the inattention, obtuseness, silliness, irresponsibility that gave rise to the feeling one does not want, and to correct the aberrant attitude. On the other hand, not to take cognizance of them is to leave them in the twilight of what is conscious but not objectified.[5] In the long run there results

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5) This twilight of what is conscious but not objectified seems to be the meaning of what some psychiatrists call the

a conflict between the self as conscious and, on the other hand, the self as objectified. This alienation from oneself leads to the adoption of misguided remedies, and they in their turn to still further mistakes until, in desperation, the neurotic turns to the analyst or counsellor.[6]

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unconscious. See Karen Horney, The Neurotic Personality of our Time, New York: W.W. Norton, 1937, pp. 68 f. Neurosis and Human Growth, New York: W.W. Norton, 1950, pp. 162 f. Raymond Hostie, Religion and the Psychology of Jung, New York: Sheed and Ward, 1957, p. 72. Wilhelm Stekel, Compulsion and Doubt, New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1962, pp. 252, 256.

6) On the development of the malady, Karen Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth, New York: W.W. Norton, 1950. On the therapeutic process, Carl Rogers, On Becoming a Person, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961. Just as transcendental method rests on a self-appropriation, on attending to, inquiring about, understanding, conceiving, affirming one's attending, inquiring, understanding, conceiving, affirming, so too therapy is an appropriation of one's own feelings. As the former task is blocked by misconceptions of human knowing, so too the latter is blocked by misconceptions of what one spontaneously is.

3. The Notion of Value

Value is a transcendental notion. It is what is intended in questions for deliberation, just as the intelligible is what is intended in questions for intelligence, and just as truth and being are what are intended in questions for reflection. Such intending is not knowing. When I ask what, or why, or how, or what for, I do not know the answers, but already I am intending what would be known if I knew the answers. When I ask whether this or that is so, I do not as yet know whether or not either is so, but already I am intending what would be known if I did know the answers. So when I ask whether this is truly and not merely apparently good, whether that is or is not worthwhile, I do not yet know value but I am intending value.

The transcendental notions are the dynamism of conscious intentionality. They promote the subject from lower to higher levels of consciousness, from the experiential to the intellectual, from the intellectual to the rational, from the rational to the existential. Again, with respect to objects, they are the intermediaries between ignorance and knowledge; indeed, they refer to objects immediately and directly, while answers refer to objects only mediately, only because they are answers to the questions that intend the objects.

Not only do the transcendental notions promote the subject to full consciousness and direct him to his goals. They also provide the criteria that reveal whether the goals are being reached. The drive to understand is satisfied when understanding is reached but it is dissatisfied with every incomplete attainment and so it is the source of ever further

questions. The drive to truth compels rationality to assent when evidence is sufficient but refuses assent and demands doubt whenever evidence is insufficient.[7] The drive to value rewards success in self-transcendence with a happy conscience and saddens failures with an unhappy conscious.

Self-transcendence is the achievement of conscious intentionality, and as the latter has many parts and a long development, so too has the former. There is a first step in attending to the data of sense and of consciousness. Next, inquiry and understanding yield an apprehension of a hypothetical world mediated by meaning. Thirdly, reflection and judgment reach an absolute: through them we acknowledge what really is so, what is independent of us and our thinking. Fourthly, by deliberation, evaluation, decision, action, we can know and do, not just what pleases us, but what truly is good, worthwhile. Then we can be principles of benevolence and beneficence, capable of genuine collaboration and of true love. But it is one thing to do this occasionally, by fits and starts. It is another to do it regularly, easily, spontaneously. It is, finally, only by reaching the sustained self-transcendence of the virtuous man that one

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7) On the precise meaning of sufficient and insufficient evidence, see Insight, Chapters ~~X~~ Ten and ~~XI~~ Eleven.

becomes a good judge, not on this or that human act, but on the whole range of human goodness.[8]

Finally, while the transcendental notions are broader than any category, it would be a mistake to infer that they were more abstract. On the contrary, they are utterly concrete. For the concrete is the real not under this or that aspect but under its every aspect in its every instance. But the transcendental notions are the fount not only of initial questions but also of further questions. Moreover, though the further questions come only one at a time, still they keep coming. There are ever further questions for intelligence pushing up towards a fuller understanding and ever further doubts urging us to a fuller truth. The only limit to the process is at the point where no further questions arise, and that point would be reached only when we correctly understood everything about everything, only when we knew reality in its every aspect and every instance.

Similarly, by the good is never meant some abstraction. Only the concrete is good. Again, as the transcendental notions of the intelligible, the true, the real head for a complete intelligibility, all truth, the real in its every part and aspect, so the transcendental notion of the good heads for a

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8) To this point we return in the next section on judgments of value.

goodness that is beyond criticism. For that notion is our raising questions for deliberation. It is our being stopped with the disenchantment that asks whether what we are doing is worthwhile. That disenchantment brings to light the limitation in every finite achievement, the stain in every flawed perfection, the irony of soaring ambition and faltering performance. It plunges us into the height and depth of love, but it also keeps us aware of how much our loving falls short of its aim. In brief, the transcendental notion of the good so invites, presses, harries us, that we could rest only in an encounter with a goodness completely beyond its powers of criticism.

4. Judgments of Value

Judgments of value are simple or comparative. They affirm or deny that some x is truly or only apparently good. Or they compare distinct instances of the truly good to affirm or deny that one is better or more important, or more urgent than the other.

Such judgments are objective or merely subjective inasmuch as they proceed or do not proceed from a self-transcending subject. Their truth or falsity, accordingly, has its criterion in the authenticity or the lack of authenticity of the subject's being. But the criterion is one thing and the meaning of the judgment is another. To say that an affirmative judgment of value is true is to say what objectively is or would be good or better. To say that an

affirmative judgment of value is false is to say what objectively is not or would not be good or better.

Judgments of value differ in content but not in structure from judgments of fact. They differ in content, for one can approve of what does not exist, and one can disapprove of what does. They do not differ in structure, inasmuch as in both, there is the distinction between criterion and meaning. In both, the criterion is the self-transcendence of the subject, which, however, is only cognitive in judgments of fact but is heading towards ~~real~~ moral self-transcendence in judgments of value. In both, the meaning is or claims to be independent of the subject: judgments of fact state or purport to state what is or is not so; judgments of value state or purport to state what is or is not truly good or really better.

True judgments of value go beyond merely intentional self-transcendence without reaching the fulness of ~~real~~ moral self-transcendence. That fulness is not merely knowing but also doing, and man can know what is right without doing it. Still, if he knows and does not perform, either he must be humble enough to acknowledge himself to be a sinner, or else he will start destroying his moral being by rationalizing, by making out that what truly is good really is not good at all. The judgment of value, then, is itself a reality in the moral order. By it the subject moves beyond pure and simple knowing. By it the subject is constituting himself as proximately capable of moral ~~real~~ self-transcendence, of benevolence and beneficence, of true loving.

Intermediate between judgments of fact and judgments of value lie apprehensions of value. Such apprehensions are given in feelings. The feelings in question are not the already described non-intentional states, trends, urges, that are related to efficient and final causes but not to objects. Again, they are not intentional responses to such objects as the agreeable or disagreeable, the pleasant or painful, the satisfying or dissatisfying. For, while these are objects, still they are ambiguous objects that may prove to be truly good or bad or only apparently good or bad. Apprehensions of value occur in a further category of intentional response which greets either the ontic value of a person or the qualitative value of beauty, of understanding, of truth, of noble deeds, of virtuous acts, of great achievements. For we are so endowed that we not only ask questions leading to self-transcendence, not only can recognize correct answers constitutive of intentional self-transcendence, but also respond with the stirring of our very being when we glimpse the possibility or the actuality of moral ~~real~~ self-transcendence.[9]

In the judgment of value, then, three components unite. First, there is knowledge of reality and especially of human reality. Secondly, there are intentional responses to values. Thirdly, there is the initial thrust towards moral ~~real~~ self-transcendence constituted by the judgment of value itself. The

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9) On values, scales of preference, feelings and their development, see above, pp. 000 and 000.

judgment of value presupposes knowledge of human life, of human possibilities proximate and remote, of the probable consequences of projected courses of action. When knowledge is deficient, then fine feelings are apt to be expressed in what is called moral idealism, i.e. lovely proposals that don't work out and often do more harm than good. But knowledge alone is not enough and, while everyone has some measure of moral feeling for, as the saying is, there is honor among thieves, still moral feelings have to be cultivated, enlightened, strengthened, refined, criticized and pruned of oddities. Finally, the development of knowledge and the development of moral feeling head to the existential discovery, the discovery of oneself as a moral being, the realization that one not only chooses between courses of action but also thereby makes oneself an authentic human being or an unauthentic one. With that discovery, there emerges in consciousness the significance of personal value and the meaning of personal responsibility. One's judgments of value are revealed as the door to one's fulfilment or to one's loss. Experience, especially repeated experience, of one's frailty or wickedness raises the question of one's salvation and, on a more fundamental level, there arises the question of God.

The fact of development and the possibility of failure imply that judgments of value occur in different contexts. There is the context of growth, in which one's knowledge of human living and operating is increasing in extent, precision, refinement, and in which one's responses are advancing from the agreeable to vital values, from vital to social, from social to

cultural, from cultural to personal, from personal to religious.[10] Then there prevails an openness to ever further achievement. Past gains are organized and consolidated but they are not rounded off into a closed system but remain incomplete and so open to still further discoveries and developments. The free thrust of the subject into new areas is recurrent and, as yet, there is no supreme value that entails all others. But at the summit of the ascent from the initial infantile bundle of needs and clamors and gratifications, there are to be found the deep-set joy and solid peace, the power and the vigor, of being in love with God. In the measure that that summit is reached, then the supreme value is God, and other values are God's expression of his love in this world, in its aspirations, and in its goal. In the measure that one's love of God is complete, then values are whatever one loves, and evils are whatever one hates so that, in Augustine's phrase, if one loves God, one may do as one pleases, Ama Deum et fac quod vis. Then affectivity is of a single piece. Further developments only fill out previous achievement. Lapses from grace are rarer and more quickly amended.

But continuous growth seems to be rare.[11] There are the

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10) On growth, growth motivation, and neurotic needs, see A Maslow, Towards a Psychology of Being, Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1962.

11) Prof. Maslow (op.cit., p. 190) finds self-actualization is less than 1% of the adult population.

deviations occasioned by neurotic need. There are the refusals to keep on taking the plunge from settled routines to an as yet unexperienced but richer mode of living. There are the mistaken endeavors to quieten an uneasy conscience by ignoring, belittling, denying, rejecting higher values. Preference scales become distorted. Feelings soured. Bias creeps into one's outlook, rationalization into one's morals, ideology into one's thought. So one may come to hate the truly good, and love the really evil. Nor is that calamity limited to individuals. It can happen to groups, to nations, to blocks of nations, to mankind.[12] It can take different, opposed, belligerent forms to divide mankind and to menace civilization with destruction. Such is the monster that has stood forth in our day

In his thorough and penetrating study of human action, Joseph de Finance distinguished between horizontal and vertical liberty.[13] Horizontal liberty is the exercise of liberty within a determinate horizon and from the basis of a corresponding existential stance. Vertical liberty is the exercise of liberty that selects that stance and the corresponding horizon. Such

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12) On ressentiment and the distortion of preference scales, see Manfred Frings, Max Scheler, Pittsburgh and Louvain, 1965, Chapter Five.

13) J. de Finance, Essai sur l'agir humain, Rome: Presses de l'Université Grégorienne, 1962, pp. 287 ff.

vertical liberty may be implicit: it occurs in responding to the motives that lead one to ever fuller authenticity, or in ignoring such motives and drifting into an ever less authentic selfhood. But it also can be explicit. Then one is responding to the transcendental notion of value, by determining what it would be worth while for one to make of oneself, and what it would be worth while for one to do for one's fellow men. One works out an ideal of human reality and achievement, and to that ideal one dedicates oneself. As one's knowledge increases, as one's experience is enriched, as one's reach is strengthened or weakened, one's ideal may be revised and the revision may recur many times.

In such vertical liberty, whether implicit or explicit, are to be found the foundations of the judgments of value that occur. Such judgments are felt to be true or false in so far as they generate a peaceful or uneasy conscience. But they attain their proper context, their clarity and refinement, only through man's historical development and the individual's personal appropriation of his social, cultural, and religious heritage. It is by the transcendental notion of value and its expression in a good and an uneasy conscience that man can develop morally. But a rounded moral judgment is ever the work of a fully developed self-transcending subject or, as Aristotle would put it, of a virtuous man.[14]

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14) While Aristotle spoke not of values but of virtues, still his account of virtue presupposes the existence of

5. Beliefs [15]

To appropriate one's social, cultural, religious heritage is largely a matter of belief. There is, of course, much that one finds out for oneself, that one knows simply in virtue of one's own inner and outer experience, one's own insights, one's own judgments of fact and of value. But such immanently

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virtuous men, as my account of value presupposes the existence of self-transcending subjects. See Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethica, II, iii, 4; 1105b 5-8: "Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just and temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them as just and temperate men do them." Similarly, ibid., II, vi, 15; 1106b 36 ff.: "Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it." Translation by W.D. Ross in R. McKeon's The Basic Works of Aristotle, New York: Random House, 1941, pp. 956, 959.

15) I have treated the topic of belief more fully in Insight, pp.703-718. The same facts are treated by sociologists under the heading of the sociology of knowledge.

generated knowledge is but a small fraction of what any civilized man considers himself to know. His immediate experience is filled out by an enormous context constituted by reports of the experience of other men at other places and times. His understanding rests not only on his own but also on the experience of others, and its development owes little indeed to his personal originality, much to his repeating in himself the acts of understanding first made by others, and most of all to presuppositions that he has taken for granted because they commonly are assumed and, in any case, he has neither the time nor the inclination nor, perhaps, the ability to investigate for himself. Finally, the judgments, by which he assents to truths of fact and of value, only rarely depend exclusively on his immanently generated knowledge, for such knowledge stands not by itself in some separate compartment but in symbiotic fusion with a far larger context of beliefs.

Thus, one knows the relative positions of the major cities in the United States. After all, one has examined maps and seen their names plainly printed beside small circles representing their positions. But is the map accurate? That one does not know but believes. Nor does the map-maker know for, in all probability, his map was just a compilation of the many maps of much smaller areas made by surveyors that had been over the terrain. Knowledge, then, of the accuracy of the map is divided up; part is in the mind of each surveyor; but the accuracy of the whole is a matter not of knowledge but of belief, of the surveyors believing one another and the rest of us believing the

surveyors. It may be urged, however, that the accuracy of maps is verified in countless manners. It is on the basis of maps that planes fly and ships sail, that highways are built and cities are laid out, that people travel about and that property is bought and sold. Over and over in myriad ways transactions based on maps prove to be successful. But only a minute fraction of such verifications is a matter of one's own immanently generated knowledge. It is only by belief that one can invoke to one's support the cloud of witnesses who also have found maps satisfactory. It is that belief, that dependence on countless others, that is the real basis of one's confidence in maps.

Science is often contrasted with belief, but the fact of the matter is that belief plays as large a role in science as in most other areas of human activity. A scientist's original contributions to his subject are not belief but knowledge. Again, when he repeats another's observations and experiments, when he works out for himself the theorems needed to formulate the hypothesis, its presuppositions, and its implications, when he grasps the evidence for excluding alternative views, then he does not believe but knows. But it would be a mistake to fancy that scientists spend their lives repeating one another's work. They do not suffer from a pointless mania to attain immanently generated knowledge of their fields. On the contrary, the aim of the scientist is the advancement of science, and the attainment of that goal is by a division of labor. New results, if not disputed, tend to be assumed in further work. If the further work prospers, they begin to be regarded with confidence. If the further work runs

into difficulties, they will come under suspicion, be submitted to scrutiny, tested at this or that apparently weak point. Moreover, this indirect process of verification and falsification is far more important than the initial direct process. For the indirect process is continuous and cumulative. It regards the hypothesis in all its suppositions and consequences. It recurs every time any of these is presupposed. It constitutes an ever increasing body of evidence that the hypothesis is satisfactory. And, like the evidence for the accuracy of maps, it is operative only slightly as immanently generated knowledge but overwhelmingly as belief.

I have been pointing to the social character of human knowledge and I now must invite attention to its historical character. The division of labor not only is among those inquiring today but also extends down the ages. There is a progress in knowledge from primitives to moderns only because successive generations began where their predecessors left off. But successive generations could do so, only because they were ready to believe. Without belief, relying solely on their own individual experience, their own insights, their own judgment, they would have ever been beginning afresh, and either the attainments of primitives would never be surpassed or, if they were, then the benefits would not be transmitted.

Human knowledge, then, is not some individual possession but rather a common fund, from which each may draw by believing, to which each may contribute in the measure that he performs his cognitional operations properly and reports their

results accurately. A man does not learn without the use of his own senses, his own mind, his own heart, yet not exclusively by these. He learns from others, not solely by repeating the operations they have performed but, for the most part, by taking their word for the results. Through communication and belief there are generated common sense, common knowledge, common science, common values, a common climate of opinion. No doubt, this public fund may suffer from blindspots, oversights, errors, bias. But it is what we have got, and the remedy for its short-comings is not the rejection of belief and so a return to primitivism, but the critical and selfless stance that, in this as in other matters, promotes progress and offsets decline.

One promotes progress by being attentive, intelligent, reasonable, responsible not only in all one's cognitional operations but also in all one's speech and writing. One offsets decline by following through on one's discoveries. For when one makes a discovery, when one comes to know what one did not know before, often enough one is advancing not merely from ignorance to truth but from error to truth. To follow up on such discovery is to scrutinize the error, to uncover other connected views that in one way or another supported or confirmed it. These associates of the error may themselves be errors. They will bear examination. In the measure they come under suspicion and prove to be erroneous, one can move on to their associates, and so make the discovery of one error the occasion of purging many. It is not enough, however, simply to reject errors. Besides the false beliefs there is the false believer. One has to look into the manner in which one happened to have accepted erroneous

beliefs and one has to try to discover and correct the carelessness, the credulity, the bias that led one to mistake the false for the true. Finally, it is not enough to remove mistaken beliefs and to reform the mistaken believer. One has to replace as well as remove, to build up as well as tear down. Mere hunting for errors can leave one a personal and cultural wreck without convictions or commitments. By far the healthier procedure is primarily positive and constructive, so that what is true more and more fills out one's mind, and what is false falls away without leaving a gap or scar.

Such, in general, is belief and now we must turn to an outline of the process of coming to believe. The process is possible because what is true is of itself not private but public, not something to be confined to the mind that grasps it, but something independent of that mind and so in a sense detachable and communicable. This independence is, as already we have emphasized, the cognitional self-transcendence involved in the true judgment of fact and the moral self-transcendence involved in the true judgment of value. I cannot give another my eyes for him to see with, but I can truly report what I see, and he can believe. I cannot give another my understanding, but I can truly report what I have come to understand to be so, and he can believe. I cannot transfer to another my powers of judgment, but I can report what I affirm and what I deny, and he can believe me. Such is the first step. It is taken, not by the person that believes, but by the person whom he believes.

The second step is a general judgment of value, It approves man's division of labor in the acquisition of knowledge

both in its historical and in its social dimensions. The approval is not uncritical. It is fully aware of the fallibility of believing. But it finds it obvious that error would increase rather than diminish by a regression to primitivism. So it enters into man's collaboration in the development of knowledge, determined to promote truth and to combat error.

The third step is a particular judgment of value. It regards the trustworthiness of a witness, a source, a report, the competence of an expert, the soundness of judgment of a teacher, a counsellor, a leader, a statesman, an authority. The point at issue in each case is whether one's source was critical of his sources, whether he reached cognitional self-transcendence in his judgments of fact and moral self-transcendence in his judgments of value, whether he was truthful and accurate in his statements. Commonly such questions cannot be answered by direct methods and recourse must be had to indirect. Thus, there may be more than one source, expert, authority; they may be independent and yet concur. Again, the source, expert, authority, may speak on several occasions: his or her statements may be inherently probable, consistent with one another and with all one knows from other sources, experts, authorities. Further, other inquirers may have frequently appealed to the same source, expert, authority, and have concluded to the trustworthiness of the source, the competence of the expert, the sound judgment of the authority. Finally, when everything favors belief except the intrinsic probability of the statement to be believed, one

can ask oneself whether the fault is not in oneself, whether it is not the limitation of one's own horizon that prevents one from grasping the intrinsic probability of the statement in question.

The fourth step is the decision to believe. It is a choice that follows upon the general and particular judgments of value. Already one has judged that critically controlled belief is essential to the human good; it has its risks but it is unquestionably better than regression to primitivism. Just now one has judged that such and such statement is credible, that is can be believed by a reasonable and responsible person. The combination of the general and the particular judgment yields the conclusion that the statement ought to be believed for, if believing is a good thing, then what can be believed should be believed. Finally, what should be so, actually becomes so, through a decision or choice.

The fifth step is the act of believing. I, in my own mind, judge to be true the communicated judgment of fact or of value. I do so, not because of my own immanently generated knowledge, for that I do not possess in the matter in question, but because of the immanently generated knowledge of others. Moreover, my knowledge of the immanently generated knowledge of others, as is clear from the third step, is not exclusively a matter of my immanently generated knowledge; as in most human knowledge it, too, depends to a notable extent on further acts of belief.

Now analysis can be misleading. Without a concrete

illustration it may arouse suspicion and even make people feel that they should never believe anything. Think, then, of the engineer who whips out his slide rule and in a few moments performs a long and difficult calculation. He knows precisely what he is doing. He can explain just why the movements of the slide yield the results. Still the results are not exclusively the fruit of the engineer's immanently generated knowledge. For the markings on the rule represent logarithmic and trigonometric tables. The engineer never worked out for himself such a set of tables. He does not know but believes that such tables are correct. Again, the engineer never checked the markings on his rule against a set of tables. He has no doubt about their correspondence, but the absence of doubt is due not to immanently generated knowledge but to belief. Is he acting unintelligently, unreasonably, irresponsibly? Is anyone willing to defend the thesis that all engineers using slide rules should desist until each one for himself has acquired immanently generated knowledge of the accuracy of logarithmic and trigonometric tables and of the correspondence of the markings on their rules with the tables they have worked out each for himself?

The reader may find our account of belief quite novel. He may be surprised both by the extent of belief in human knowledge and by the value we attribute to it. But if notwithstanding he agrees with our position, his agreement may mark an advance not from ignorance but from error to truth. In that case, he should ask whether the error was a mistaken belief, whether it was associated with other beliefs, whether

they too were mistaken and, if they were, whether they were associated with still further mistaken beliefs. As the reader will observe, this critical procedure does not attack belief in general; it does not ask you to believe that your beliefs are mistaken; it takes its start from a belief you have discovered to be mistaken and it proceeds along the lines that link beliefs together to determine how far the contagion has spread.

6. The Structure of the Human Good

The human good is at once individual and social, and some account of the way the two aspects combine has now to be attempted. This will be done by selecting some eighteen terms and gradually relating them to one another.

Our eighteen terms regard (1) individuals in their potentialities and actuations, (2) cooperating groups, and (3) ends. A threefold division of ends is allowed to impose a threefold division in the other categories to yield the following scheme.

Individual		Social	Ends
Potentiality	Actuation		
capacity, need	operation	cooperation	particular good
plasticity, perfectibility	development, skill	institution, role, task	good of order
liberty	orientation, conversion	personal relations	terminal value

A first step will relate four terms from the first line:

capacity, operation, particular good, and need. Individuals, then, have capacities for operating. By operating they procure themselves instances of the particular good. By such an instance is meant any entity, whether object or action, that meets a need of a particular individual at a given place and time. Needs are to be understood in the broadest sense; they are not to be restricted to necessities but rather to be stretched to include wants of every kind.

Next are related four terms from the third column: cooperation, institution, role, and task. Individuals, then, live in groups. To a notable extent their operating is cooperating. It follows some settled pattern, and this pattern is fixed by a role to be fulfilled or a task to be performed within an institutional frame-work. Such frame-works are the family and manners (mores), society and education, the state and the law, the economy and technology, the church or sect. They constitute the commonly understood and already accepted basis and mode of cooperation. They tend to change only slowly for change, as distinct from breakdown, involves a new common understanding and a new common consent.

Thirdly, there are to be related the remaining terms in the second row: plasticity, perfectibility, development, skill, and the good of order. The capacities of individuals, then, for the performance of operations, because they are plastic and perfectible, admit the development of skills and, indeed, of the very skills demanded by institutional roles and tasks. But besides the institutional basis of cooperation, there is also

the concrete manner in which cooperation is working out. The same economic set-up is compatible with prosperity and with recession. The same constitutional and legal arrangements admit wide differences in political life and in the administration of justice. Similar rules for marriage and the family in one case generate domestic bliss and in another misery.

This concrete manner, in which cooperation actually is working out, is what is meant by the good of order. It is distinct from instances of the particular good but it is not separate from them. It regards them, however, not singly and as related to the individual they satisfy, but all together and as recurrent. My dinner today is for me an instance of the particular good. But dinner every day for all members of the group that earn it is part of the good of order. Again, my education was for me a particular good. But education for everyone that wants it is another part of the good of order.

The good of order, however, is not merely a sustained succession of recurring instances of types of the particular good. Besides that recurrent manifold, there is the order that sustains it. This consists basically (1) in the ordering of operations so that they are cooperations and ensure the recurrence of all effectively desired instances of the particular good, and (2) the interdependence of effective desires or decisions with the appropriate performance by cooperating individuals.[16]

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16) For the general case of such relationships, see Insight on emergent probability, pp. 115-128.

It is to be insisted that the good of order is not some design for utopia, some theoretic ideal, some set of ethical precepts, some code of laws, or some super-institution. It is quite concrete. It is the actually functioning or malfunctioning set of "if - then" relationships guiding operators and coordinating operations. It is the ground whence recur or fail to recur whatever instances of the particular good are recurring or failing to recur. It has a basis in institutions but it is a product of much more, of all the skill and know-how, all the industry and resourcefulness, all the ambition and fellow-feeling of a whole people, adapting to each change of circumstance, meeting each new emergency, struggling against every tendency to disorder.[17]

There remains the third row of terms: liberty, orientation, conversion, personal relations, and terminal values. Liberty means, of course, not indeterminism but self-determination. Any course of individual or group action is only a finite good and, because only finite, it is open to criticism. It has its alternatives, its limitations, its risks, its drawbacks. Accordingly, the process of deliberation and evaluation is not itself decisive, and so we experience our liberty as the active thrust of the subject terminating the process of deliberation by

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17) For a fuller presentation, Insight, on the good of order, p. 596, on common sense, pp. 173-181, 207-216, on belief, pp. 703-718, and on bias, pp. 218-242.

settling on one of the possible courses of action and proceeding to execute it. Now in so far as that thrust of the self regularly opts, not for the merely apparent good, but for the true good, the self thereby is achieving ~~real~~ moral self-transcendence; he is existing authentically; he is constituting himself as an originating value, and he is bringing about terminal values, namely a good of order that is truly good and instances of the particular good that are truly good. On the other hand, in so far as our decisions have their principal motives, not in the values at stake, but in a calculus of the pleasures and pains involved, one is failing in self-transcendence, in authentic human existence, in the origination of value in oneself and in one's society.

Liberty is exercised within a matrix of personal relations. In the cooperating community persons are bound together by their needs and by the common good of order that meets their needs. They are related by the commitments that they have freely undertaken and by the expectations aroused in others by the commitments, by the roles they have assumed and by the tasks that they meet to perform. These relationships normally are alive with feeling. There are common or opposed feelings about qualitative values and scales of preference. There are mutual feelings in which one responds to another as an ontic value or as just a source of satisfactions. Beyond feelings there is the substance of community. People are joined by common experience, by common or complementary insights, by similar judgments of fact and of value, by parallel orientations in life. They are separated,

estranged, rendered hostile, when they have got out of touch, when they misunderstand one another, when they judge in opposed fashions, opt for contrary social goals. So personal relations vary from intimacy to ignorance, from love to exploitation, from respect to contempt, from friendliness to enmity. They bind a community together, or divide it into factions, or tear it apart.[18]

Terminal values are the values that are chosen; true instances of the particular good, a true good of order, a true scale of preferences regarding values and satisfactions. Correlative to terminal values are the originating values that do the choosing: they are authentic persons achieving self-transcendence by their good choices. ~~Since man can know and choose authenticity and self-transcendence by their good choices,~~ Since man can know and choose authenticity and self-transcendence, originating and terminal values can coincide. When each member of the community both wills authentically in himself and, inasmuch as he can, promotes it in others, then the originating values that choose and the terminal values that are chosen overlap and interlace.

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18) On interpersonal relations as ongoing processes, there is in Hegel's Phänomenologie the dialectic of master and slave, and in Gaston Fessard's De l'actualité historique, Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1960, Vol. I, a parallel dialectic of Jew and Greek. Far more concrete is Rosemary Haughton's The Transformation of Man: A Study of Conversion and Community, London: G. Chapman and Springfield, Ill.: Templegate, 1967. Description, technique and some theory in Carl Rogers' On Becoming a Person, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961.

Presently we shall have to speak of the orientation of the community as a whole. But for the moment our concern is with the orientation of the individual within the orientated community. At its root this consists in the transcendental notions that both enable us and require us to advance in understanding, to judge truthfully, to respond to values. Still, this possibility and exigence become effective only through development. One has to acquire the skills and learning of a competent human being in some walk of life. One has to grow in sensitivity and responsiveness to values if one's humanity is to be authentic. But development is not inevitable, and so results vary. There are human failures. There are mediocrities. There are those that keep developing and growing throughout a long life-time, and their achievement varies with their initial background, with their opportunities, with their luck in avoiding pitfalls and setbacks, and with the pace of their advance.[19]

As orientation is, so to speak, the direction of development, so conversion is a change of direction and, indeed, a change for the better. One frees oneself from the unauthentic. One grows in authenticity. Harmful, dangerous, misleading satisfactions are dropped. Fears of discomfort, pain, privation have less power to deflect one from one's course. Values are apprehended where before they were overlooked. Scales of preference shift. Errors, rationalizations, ideologies fall and shatter to leave one open to things as they are and to man

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19) On various aspects of growth, see A.H. Maslow, Towards a Psychology of Being, Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1962.

as he should be.

The human good then is at once individual and social. Individuals do not just operate to meet their needs but cooperate to meet one another's needs. As the community develops its institutions to facilitate cooperation, so individuals develop skills to fulfil the roles and perform the tasks set by the institutional frame-work. Though the roles are fulfilled and the tasks are performed that the needs be met, still all is done not blindly but knowingly, not necessarily but freely. The process is not merely the service of man; it is above all the making of man, his advance in authenticity, the fulfilment of his affectivity, and the direction of his work to the particular goods and a good of order that are worth while.

7. Progress and Decline

Our account of the structure of the human good is compatible with any stage of technological, economic, political, cultural, religious development. But as individuals not only develop but also suffer breakdowns, so too do societies. Accordingly, we have to add a sketch of social progress and of social decline and, indeed, one that will be relevant to an account of the social function of religion.

Progress proceeds from originating value, from subjects being their true selves by observing the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. Being attentive includes attention to human affairs. Being intelligent includes a grasp of hitherto unnoticed or unrealized

possibilities. Being reasonable includes the rejection of what probably would not work but also the acknowledgement of what probably would. Being responsible includes basing one's decisions and choices on an unbiased evaluation of short-term and long-term costs and benefits to oneself, to one's group, to other groups.

Progress, of course, is not some single improvement but a continuous flow of them. But the transcendental precepts are permanent. Attention, intelligence, reasonableness, and responsibility are to be exercised not only with respect to the existing situation but also with respect to the subsequent, changed situation. It spots the inadequacies and repercussions of the previous venture to improve what is good and remedy what is defective. More generally, the simple fact of change of itself makes it likely that new possibilities will have arisen and old possibilities will have advanced in probability. So change begets further change and the sustained observance of the transcendental precepts makes these cumulative changes an instance of progress.

But precepts may be violated. Evaluation may be biased by an egoistic disregard of others, by a loyalty to one's own group matched by hostility to other groups, by concentrating on short-term benefits and overlooking long-term costs.[20] Moreover, such aberrations are easy to maintain and difficult to correct. Egoists do not turn into altruists overnight. Hostile groups do not easily forget their grievances, drop their

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20) I have elaborated these points in Insight, pp. 218-242.

resentments, overcome their fears and suspicions. Common sense commonly feels itself omnicompetent in practical affairs, commonly is blind to long-term consequences of policies and courses of action, commonly is unaware of the admixture of common nonsense in its more cherished convictions and slogans.

The extent of such aberration is, of course, a variable. But the greater it is, the more rapidly it will distort the process of cumulative change and bring to birth a host of social and cultural problems. Egoism is in conflict with the good of order. Up to a point it can be countered by the law, the police, the judiciary, the prisons. But there is a limit to the proportion of the population that can be kept in prison and, when egoism passes that limit, the agents of the law and ultimately the law itself have to become more tolerant and indulgent. So the good of order deteriorates. Not only is it less efficient but also there is the difficulty of exercising even-handed justice in deciding which injustices are to be winked at. The practical question is apt to be whose social sins are to be forgiven, and whose are to be punished, and then the law is compromised. It is no longer coincident with justice. In all likelihood it becomes to a greater or less extent the instrument of a class.

For besides the egoism of the individual there is the egoism of the group. While the individual egoist has to put up with the public censure of his ways, group egoism not merely directs development to its own aggrandizement but also provides a market for opinions, doctrines, theories that will justify its ways and, at the same time, reveal the misfortunes of other groups to be due to their depravity. Of course, as long as the

successful group continues to succeed, as long as it meets each new challenge with a creative response, it feels itself the child of destiny and it provokes more admiration and emulation than resentment and opposition. But development, guided by group egoism, is bound to be one-sided. It divides the body social not merely into those that have and those that have not but also makes the former the representatives of the cultural flower of the age to leave the latter apparent survivals from a forgotten era. Finally, in the measure that the group encouraged and accepted an ideology to rationalize its own behavior, in the same measure it will be blind to the real situation, and it will be bewildered by the emergence of a contrary ideology that will call to consciousness an opposed group egoism.

Decline has a still deeper level. Not only does it compromise and distort progress. Not only do inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility produce objectively absurd situations. Not only do ideologies corrupt minds. But compromise and distortion discredit progress. Objectively absurd situations do not yield to treatment. Corrupt minds have a flair for picking the mistaken solution and insisting that it alone is intelligent, reasonable, good. Imperceptibly the corruption spreads from the harsh sphere of material advantage and power to the mass media, the stylish journals, the literary movements, the educational process, the reigning philosophies. A civilization in decline digs its own grave with a relentless consistency. It cannot be argued out of its self-destructive ways, for argument has a theoretical major premiss, theoretical

premisses are asked to conform to matters of fact, and the facts in the situation produced by decline more and more are the absurdities that proceed from inattention, oversight, unreasonableness and irresponsibility.

The term, alienation, is used in many different senses. But on the present analysis the basic form of alienation is man's disregard of the transcendental precepts, Be attentive, Be intelligent, Be reasonable, Be responsible. Again, the basic form of ideology is a doctrine that justifies such alienation. From these basic forms, all others can be derived. For the basic forms corrupt the social good. As self-transcendence promotes progress, so the refusal of self-transcendence turns progress into cumulative decline.

Finally, we may note that a religion that promotes self-transcendence to the point, not merely of justice, but of self-sacrificing love, will have a redemptive role in human society inasmuch as such love can undo the mischief of decline and restore the cumulative process of progress.[21]

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21) I have elaborated this point in Chapter ~~XX~~ Twenty of my book, Insight. The practical problem of deciding who is and who is not alienated comes up in this book in the chapter on Dialectic.