

8640ADTE060

Horizon

(Transcription of 86400DTE060 by R. Doran)

Horizon

1 The generalization of the term was introduced, it seems, by E. Husserl in his phenomenological studies; it has passed into existential thought to take on meanings consonant with various approaches; we shall employ it as a concrete variation of the Aristotelian-Thomist notion of formal object.

2 A horizon is defined by two correlatives, pole and field, with the field determined or selected by the pole, and the pole conversely defined by the field.

Hence, for every different pole, there is a different field, and for every different field there is a different pole.

The pole is the subject.

The field is a totality of objects.

Hence, horizon, pole, field, resemble the notion of potency and formal object inasmuch as potency and formal object are mutually determining;

they differ inasmuch as the Scholastic concept concentrates on the object and considers it, at least commonly, in abstract fashion as the *ratio sub qua obiectum attingitur*;

they differ further in concreteness: the concrete subject vs. the potency; the totality of objects vs. the usually abstract *ratio*; and finally the use of a term, horizon, that denotes the whole constituted by both concrete subject and concrete totality of objects.

3 This technical use of the term 'horizon' differs from its literal meaning, the 'bounding circle,' *ho horizōn [kuklos]*.

However, the technical use may be approached from the literal meaning.

For different standpoints there are different horizons.

For different horizons there are different totalities of visible objects.

Substitute for the various standpoints different subjects, and for the various totalities of visible objects different totalities of objects of any form of apprehension or appetite.

4 The phenomenology of horizon invites a comparison with the visual phenomena of (a) a central area of complete illumination, (b) a surrounding penumbra, and (c) an undefined region of outer darkness.

What is beyond one's horizon is what one knows nothing about [it's all Greek to me; I did not understand a single word he said] and what does not possess the slightest significance for me [I just could not care less].

What lies in the penumbra is the field of vague and inadequate knowledge, of minor interests, of secondary concerns.

One will talk about it but only casually; if one talks about it at length, one will not do it; if one starts doing it, one does not stick to it.

[page 2]

What is fully within one's horizon is what fully engages one's attention, what one comes to know all about, what one comes to be able to do anything with.

He may seem a clumsy fellow, but put him in the driver's seat in one of those enormous twelve-wheel lorries and he is completely master of any situation that can arise.

One's horizon, then, is world, and we all live in our own little worlds.

The world of politics, of the law, of medicine, of education, of religion, of industry, of commerce, of entertainment, of the home.

5 In the analysis of horizons the basic distinction is between absolute and relative horizon.

One has to draw the line somewhere, and absolute horizon is where one draws the line.

What is beyond one's absolute horizon is what just does not exist, what cannot be known, what is to be disregarded, what is simply worthless.

Others may and do draw the line of absolute horizon differently; but their doing so only reveals their wishful thinking, their indulgence in myth, their subjection to fallacy, their self-deception, their illusions, their backwardness, their lack of development or of maturity, their blindness to truth, their refusal of God's grace.

Relative horizon is a different matter.

Doctors, lawyers, politicians, industrialists, workers know about one another's different worlds, acknowledge their existence, recognize their validity and their value. Each will say that it takes all sorts of people to make up a world. Each perhaps will recognize in the others a 'deformation professionnelle,' and smile at the limitations of human nature.

Relative horizon, then, is a matter of *development*, and a person's development varies with historical epoch, with the society in which he is born or to which he migrates, with the training and education he has had.

But absolute horizon is a matter of *conversion*, and conversion in the subject turns his world over, makes its upside down into a right side up.

Conversion is intellectual or moral or religious; it is any two of the three; or it is all three. It changes basic orientation.

Development, on the other hand, is psychological, social, and historical. It occurs in the way we operate (psychological) with others (social) within a tradition (historical).

[page 3]

## Relative horizon

Relative horizons differ psychologically, socially, historically.

They differ psychologically by differences in the range of one's interests and one's competence.

They differ socially: what one is to do, when one is to do it, how one is to do it, why one is to do it, with what results it will be done, are (1) perpetually recurrent questions and (2) the answers tend to be dictated by the social situation.

They differ historically: social situations arise from social situations; what was up-to-date, novel, original, daring, becomes antiquated, obsolete, out-of-date, tiring.

In brief, horizons emerge through operating (psychological) with others (social) within a tradition (historical).

The differentiation of relative horizons may be studied, then, by considering the mediation of operations, the mediation of society, and the mediation of history.

[page 4]

*The Mediation of Operations : Development*

(a) Aristotle's theory of habits may be complemented by J. Piaget's theory of psychological development.

Aristotle's analysis is obviously valuable and fundamentally true; but it suffers from two drawbacks.

The habits go into different potencies, and there does not seem to be an adequate account of their coordination and unification.

The habits are distinguished by the merely classificatory terms of Greek vocabulary (Socrates' questions), and so there is a lack of explanation.

Piaget, a score of books, many translated into English, on child psychology and educational psychology.

Also three volume *Epistémologie génétique* and many later works in collaboration with others under Rockefeller Fund auspices.

(b) Piaget's theory centres on the notion of adaptation; he pushes it back to the starting point in Aristotelian 'natural habit'; and he pushes it forward towards the term of a development, a term he defines on the analogy of mathematical group theory.

(c) An adaptation results from assimilation and adjustment.

Assimilation: in dealing with a new object, in performing a new task, one assimilates the new object or task to some already familiar object or task, and so one employs the operations one would employ on the familiar object.

Assimilation, then, is the use of natural or acquired habit, the employment of operations one already can perform.

Adjustment: the familiar operations are not performed in the already familiar manner; there is introduced at least some minor and obvious change corresponding to the requirements of the new object or task.

Hence, adaptation need not be perfect at the first try; there may be needed a series of adjustments; practice makes perfect; and learning is slow.

(d) Prior to all adaptations, there is the Aristotelian 'natural habit.'

It lies behind the operation that is performed spontaneously, naturally, without learning; in general, such operation is sketchy, without precision, slow, groping, uneconomical, inefficient.

By a series of adjustments, it becomes precise, rapid, economical, efficient, enjoyable.

The same 'natural habit' can be differentiated: i.e., become adapted to dealing with each of a series of objects, to performing each of a series of tasks.

Differentiated operations may be combined to yield the compound operation; and such combinations may be extremely numerous (e.g., playing the piano, writing, speaking; Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, the recurrence of the same arguments in different combinations with adaptations in chapter after chapter).

[page 5]

(e) The development heads towards the group of combinations of differentiations of basic operations.

Mathematically a group is (approximately) the set of elements under specified operations such that

by the operations one can proceed from any element to any other and back again

by the operations one cannot proceed from an element to a non-element.

E. g., under addition and subtraction there is the group of positive integers, negative integers, and zero.

Groups of oral, of manual, of ocular, of aural, ... operations.

Lower groups merge into higher groups: the group of oral, ocular, and manual operations [Everything the baby sees, he reaches for; and everything he grabs, he puts in his mouth].

The validity of the notion of group in psychology seems validated by the fact that it enabled Piaget to determine the average age at which children could learn to perform various types of tasks.

The notion of group enabled him to discover the right questions and to determine the experiments that would give the answers.

(f) Instead of potency and formal object we distinguished the more concrete components of horizon, pole, and field.

Similarly, instead of habit and 'subiectum' [e.g., God is the subject of theology], we shall qualify the pole by a group of operations and designate the corresponding field as the field of mastery or competence.

[page 6]

### *The Mediation of Operations: Levels of Development*

Three levels of development may be distinguished by distinguishing

- (1) immediate operations
- (2) mediated operations
- (3) operations on the mediator.

Immediate operations are operations in which eye, ear, hand, mouth, etc., reach their object.

The field of immediate operations is the field as reached; it is the field of the sensible, present, and accessible.

It is the field in which the infant develops: learning to manipulate spoon, cup; learning to walk; learning to talk ...

Mediated operations are mediated by meaning: one imagines or thinks or says what lies beyond the field of immediate operations.

There follows a vast expansion of the field: from the sensible, present, accessible to anything that can be imagined, thought, said, meant.

The field as reached is only the immediate part of the field as meant; the field as meant is one's world, and one's entry into others' worlds.

By operations on the mediator are meant operations concerned with the development and the control of meaning.

Such are studies that enrich and control imagination, studies of languages, studies of mathematics, studies of logic.

By such exercises and studies one is not directly coming to know things but one is coming to the mastery of the tools by which one knows the things in the vast world of meaning.

Operations on the mediator result in a duplication of the field.

There is the mediating field: the field of linguistics and of mathematics.

There is the potential field: the field that comes into our view through literature, history, science.

## The Educational Problem

The 'real' world 'is' the field as reached, the world of the infant.

The field as meant can be a mere castle in the air; contact with, relation to, the field as reached is a condition of its being known as real.

Studies of art, language, mathematics, logic are 'useless'; they are if you are to remain in the world of the infant.

There is a coincidence of this basic educational problem and the philosopher's critical problem.

[page 7]

### *The Mediation of Society*

Individual		Social	Final
1 capacity-need operation		cooperation	particular good
2 plasticity-perfectibility habit		institution	good of order
3 liberty	orientation conversion	personal relations	terminal value

*Notes: Particular good:* my breakfast; St Peter's beatific vision; a particular entity good to a particular individual.

*Good of order:* a series of particular goods, the corresponding series of particular operations and cooperations, the relevant group of operators and sleeping partners that enjoy the series of particular goods.

The order is the formal element in the good of order: it is the network of relations, of interdependences, that so coordinate the operations and control the operators that the series of particular goods occurs.

The order in question is not some design for utopia, some theoretic ideal, some ethical set of precepts, some code of laws. It is the concrete, actually functioning set of relationships that easily can become psychological, economic, political, social determinism.

*Institutions* are the family, mores (not ethics), the community, education, the state, the law, the economy, the technology.

They stand to society as habits to the individual; they are the accepted basis and mode of cooperation.

They stand to the good of order as habit to operation, but at a greater remove; the same type of family set-up permits a great variation in the consequent good-of-order of family life; the same economic set-up is compatible with prosperity and recession.

Children fight about particular goods; men about institutions.

[Margin]: good → apparent  
→ true = value

*Terminal values* are the hedonistic, aesthetic, religious, moral, or intellectual ideals incorporated in a given good of order and its institutions.

They are the justification of capitalism or socialism, democracy or dictatorship, Christian marriage or serial monogamy, this or that type of legal system, of education, of economy, technology, etc.

*Conversion* is the transformation of one's intellectual, moral, and/or religious living.

From the basis of what I see, to what is true.

From the basis of what I like, to what is right.

From the basis of the old man in Adam, to the new man in Christ.

[page 8]

To consider conversion is to move beyond relative to absolute horizon; it introduces absolute oppositions.

*Personal relations* rise upon institutional roles (father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister; teacher, pupil; professor, student; employer, employee; the corporate set-up; master, slave).

As personal relations are apprehended intersubjectively, they provide the most concrete and vital apprehension of institutions, the acquisition of habits for



specialized institutional roles, the functioning of the good of order, the reality of terminal values.

There is a dialectic of personal relations (Hegel's master-slave; Fessard's Jew-Greek) that is intimately connected with conversion.

Cf. encounter, mutual self-mediation.

### *The Social Horizon*

Its field is the good that is apprehended as practically possible.

It relegates to outer darkness the merely possible and the merely ideal.

It concentrates upon the good that can be achieved and upon the means of achieving it.

It is opposed to the classicist blindspot that thinks only in terms of norms, ideals, laws, exemplars, states of perfection, and has no real apprehension of concrete possibilities and concrete actualities.

Cf. C. Dawson vs J.G. Lawler, *Thought* 35 (1960) 489, culture as (1) an ideal and (2) a concrete historical entity. .

It is not to be identified with the empiricist blindspot that fails to recognize that man advances to the actual by apprehending the possible and the ideal.

Conversion from the seen to the true, from likes and dislikes to right and wrong, from the old man to the new man, is a concrete historical event, a real human good.

Consideration of what can be and of what ought to be are stages but only stages on the road to the realization of what can and ought to be.

Such consideration is all the more momentous when it is only through a series of stages that the ideal can become practical politics.

Though Karl Marx in the XIXth century could be rated as an old fool with an enormous beard who wasted his time in the British Museum, the XXth century refutes the view that he was not a practical fellow.

[page 9]

*Absolute Horizon* [handwritten: notes Gonzaga]

1 Consciousness

Constitutive of the subject; third presence.

Not the object of an inner perception but the subject of any intentional act as present to self in and by the act.

## 2 Levels of consciousness

Dream, empirical, intellectual, rational consciousness; self-consciousness

## 3 Patterns of consciousness. Polymorphic subject.

artistic, theoretic, dramatic, practical, introspective, mystical  
neurotic, schizophrenic, manic-depressive, ...

## 4 Development of consciousness: worlds of community, theory, interiority

Undifferentiated: primitive to ancient high civilizations

Historical horizon      Differentiated: practical and theoretic life (cf. Indian) – withdrawal to  
Integrated: existential-historical-technical      absolute subject  
from world of  
appearance

## 5 Conversion: the deliberately self-constituting subject; existence.      si

Intellectual: perceptionism, idealism-essentialism, realism  
authenticity, obnubilation, rationalization

Moral: particular good, good of order, absolute values

Religious: implicit in intellectual and moral  
historical: progress, sin and suffering, redemption

## 6. The Transcendental Subject

Authenticity is the conformation of the existential to the transcendental subject; it is meeting the exigences of man's intellectual, rational, moral nature (spirit)

It determines the pole and thereby determines the horizon.

It is the normative structure that grounds each heuristic structure, and the metaphysics that is total heuristic structure.

The normative structure both recurs and develops; but the development is differentiation and integration within the basic structure.

But obnubilated and rationalized existing also recur and counter-develop.

## 7 The World of Theory

Division: natural science, data as given

human science, data as carrying a meaning

theology, data as carrying a true meaning, the word of God

Human science: descriptive: quis quid ubi quibus auxiliis cur quomodo

explanatory: comparative, organic, genetic, dialectical

models: structure and recurrence

Theology: Xtianity: mediation of New Man in Xt Jesus, Gal 3.28