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A Schema for a Natural Ontology of the Human: Reflections on Psychology and Religion

Introduction

In its broadest meaning, psychology refers to the movements of the human soul: their vicissitudes, their origins, their fate. In contemporary usage, it suggests only the structures of mind in a scientific sense; it deals with such techniques as fix mind's contents and prerogatives. Wide-ranging and soaring, the soul animates everything we call human. As the soul's mere residue, mind, however has but a restricted set of functions investigable as a behavioural phenomenon. In its original sense, religion means a durable binding: firm, unbreakable commitment, ground for personal salvation, locus of ultimate responsibility. More narrowly, it refers to ritual and dogma, and to prescribed habits of worship. In this essay, I propose certain links between religion and psychology, intending these terms in their larger import. Such comprehensive psychology studies mankind's adventure toward some over-arching, all-inclusive concern. In the religious orientation, this process culminates in the fruition of all aspiration, as a redeeming participation in something beyond the natural.

To depict this journey, we must portray the unfoldings of human being from its earliest questing acts to its last gropings for perpetual life: we must be responsive to humankind's every nuance—to its ecstasies and its tragedies, to its nobler reachings and its degradations. By this search, a natural ontology of the person emerges; and for each of its categories some narrow psychological correlate holds as its empirical anticipation. In the end, such an ontology is nothing less than the person himself as a totality—as subject as well as object, as possessing both body and soul. When I declare this ontology *to be* the person in his *whole* being, I mean that it is fully exemplified in each specific human existence, that its categories are incorporated within

that existence, that far from comprising an abstract prospectus upon the human those categories are concretely lived by real men and women. In several volumes,¹ I have worked out a theory of the person which explicates the affinities between religion and psychology. Sketching the principles which ground this theory, I here delineate in a general way such postulates of human ontology as, in their restricted applications, are associated with special topics of general psychology. Collectively, these topics portend the religious in its narrower sense; their broader philosophic analogues portend the religious in its larger sense.

In these pages, I stress the character of this theory as an open-ended system amenable to persistent re-thinking, as postulates which constitute but a bare schema into which new empirical content must ever be infused. Such content goads the quester into continually emending the theory, into perhaps frankly abandoning its tenets in favour of an altogether new schema. Invariably dialectical and never failing to evoke the human mystery and its unplumbable depths, this approach to the person does not cease to evolve, and even at times to entail its own supersession. Panoramic, as proposing a synoptic overview of all extant perspectives upon the human, and heuristic, as a spur to new meditation upon the human essence, its keynote is repetition of thought about the recurrent themes requisite for conceptualizing the person rather than accumulation of information currently held to be sacrosanct for rendering prevailing "truths" about his alleged nature. In its own way, such a theory, when sufficiently comprehensive, mirrors a subject-matter, the person himself, which is infinitely complex and replete with paradox and ambiguity, which is ever-changing and ever self-transforming.

A human ontology aims at encompassing human phenomena in their widest possible range, at organizing potential information about the entire fabric of humankind, at illuminating every specific instance of that fabric. Such ontology is both propaedeutic to and directive of

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1. The published books, which together comprise *A Philosophic Inquiry into the Person*, include *Homo Quaerens: The Seeker and the Sought* (New York: Fordham, 1978), *The Dance of Being: Man's Labyrinthine Rhythms* (New York: Fordham, 1979), and *Choros: The Orchestrating Self* (New York: Fordham, 1983). Completed and submitted for publication, is *Metamorphosis: The Odyssey of the Self*. In progress are *Apotheosis: The Divinizing Self*, *Cosmos: The Crucible of Man*, and *The Person: A Cosmic Perspective*.

the quest to know each person in his full particularity. Comprising a formal schema for aiding the empiricist to elicit such data as pertain both to the person in general and to each person in particular, it facilitates the discovery of new human facts; it coordinates those facts, once discovered, in the appropriate theoretical formulations. From this standpoint, human ontology cannot claim empirical status as a *scientific* theory of the person. On the contrary, it constitutes only an evocation of the human, a stimulus for understanding him in greater depth, a guide to the systematic conceptualization of his being in its diversity, its powers, and its mystery. By such an ontology, I mean—to anticipate my argument—an assemblage of ideas, systematically interwoven, which rests upon a deeper human experience than any empirical theory can embrace, which aims at prescinding less from the human than a scientific account—which as science is necessarily restrictive—which locates the human within the broadest imaginable world context. Among the entities amenable to natural investigation, the person is unique for several reasons: the method for conceptualizing his nature, being itself a person who as a totality engages another person, is constitutive of that nature, hence of the very conceptual schema; the nature *itself* commands, for each singular individual, infinite interest as being infinitely unfathomable; both method and nature, being sufficiently rich and deep, suggest the categories for framing a general ontology, hence constitutes the person himself as paradigm for that ontology. No merely empirical theory possesses these attributes, this implied heuristic power. Accordingly, the human must be construed as exhibiting, in addition to a behavioural and empirical status, a transcendental and trans-natural status. Synoptically, I set forth this view.

1. Perspectives of Orientation

In general, three pervasive dimensions of inquiry dominate my quest to rescue the veridical person from the prevailing abstract renditions of his “nature”, and to fix that “nature” in some set of restrictive theoretical formulations—namely, the perspectives of historicity, syncretism and adventure. Any philosophy of the person of wide scope and contemporary relevance must respond to many intellectual currents: it must mediate these in the light of modern social, political and economic realities. In our age of fragmentation and alienation, of technology and an often false scientism, numerous special languages have been fashioned for conceptualizing the person. They provide schemata which vary from those of philosophical psychology, pheno-

menology and existentialism to those of behaviourism, computer science, Wittgensteinian-type distinctions, and instrumentalism. How to coordinate the positive components of these diverse approaches is the chief problem. To this end, one must reach back in history for integrative concepts of sufficient generality, break down barriers between overly specialized disciplines, re-think categories which have become rigid and constraining. Such classical theories as involve Spinoza's *Substance*, Kant's *Noumenon*, and Hegel's *Geist* illuminate the human essence; insights of poets and artists in general stress experiential factors overlooked by systematic scholars; revolutionary thinkers like Marx, Darwin, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Freud, Jung, Einstein and Heisenberg are relevant. Thus Marx delineates that organic inter-connectedness of complex social institutions which expresses a single economic reality, a reality which weaves the social community itself into the person's substance; Darwin places the person within an evolutionary process as the locus of both powers but latent within his forebears and of powers which, as latent within the person himself, are actualized only by his perhaps trans-personal progeny; Kierkegaard stresses inwardness and Nietzsche a transvaluation and a reaching beyond the natural; Freud and Jung jointly create the depth-psychology movements in which inwardness itself becomes, as developmentally construed, immeasurably complicated; Einstein quests after a pattern of relationships—by analogy, the person himself—which persists as invariant amidst a multitude of transformations of the diverse variables pertaining to observable behaviour; Heisenberg formulates an indeterminacy principle which emphasizes the quantum as a minimal unit inter-connecting variables which cannot be assigned (with equal precision) specific values—and suggesting, by analogy, that the person himself may be the locus of parameters which cannot be simultaneously specified in overt behaviour. Finally, the ideas of recent writers are essential—for example. Whitehead, Heidegger, Dewey, Peirce, Royce, MacMurray, Lonergan, William James, Merleau-Ponty, Buber, Marcel, Husserl, Sartre, Teilhard, Buchler, Scheler. By all these thinkers, and by many others, a rich fabric is woven which requires systematic unity. In the history of philosophy, form, mechanism and organism have successively evolved as paradigm for general ontology. Now the person himself emerges as supreme ground for envisaging, and for framing by extrapolation from his own essence, the categories for conceptualizing the world beyond the human.

These factors—emerging in the course of historical examination, and thus diffusely entertained—must be organized into a coherent manifold. System, accuracy, adequacy to experiential detail, and comprehensiveness must prevail. In a measure, the unfettered imagination must be restrained, though never sub-ordinated to an excessively formal discipline. Distinctions must be precisely rendered; a natural taxonomy must be allowed to evolve. Yet system must be dialectically construed. The person is infinitely varied. To present his essential nature, a myriad of subtleties must be set forth. Though a commentary on the person is hardly like a painting or a musical composition, it must be made stylistically to approach something like an art-work. Throughout, a certain organicity and harmony, a proportion, symmetry and balance must be attained. No part of such a systematic inquiry can be defined save by reference to a context of sufficient breadth. Through organized and concise, reflection must not lack the element of the poetic and the imaginative. Rather than uni-linear, the mode of thought relevant for conceptualizing the person must be both multi-dimensional and multi-nuanced, both contextual and synoptic. Many aspects of the human must be simultaneously heeded. Always concrete and particular, the deliberations should as a whole appeal to an abiding sense of the individual, to a deep and searching personal experience. So dialectical must this syncretism be that the specific working out of its details should make possible its own negation and even its frank rejection, with systematic recommencement of the entire enterprise. For the person, so I here presuppose, manifests (in the course of such inquiry) an endless new depth, scope and worth.

Since the human, and all inquiry into his being, is astoundingly complex, a sense of high adventure should always prevail. To shape a theory appropriate to man's nature, an enormous number of considerations must be operative. Above all, the approach to understanding him must not be prematurely systematic. Hardly desultory or random, it must nonetheless be expansive, flexible, open and emendable. Without constraint, all impressions should be permitted to imprint their most subtle nuances upon the inquirer. Facts, biases, and theories assembled by other investigators must freely be contemplated and never precipitously evaluated or incautiously dismissed: their broadest imaginable implications must be reflected upon. The humanities, the sciences, the arts, philosophy, history, theology—all disciplines bearing upon the person must be taken into consideration, and

their deeper import traced out. In effect, an attitude of romance must be allowed to dominate every instance of such inquiry. By that attitude, the quester will accept all his formulations as fallible, hence revocable. A continual ferment of ideas and perceptions must be encouraged; and, in response to this ferment, the quester must trustingly accept his own spontaneous, intuitive reactions. By vision and revision, he can then permit a succession of theories to emerge which are appropriate to the variegated, labyrinthine textures of the human. Then alone may he realize that no set of objectifications, no attempt to convert the person's essence into an object—a mere bundle of behaviors no matter how complex—can exhaustively specify his nature; that, on the contrary, every particular objectification but reifies the person and, in effect, permits him to be regarded, by himself and by others, as a simple commodity on the exchange market.

2. The Taxonomic Tree

To frame a general ontology, philosophers have adopted diverse points of departure. For Descartes it was the thinking hence existing ego, the universal quester; for Spinoza the totality of substance of which creator and created are the complimentary aspects; for Hume experience construed as stark sensory impressions; for Kant bare phenomena both conveyed through and contrasted with the invisible noumenon; for Hegel human consciousness itself as first manifested in a dialectically unfolding sensory experience. From the rationally ordered systems these philosophers shaped, a specific theory of the human was, in each instance, either implied or explicitly adduced. In my account,² I begin with man seeking to understand himself, with each particular person questing into what it means to be a person. From this base, I generate my entire ontologic schema: first evolving a restricted ontology of the human, I finally propose, using the person himself as paradigm, a general ontology in which man projects the traits of his own being upon being in general.

In effect, I seek a natural classification of such aspects of the human phenomenon as integrally cohere for each unique person: I aim at re-presenting, in the sense of an evocation, the entire human reality—its mystery, its complexity, its depths. By this representation, I portray the person as a spiritual unfolding, as an arduously sought

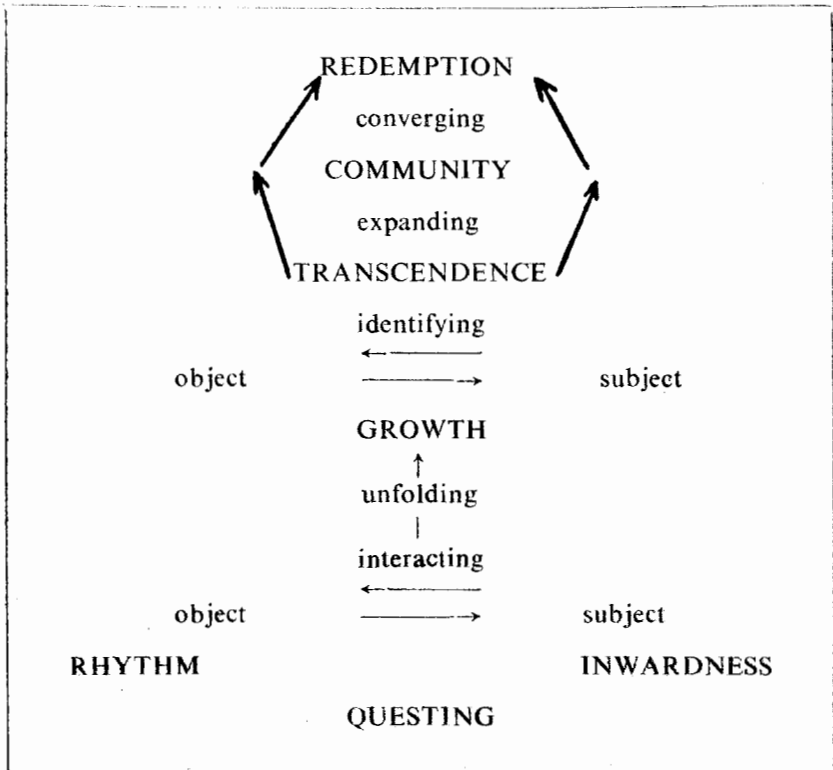
2. Set forth in my books, and here but briefly sketched.

achievement tragically constrained, as the consummate if flawed realization of what in a man's earliest phases of personal development had been merely germinal. The very manner in which ontology itself arises must, so I propose, mirror this unfolding, express its dynamics, capture its organicity and ferment. Regarding the person synoptically as an integral phenomenon, I seek to grasp his essence by engaging him in a total way. Surveying the whole evolving human fabric, I aim at an adequate depiction of this totality. My apprehension of the world as a whole can grow only from my encounter with the human situation, can root itself only in my knowledge of human possibilities, human yearnings, human powers. After all, it is only man who reaches out, listens, questions, construes: only man with his specifically human equipment, with his artifices and his symbols. To conceptualize ontology in general (and thereupon to ascertain some plausible ground of human redemption, hence of vindicating religious aspiration), one must centre oneself, at the very beginning of one's inquiry, within one's own particular being, within one's idiosyncratic variations upon the theme of humanity in general. For all being reveals itself, so I here presume, within a locus which is nothing but man himself: man who is alternately curious and adventuresome, melancholy and tragic, tranquil and ecstatic.

Within my questing being, a dialectic unfolds between myself as agent and that internalized community of agents which never ceases to work within me. And as a quest, I repeatedly consult this interior social critic of my every act, this critic which conveys to me the cumulative wisdom of humankind. For the person himself, as he seeks to experience what it means humanly to experience, as he quests after what it means even to be a quester, constitutes the epistemological soil whence grows the taxonomic tree of human ontology. When I examine, in its every concrete manifestation, the very method by which I had come to understand the human essence in the first place as woven of both an aboriginal synthesizing activity and the communal overseer incorporated within me, I generate the ontological categories appropriate for depicting man in his uniqueness and in his universality. When I quest to experience myself to be so deeply implicated with other questers that together, through our collective acts, we shape the norms, standards and criteria by which questing itself is evaluated, I draw forth the latent content of my primordial questing act: I expand the formula which characterizes my very being as quester. From a rich, albeit compressed immanent content, I trace out several on-

tological levels: the person as the interaction of subjectivity and objectivity; as a substantive unity which both temporalizes itself ontogenetically and transfigures itself as timelessly dwelling in transcendence; as a micro-image of the cosmos in general; as the chief paradigm for deriving, by attenuation of my personal being, all other kinds of ontology. Rather than conceiving the natural world after the model of mechanism or even organism, constructing the categories for rendering philosophic cosmology by augmentation of the non-personal, with its impoverishment of being, I adduce from the fulness of being the world as a matrix of the diverse grades of the diminution of plenitude. In this way, I apprehend the quester as both subject and object, as both a temporal unfolding and an arresting of time, as both cosmic participant and acosmically apart; and, at the end, at attaining a redemption appropriate for my own specific kind of finitude.

In a formal schema, I summarily represent the natural development of human ontology :



3. Tenets of Method

Reflecting upon this schema, certain general tenets of method emerge. As I inquire into an object—and the person is (in part) an object among other objects, a phenomenon to be investigated, I engage it (as scientist) detachedly and circumspectly. By my senses, I discern its textures, its contours, its patterns, its qualities: I regard its every facet. As object, it is simply *there*, a presence for me, a datum to be inquired into. Yet even as I merely see it or touch it—and sight and touch are the primary sensory sources of objective knowledge—I see it and touch it *with* my eyes, *with* my fingers. In effect, I employ my physical being, even in principle my entire physical being, under the limitations however (when I seek objective knowledge) of this or that special sense. Thus my body is implicated in my every questing act, my body as well as my mind, hence my whole personhood—though obviously in limited ways. In consequence, I apply myself actively, in a physical as well as a mental sense, to rearranging, reconstituting, manipulating, experimenting, or even transforming the object which I would know. For to conceptualize it, I must place it in a variety of experimental contexts, study its reactions to the stimuli to which it is systematically subjected, examine its behaviour. And I must seek to bring that behaviour under natural laws, and to understand it in a systematic, comprehensive way.

Yet every object, and especially the person as an object, exhibits a texture which is infinitely rich and diversified. For most objects, we prescind, for the purpose of rendering our account of its behaviour precise, from much of this texture; we discriminate the pertinent parameters, and systematically inter-connect these into an hierarchical system of laws. At the same time, we attend that object, in order adequately to render its behaviour, with respect to its every detail; and this by every imaginable device of observation, experimentation and construing. To frame a theory about so complex a texture as the person as object, we weave together, systematically, comprehensively, thoroughly, and with precision, every nuance which we may elicit from him in that objective status. In order to study *any* object, one clearly employs a method: one seeks to reveal the object's every aspect, the depths of its composition, its contours and facets. To this end, one refines one's every relevant sense: one amplifies it with all relevant instruments and procedures: one uses manifold descriptive languages and frames of reference. All these

approaches converge upon the object. By them one illuminates that object, draws it out from concealment, allows it to shine forth as what it is. Yet even as mere object the person is so complicated, so subtle, so multi-nuanced that his nature defies definitive conceptualization. At best, a tentative, perhaps only a tenuous theory of that nature can be constructed.

With my body, I explore (to create this theory) other bodies. Methodically, I constitute them into a manifold of objects. Synthesizing an integrated unity by applying the fundamental forms of my understanding to ordering that manifold, I consult with my community so as to possess a corpus of increasingly accurate judgments, so as to interpret those judgments in a way which the community will subsequently vindicate: I build toward truth, goodness and beauty. In the first case, I deal with the object in a cognitive way; in the second, I deal with its utility; in the third, I deal with its harmony. In all instances, I appropriate the object; I allow it to imprint itself upon me, even in some significant way to transform me; I thereby determine the norms of inquiry to which it will henceforth be submitted. Especially—if the object be a person in his objective aspect—I re-determine my own personhood by what I observe about the objective personhood of the other: I re-form my personhood; I turn within myself of scrutinize my very self as object, whether mental or physical; I examine my *own* behaviour.

Yet, unique among objects, the person is also a subject. To reveal his subjective texture, one must engage him as subject. In general, only sight and touch are relevant for the detached experience requisite for *objective* discernment. By these senses, one can remove oneself from the object, rationalize it, experience its changing configurations under a variety of perspectives, seek its constituent invariants amidst a welter of transformations. But to disclose subjectivity, one must engage it with *every* faculty: one must orient oneself toward it empathically; one must confront its interweavings with its *own* associated objectivity (i.e., human mind *with* human body) with one's entire being; one must combine sympathetic attunement with disinterest. Thus totally to engage, one must become aware of oneself as an I which both constitutes the world and (correlatively) its own subjective being: one must locate oneself within a world of persons as a specific person among other specific persons. Likewise, one must become aware of the other as analogously constituting himself. In effect, an interpersonal

field arises, a set of processes which transcend both the objective and its merely enclosed subjective, an enveloping awareness which is somehow larger than one's own self *or* the other's self. For one feels as reverberating within oneself the very being of the other as, likewise, one discerns him to be reverberating within one's own being. To engage the other is to engage him with this special kind of intimacy. It is to feel the beings of each, self and other, as inextricably interwoven with the other, as intimately bound together, as reciprocally constitutive. Each of us is empowered to experience the other as a free end in and for himself: as freely self-determining and creative; as each imprinting itself into the other.

In this process, one becomes aware of oneself and the other as questers after personal knowledge, after what it means to be persons. A field of questing is engendered wherein three moments emerge as complicatedly interwoven—questioning, listening, interpreting; wherein we can discern (albeit as yet obscurely) as indwelling within each of us not only the entire human community but, beyond that, a transpersonal ground which, arising from without us, works its way within and through us. Already, an ontology is beginning to emerge, certain substantive categories for conceptualizing personhood. At first, this ontology is method itself, the method of inquiry of total personal engagement. For the method for studying the person is the person himself in the totality of his self-conscious, self creative, free, and spontaneous acts. A horizon of object-subjects now reveals itself: a community of such entities mutually engaging one another; all disclosing their respective beings to lie, as it were, in the future as forever incomplete, as replete with infinite possibilities for self-actualization, as nonetheless open to their own self-articulation in terms of certain broad categories of ontology, as in the details of that ontology renderable only through specific empirical research. Questing itself has become an ontological category.

4. Postulates of Ontology

(a) Questing³

In the context of its concrete applications, the method for understanding the person emerges (I stress) as the *primary* ontological category, as the very ground for articulating the entire schema for

3. Set forth in *Homo Quaerens: The Seeker and the Sought*.

formally characterizing the human essence. By this method, we engender the fundamental structures, each the locus of a specific kind of empirical content, which persist as invariants amidst the widest possible class of transformations of his substance—that is over the entire range of the human phenomenon. To exhibit this transformation of method into ontology, consider how method interweaves a theoretical, a practical, and an empathic approach to the human.

In its theoretical component, method, enjoins us to discern how each language for describing the person, in focussing upon a single aspect of the human, prescind from other significant aspects. Though its governing principles are defined with respect to particular universes of discourse, they gain their full import from a more inclusive, as yet unarticulated context. In every instance, the underlying intention of these languages is to elicit, under the limitations of a given inquiry, some image of the human *essence*: it is to evoke a particular yet pervasive dimension of man, be it the mechanistic, the communal, or the biological. Each image possessed a momentous kernel of truth. Suitably combined, and their valid content extracted, all express, when integrated over a broad spectrum of formulations, the whole person. Though they may imply disparate frames of reference, they constitute, as a totality, an integral approach to the person in *his* totality.

To *listen* to this totality, and to apprehend it practically in its uniqueness and mystery, one must avoid premature abstraction, determine the special approaches pertinent for *each* ontological category, delimit that category's potential empirical content, and, in every instance, probe each relevant specimen of personhood. Intimately and fully to apprehend the person, one must restrict one's inquiry to a few individuals, confront their absolute singularity, discern the special characteristics which mark them out for distinction in the general class to which they typically belong and, in short, constitute them as worlds in themselves. As paleontologists, we study the details of fossils; as minerologists, of rocks. In each case, such particularity is but a means toward ascertaining general principles. As philosopher of the person, however, we must dwell in sustained ways with each individual as such, wholly for his own sake and as an end in himself, and never use our knowledge of his being solely for the purpose of adducing universal laws. On the other hand, when we so dwell, we enable ourselves in our subsequent reflections to detect those laws as immanently resident within his very particularity.

Inspecting each human, we find our "data" unreliable and tenuous. Characteristic of the person is his power to dupe, his need, erratic but inexorable, to conceal his inner being not only from us as inquirers but even from his own self. Always momentous, this propensity for duplicity is constitutive itself. Moreover, our knowledge of the person is on many other counts undependable hence fallible. Thus, not only must we be circumspect and detached, studying the surfaces of the human—though, granted, with comprehensiveness and under varying perspectives—but, in addition, we must become *participant* observers: we must step into the inter-personal field which envelops us, and links even our *inward* beings; we must involve ourselves with him sympathetically; we must study the processes which unfold between as well as within persons. Insofar as we can, we must free ourselves from bias, empty ourselves of stereotypes and preconception. Engaging the person's totality we must know him empathically as this *particular* mind, as this *particular* body. Above all, we must know him from the inside, feel him as a true *datio* resonating within us, attune ourselves to his very centre, attend to his entire life-story, sustain within ourselves his every weal and woe, fill ourselves with reverence for him even amidst his anguish and his despair.

In effect, we must orient ourselves toward the person novelistically and poetically. As thus apprehended, every man reveals himself, in ways appropriate to his particular developmental stage, as a quester. To be a person is to wonder, to adventure, to embark upon an odyssey: it is to reach out, to engage, to listen, to question, to understand, to interpret, to experience; but it is also to come home again, to probe deep into roots, to dwell in the well-springs of sustenance. Restlessly and dramatically, hence novelistically, the person seeks; lyrically and poetically, he sings forth the melodies of his being. Mysterious, multi-faceted, ever-changing, every person struggles, however abortedly and with whatever risings and fallings, toward his own truth. An Eliot, a Hardy, a Tolstoy, a Yeats, a Donne, indeed a Rembrandt or a Beethoven, all apprehend, each in his unique way, some hitherto concealed dimension of humankind each specifies the human dance in his ingenious fashion.

To know a person is thus to reveal him *as* knower—not in the manner of behaviouristic psychology, which expresses his being as passive and inert and as a bundle of behaviors and mere reactions, but rather as a power of giving and acting, a power of growing and

transcending, a power of submitting to every kind of humiliation and of ascending toward a redemptive acquiescence. By his very essence, the person quests in many forms and guises. In order to quest, the inquirer alternately attaches himself to and detaches himself from the sought "object." By a dialectic of sympathy and circumspection, of passionately engaging and dispassionately observing, he probes its content; he modifies and revises and transforms those schemata. Characteristically, he even quests after what it means to be a quester. By these acts, he reaches out and embraces: he listens, interrogates, and interprets. Dialectically unfolding, these phases of questing confer upon life the quality of grand adventure within which, in some measure, every person participates. Apprehending the interwovenness of his own being with the being of that after which he quests, he allows each so to impinge upon the other as to alter and even metamorphose it; he declares himself chief paradigm for understanding (by extrapolation) all creatures; he constitutes the ontology of the human a metaphor for conceiving ontology in general. In this context, the quester apprehends himself as power of both giving and receiving and as locus of immanent coherence of the seemingly dis-integrated parts of his being—and, despite his ever falling into new fragmentation, as never ceasing to aim at transcending his own natural limits.

(b) *Inwardness and Rhythm*⁴

As quester, the person is both subject and object, psychic inwardness and bodily rhythm. In itself autonomous, each sphere discloses itself *sui generis* as a relatively enduring configuration of traits which constitutes a world to be explored. Yet, when sufficiently probed, each requires the other for its complete formulation. Complementary though antithetical, oppositional though mutually presupposing, each subsumes the other; and both are over-arched by a more inclusive "substance"—by that evolving activity which *is* the person. When independently construed, mind and body, inwardness and rhythm, are agencies and, as such, potencies-in-act. As sheer potency, these agencies are united as a single action; the person is an indivisible datum, or, more accurately, a *datio*, which must be apprehended in its own terms. But as actual, inwardness and rhythm are disparate and self-contained. Complex manifolds of activity, these spheres form a

4. Set forth in *The Dance of Being: Man's Labyrinthine Rhythms and Choros: The Orchestrating Self*.

correlative pair, an epistemic unity. In this respect, they, together with their underlying action, are observable, each in its manner. Consensual as involving the co-acting of all human faculties, such observation requires a total engaging by the questing person. In its literal meaning, "ob-servare" suggests a watching over, a heeding, a safe-guarding or preserving. In this sense, one can specify a mode of observation for each activity, mind, body and their grounding matrix. Neither inwardness nor rhythm is ever passive and inert. As springing forth from sheer personal activity, each derives its active status from that ground. Each dwells amidst, and gains its sustenance from, a community of its own kind: mind among other minds, body among other bodies. Each is a process, an unfolding, a generativity. As thus emerging, each is lived and enjoyed. Yet, when conceived as wholly severed from its originating ground, each constitutes but a limit, an ideal pole of that matrix. When so disconnected, each is a myth, a mere abstraction from full, concrete human actuality.

By the self-correcting, self-emending method of inquiry into the person, I at first encounter, in my both mental and physical being, a bare object, the human body as a behavioural complex of simply observable phenomena. Yet as I inquire, hence as the very method becomes ontologized, this mere body is disclosed to be a vast assemblage of rhythms, a complicated system of interwoven pulses of varying grades of coarseness and refinement. Comprised of rhythmic themes inscribed upon invariant patterns which themselves are deeperlying rhythms, this system reveals, the more one probes it, cycles unfolding within cycles and cycles enclosing cycles: periodic processes which, though essentially corporeal, manifest, in their more subtle components, a mental character which itself is labyrinthine and self-transforming. Objectivity *itself* is converted from a manifold of myriad natural factors naturalistically construed into an intangible, even an ineffable ferment which, while portending something beyond the natural, is nonetheless linked to the natural. In an intricate dialectic, these rhythms of the natural interact and interpenetrate, and shape ever new dimensions of the human. Rhythm as such emerges as an ontological category.

Dwelling with his own natural rhythms, so intermeshed with other rhythmic systems, the person becomes fully absorbed with his body. In any athletic activity, I am consumed by sheer physicality: I am ecstatically mindless. Even my transitory thoughts, at such times, are

woven with my body's substance. No part of my physical being fails to subordinate itself to this wholly physical enterprise. Mind is completely mobilized for body's purposes. Effectively it *becomes* body. Experiencing the drama of a purely corporeal synchronicity, each bodily unit pulses with its own beat, metabolizes with its own cycle. Seemingly, the entire person *is* his body. Yet, animated by mind just as, conversely, mind unfolds as body incarnate, the mental never ceases to imprint itself upon every physical region. Inwardness can be read through gesture, inflection, gait, physiognomy; it is encoded upon each organ and cell. Being alive, every bodily part, moreover, adds some element to body's overall mental aspect, helps to shape a corporeal firmament. From this standpoint, the human body is a vast congealing of diverse minuscule mental components. Indelibly, each physical minutiae both receives mind and, in its modest way, contributes to mind. And through its intentionality, mind as a whole engenders all bodily tensions: it hovers about the body, it directs its every act. Some mental factor mediates the passage of each bodily state into another—not, however, as chronologically interposed but, rather, as compresent medium, as all-suffusing, all-pervading aura. Mental depression lowers the body's vitality; mental anguish wreaks destruction upon its tissues. Psychosomatic medicine itself, as Hippocrates well understood, attests to mind's power over body, to the ineluctable reverberations of body with mind.

The more I discern the rhythmic composition of my own body and employ that body as the very instrument of such discernment and refine my powers for imaginative discrimination—hence perfect the method of inquiry itself—the more profoundly aware I become of inwardness *itself* as constitutive of human being. Yet inwardness but complements rhythm. Each presupposes the other as a correlative aspect of personhood; each dynamically implicates the other. Though both inwardness and rhythm are relatively autonomous in their distinctive *modi operandi*, each, when sufficiently explored, leads the inquirer toward the conceptualization of the other. As he discerns the rhythmic character of the human body, the quester's own inwardness presents itself as woven of differing grades of consciousness and unconsciousness, as constituted by an original synthesizing ego and, as well, by the entire indwelling human community, and as self-transforming through the dialectical interplay of this ego with this community. In this process, an infinitely rich abyss of feeling, imagination, sensation and thought is generated—a realm of being which unfolds by its own

laws and, thereby evolving, discloses ever new depth, ever new wealth of detail. Itself an ontological category, inwardness consists of an intricate labyrinth of psychic activity which, in the end, is inseparable from the cavernous ferment of the body's intermeshed rhythms. Jointly, such activity and such ferment portend a single grounding substance of which both inwardness and rhythm are but aspects and manifestations.

Still, inwardness exhibits its own autonomy. Complex and variegated, it is "observable" through either introspection or empathy. As such, it reveals itself to be constituted by the flow, and continual interpenetration, of thoughts, sensations, feelings and volitions. Mind seizes me, possesses me, overwhelms me, fills me, dominates me. As I commit myself to each mental element, and adequately entertain it as idea, I become exalted, and even transformed. For mind is nothing but an assemblage of ideas which press for coherence and unity. Truly to be reflective is not merely to mirror truth. On the contrary, it is to be swept over by and immersed within ideas which spontaneously unfold. Woven of communings, since every mind is embedded within other minds, mind spreads throughout the universe as a Teilhardian noosphere, layered as a self-sufficient network upon both lithosphere and biosphere. Yet no mental act ever fails to presuppose some bodily act. I see *with* my eyes, hear *with* my ears, put my whole bodily being into my every mental act. Thus thinking with my body, I experience no single thought to be disaffiliated from that body. In my mind's very inwardness, my corporeality is a relentless presence: my body affects and grounds my mind, and even transforms it. When I become bodyless (as it were) with thought, and my body becomes attenuated and even in a sense etherealized, it never completely absences itself. For every subject implies, from within its very subjectivity, its own associated body *as* that body is affected by other bodies. My very emotions are set in motion by the impact of those bodies. Hence my body mediates the passage of each mental state into another—not as chronologically interposed but, just as the converse proposition holds when mind is body's mediating agency—as always compresent. Mental states do not succeed one another in any ordinary temporal sense. On the contrary, each blends into each: all intermingle and interpenetrate. Just as hitherto mind had insinuated itself into body, so now body insinuates itself into mind—in each instance, out of time. Though my mind is an abyss of inwardness, so that I can journey endlessly amidst my inner imagery, and

indeed within the very indwelling community, I can never wholly disconnect my mind from my body which, however subtly, both invades it and controls its movements.

Though mind mediates bodily transitions and body mental transitions, neither factor cause the other. Often at odds, they are mutually presupposing and reciprocally grounding. Jointly, they manifest but one substance, integral and unified; they are aspects of a single indiscernible action. Within this process, rhythm and inwardness are but focal regions: human physiology and physiological psychology, on the one hand, and psychoanalysis and the various depth psychologies, on the other, are empirical disciplines which pertain to these regions; extrospective detachment and introspective attachment are the coordinate moments whereby one may penetrate their concrete togetherness. Under the perspectives of mind and body, we grasp this action as merely formal and abstract. Only by framing a human ontogeny may we chronologically apprehend, in its specific reality, the human essence; and this material genesis may itself only be understood by reference to the identity of mind and body in spirit, as the articulation of their unity in a dialectic of symbols. In the context of the progressions and regressions of his actual development, man seeks to arrest time, to transfigure himself, to affirm the oneness of his being. In spirit, he quests after the veridical union of mind with body; by participating within his symbolic creations, he both shapes and knows his own integrity. A material unfolding, human being is, at the same time, atemporal and symbolic. By reference to this dual character, the person will, in the end, achieve a sense of himself as both communal and solitary, and find his redemption by wholly yielding himself to the grand cosmic rhythms.

(c) *Growth and Transcendence*⁵

To re-think the unity of the person—that is, the activity of reflecting wherein the person as mirror is pure subjectivity and the person as mirrored is pure objectivity—the quester must grasp that unity as both a self-temporalizing activity and an activity of transfixing time. In human growth, space is (so to speak) fixed as time changes; in human transcendence, space spreads variably whereas

5. Set forth in *Metamorphosis: The Odyssey of the Self* and *Apotheosis: The Divinizing Self*.

time is fixed. Coordinate and complementary, these processes further concretize the human substance. Articulating their empirical ramifications (as narrowly construed), the disciplines of developmental psychology and the psychology of creativity must be included within a broader, more experiential approach. The philosophic ground for human growth and human transcendence requires its own formulation.

Neither inwardness nor rhythm can be understood in a static way. Each is pure activity. By my rhythms, I transcend my every bodily act; I become self-consciously reflective. By my inwardness, I incorporate those rhythms into my every mental act; I receive the impact of my brute body. Each, my body and my mind, reaches beyond itself both to comprehend and to subsume other minds and other bodies. In both its physical and its spiritual dimensions, the world as a whole impinges upon me, and alters my whole being. In this process, I grow, I mature, I individuate myself. What in earlier phases of my development had been merely germinal tendencies now become, in every succeeding phase, explicit and actual. Throughout my being there reverberates an incessant thrust toward personal metamorphosis, though in each phase a particular world-orientation dominates, in all phases several such orientations are woven together to constitute me into a many-sided creature. Side by side, vestiges of my past cohere with anticipatory traces of what is yet to emerge. Always, all parts of my being are in some way contemporaneous. Yet my very consciousness never ceases to evolve. What had been simply unconscious advances, so to speak, to become integrated within an exuberantly expanding, a multiplex, an ever self-clarifying awareness. The dance of my being becomes orchestrated into ever new steps, undergoes a transfiguring choreography. Gradually, hitherto concealed yet omnipresent conditioning factors come to function as the potent ground for new aspiration, for new experiment, for new envisagement. Still, even as I progress, I regress: I step back and forth within the time of my own existence. Becoming embedded in that past as it continues (often insidiously) to dwell within my actual present, I dissociate potent, liberating aspects of my being. Yet I am empowered to re-integrate those aspects, to expand my horizons, to step forth optimistically into my own future. Ontogenesis as dialectically conceived human growth has become an ontological category.

In this process, the person reveals himself as an energetic activity of mind-body resonances. On increasingly concrete levels of integra-

tion, human growth mirrors the coherence of questing itself. All ontogenetic phases co-exist in varying proportions, and with differing modes of balance. Now one function crystallizes as dominant, now another recedes: there is continual emergence and submergence; foreground and background ever alternate. In a single conation, the urge of *body moved by mind*, and of *mind moved by body* coalesce, and unite their separate forces. A fluent, pulsing, fermenting complexus of contemporary phases prevails. In a dual compresence, the correlative series, mind and body, undergo their coordinate ontogenesis. With dialectical movement, the harmonies shift, disengage, re-equilibrate. At once, the person presents himself as simple and complex, as unified and disunified, as fragmented and integrated.

In every developmental stage, from my birth to my death, I aim at transcendence. By degrees, I advance toward knowledge of the true, the good, the beautiful. In interwoven symbols, I represent to myself, as it incessantly haunts me, each newly disclosed grand human mystery; I aspire to comprehend that mystery, to articulate it, somehow to participate in it. And so I fashion the myriad symbols by which I create and recreate my own being; and so I soar, it seems to me, toward some miraculous realm of the transcendental. Yet I am continually thrust back upon my own natural needs and inclinations; and to gratify them I am inexorably led into the mires of self-alienation and diabolism. In contradistinction to my questing acts, I am ever tempted to become the anti-quester. As the very condition for my questing, I may even embrace the antithesis of questing. An accentuated fragmentation often precedes a durable integration; and no integration lasts indefinitely. Instead of seeking truth, goodness and beauty, I accordingly wallow, by my own choice, in deceit, evil and ugliness, and in all their manifold shapes. By pseudo-symbols, I represent these equally human states to myself, states which are perhaps more elusive, perhaps more subtle than their positive counterparts. In sanctimonious guise, I celebrate and even hallow them. Hypocrisy pertains to the human as much as authenticity; and often the latter is but a way of naming the former. Hence, symbols alternate with diabolos, the quest for the demoniacal with the quest for the divine. All these forms, and mal-forms, of human yearning are interwoven in strange fashion. Whether by the sacred route or by the profane route, the human is striving, in each instance, to embrace the uncanny, to lift himself out of the banal, to glow with an iridescence which is unnatural. Such transfiguration—human transcendence—constitutes an ontological category.

(d) *Community and Redemption*⁶

Immanent within this expanding network of symbols and diabol is a whole world, bare and empty, which only gradually emerges as articulated and concrete. Not only does the network manifest cosmic being but also it expresses human being. By the symbol, subject is joined to object, fragmentary parts to unity, past, present and future to timeless eternity. Through this treble unification an ontology arises which mirrors human ontology. Yet, by the diabol, disunification equally afflicts the world and the person. Symbols create the one, diabol the many. Every person dwells within the communities envisaged by symbolism; every person dwells with that dismemberment which results from diabolism. Internal relationships of empathy shape community, external relationships of constraint break community. By his own activity, the person can self-consciously inhabit the cosmos—always questing, always participating. Knowing, by that activity, solitude amidst community, he can achieve his salvation and his redemption. But insofar as he falls away from that quest, and from that participation, he denies himself his earthly blessedness. Within every person a battle rages between the divine and the demoniacal. From an empirical point of view, such disciplines as social psychology and the psychology of religion treat man's social aspect and his salvational aspect.

Each schema of symbols or diabol is engendered in accordance with some set of rules. Expressions of a variegated human creativity, these rules cohere as manifesting an underlying world pattern—a pattern which, granted, is infinitely complex and inexhaustible in its details. Not merely formal, abstract and universal, this pattern is, on the contrary, concrete, particular and substantive. Within a cosmic perspective, the person is chief paradigm for conceiving—under the ontological rubrics of questing, rhythm, inwardness, growth and transcendence—the world as a totality, a world which though often inchoate and even chaotic is somehow ordered and connected. To conceive this whole, we must conceive the person as its exemplary microcosm. As such, he must always be understood in his character as referred to the most inclusive imaginable context. By this context, his very personhood is defined. Within it, that personhood constitutes

6. To be set forth in *Cosmos: The Crucible of Man and The Person: A Cosmic Perspective*.

an absolutely singular region, the locus of a whole world of *internal* occurrences, a relatively invariant pattern of relationships which itself is a variable component within some over-arching invariant cosmic theme. Constitutive of his being under the perspective of his own specific mode of finitude, this maximal context is the crucible within which man is fashioned. And, in general, the architectures of person and cosmos mirror each other in a way which is dynamic and dialectical. Correlative and mutually presupposing notions, person and cosmos require one another for their reciprocal understanding. Now microcosm and community itself, emerges as an additional ontological category.

In human transcendence, we strive for immortality by creating replica of our beings as spirits incarnate, as bits of matter etherealized. Through numerous artifices, we shape durable images of ourselves: we aim at self-completion in tangible ways. Creating whole new worlds—each an organic unity, each a non-natural extrapolation from the natural—we immerse ourselves therein in our quests for personal renewal. Equally, we destroy, break up, and pulverize. Whether through symbols or diabolos, we leap out of ourselves into charisma and ecstasy. Generating entirely new forms of reality, we transfigure our being; by opening ourselves, through those forms, to a cosmos already immanent within our first groping acts; we move ever outward into more inclusive communities, ever inward into the solitude of redemption.

In questing after human being, we ineluctably quest into an object which itself is empowered to quest into me (the quester) as *its* object. No human as such is ever mere datum, passive and inert. On the contrary, he is always a veridical *datio*, a reaching out and a going toward. Every questing act is suffused with elements of another's questing act: each act is a *datio-cum-datio*, a reciprocity of givings; no person is isolatable from a society of questers which dwells potently within him. By his most distinctive trait, the person *is* this activity. Unlike natural science, in which we extract, and systematically conceptualize, the purely reactive component of activity, we deal, in a philosophy of the person, with schemes of mutuality with respect to self-initiated activity. Metaphysically, perhaps, I can apply this "act-act" model to the whole of nature, regarding her after the image of the human, imputing to her teleology and freedom. But even if valid, such a presumption can only be justified in the context of a detailed working

through of the specifically human way of being. To conceptualize this way, I must approach the person practically, and not merely theoretically. Apprehending him as agent, I must inquire into the impact upon him, as he quests, of another like agent, and yet another. The locus of my search must become the entire community of agents—each dynamically implicated with the other, each a potential quester—under the perspective of the particular agent within whom they are operative, and through whom they announce *their* questing intentions.

Tracing out the details of a philosophic cosmology, one may adduce the person himself as both recipient from a larger being and donor to himself, through the mediation of that being, of specific acts of redemption. In some mysterious way both free and determined, both risen and fallen, both near-angel and near-brute, man is trapped in an endless spiral of questing and anti-questing. The ontological categories just set forth, including that of community, interweave, and issue in a final category, redemption, the formulation of which is beyond the purview of philosophy itself. Now a context emerges in which the holy can be acknowledged but not articulated as calling forth attitudes of prayer, sanctity and reverence rather than rational deliberation. Philosophy has transcended itself. Yet as a category, redemption *itself* is subject to further inquiry. By investigating its implications, the investigator himself, his very personhood, becomes ontologically problematic. The postulates of ontology must again be scrutinized, re-thought, perhaps even abandoned in favour of newly constituted postulates. Like the person himself, human ontology must be conceived as fluid, dynamic, ever-changing, ever-evolving.

A Personal Note

By my interaction with the world, when I fully give myself to it, I enhance my existence, I participate with cosmic rhythms, I lift myself out of ego-centricity toward deo-centricity, I continually reformulate my being in conjunction with world-being, I attain an ecstasy of blessedness. Through a reason construed as passionate reflection, and a continuing act of faith, I engender those ontologic structures which articulate both my-being and world-being. As culmination of this process, I spontaneously shape, with compassionate openness and constant self-renewal, my redemptive possibilities.