

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

RELIGION IN THE INTERPRETATION OF EXPERIENCE

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INTRODUCTION / ABSTRACT

This dissertation initially grew out of a pre-occupation with the epistemological status of substantive religious beliefs. Its narrowly linguistic beginnings were soon broadened, however, for it became clear from the comparative study of religion that commitment to a tradition is an important part of discovering its veracity. In other words, it is through being linked in some way to the activities of a religious group that the truth of its doctrines are tested. This being so, the question of the epistemological status of substantive religious beliefs was seen to be linked to valuative considerations. The decision whether and in what way to be linked to the activities of a religious group in order to test its views is itself a valuative one. A pre-occupation with the epistemological status of religious beliefs gave way therefore to a more general pre-occupation with the relationship between value and "fact".

At this point the investigation took what may be considered a peculiar turn for one concerned primarily with religion. It moved into the area of systems and information theory and into those areas of the human sciences in which an attempt is made to apply systems and information theoretic ideas, the reason being that the links between the way human beings value and the way they see the world seem to be most clearly conceived in these areas. Particularly significant is the extent to which it is becoming clear that human beings structure their "fact-gathering" in accordance with the informational requirements of goals. This does not mean that facts, in some sense or other, are value-laden, but only that the selection of facts will show valuative influences. While investigations influenced by systems and information concerns are clear on the relationship of information gathering to goal-directed activity, they are not however clear on the processes which may underlie the development of those goals.

Since the predominant concern has been with the relationship between value and fact it became necessary to go beyond existing

kinds of analysis to the development of a view of the way in which values underlie the acquisition of goals. This had the consequence of opening up a way for the ideas generated in systems and information research to be applied to the interpretation of religion. Thus, the end product of a pre-occupation first with the epistemological status of substantive religious beliefs and second with the relationship between value and fact, was the development of a theory of religion i.e. of an account of the features in human nature which give rise to religion and which make human beings religious at both individual and social levels. It is a highly speculative and theoretical account and, though some leads in this regard have been given in the texts and in footnotes, its application to religious studies in the field remains to be worked out.

The body of the dissertation is divided into three sections. In the first the discipline of religious studies is introduced and I argue for the importance of the development of an understanding of religion which traces it to at least a factor in human nature. Since this is an empirical problem I set the study of human nature within what I consider to be its general scientific context. The systems approach to the study of human nature is then introduced, having been chosen for the clarity with which it links information gathering to goal-directed activity. This brings to a close the first section. The significance of the systems approach for understanding religion may not at this point be very clear. The purpose of the first section, however, is only to introduce that general approach to the investigation and interpretation of religion which will follow.

In the second section the theoretical underpinnings for the theory of religion are developed. A system of concepts in terms of which all human activity is shown to be value-based is defined and explained. It builds on the systems and information theoretic approach to the study of man, but presses this approach further by the development of a scheme which links the acquisition of goals to underlying values. This opens the way to the application of these ideas to the interpretation of religion, a task carried out in the third section.

In the third section a notion of what it is for an individual to be religious is developed in terms of the foundations laid in the first, and second sections. Religious activity is seen to arise out of the operation in the individual of the valuing process at its most comprehensive. This understanding is then used to explore what the emergence of religion at a social level must involve. Since communication is so central to the operation of religion at a social level the dissertation comes full circle and links back to the pre-occupation which was its initial stimulus i.e. that of the status of substantive religious beliefs. This, however, is only one of the issues which it resolves. The value of the overall approach emerges by the clarity with which it links religious activity to other areas of human endeavour, religious experience to other areas of human experience, and religious discourse to other areas of human discourse.

Throughout the dissertation use has been made of areas of thought in which many problems are still far from resolved. These areas, incomplete as they may be, have been pressed into service as providing the theoretical underpinnings of my view of religion. Clearly, there are critical intellectual dangers here for it might be argued that an attempt has been made to develop an understanding of religion on the basis of foundations which are still too insecure to support such an attempt. I have tried throughout, however, to leave the unresolved theoretical problems as open as they need to be for my final position to stand irrespective of how they may be resolved. The predominant consideration in the adoption of an approach was the promise it held out for understanding religion. If it has been justified its justifiability will be shown therefore in its fruitfulness in the interpretation of religion, in its power to make interpretable that which has been but vaguely interpreted in the past.

Section A: Preliminary Considerations

The subject of this dissertation is religion. However, my approach has necessitated the use of areas of thought not usually associated with that subject. The purpose of section A is to introduce these areas in order both to establish their relevance and to lay the foundation for the further development of my approach.

Chapter 1: The Study of Religion

Religious studies at the present time involves a confusing array of unco-ordinated orientations, these being determined partly as a function of the different attitudes of those who study religion. But for all this manifest variety the study of religion can be resolved into a few basic tasks. At one level it is an attempt to set out what is involved in a particular system designated as religious. At a more fundamental level, however, it seeks to answer two questions:

- (i) What are to be counted amongst religious phenomena;
- (ii) What from amongst the phenomena available as alternatives, are the best.

Attempts to answer the second question have done much to generate the histories of religious traditions. But it is the first which is obviously crucial to religious studies as a whole.

What then are to count as religious phenomena? An uncritical solution to the problem is to see as religious all the things which are so designated in common parlance. However, while common parlance is adequate for most everyday purposes, it is both too unsystematic and too uncritical for this purpose. Accordingly I shall fix immediately upon what I consider to be the two most characteristic and most important ways in which the word "religion" is used. They are what I will call the institutional and the philosophical uses.

1.1 Religion: The Institutional and Philosophical Senses

The institutional use of the word "religion" occurs relative to certain existing institutional forms e.g. books and buildings, beliefs and behaviours. This is a result of the fact that these institutions are seen to be the contemporary representatives of religious traditions. A common understanding seems to govern what are designated as religious traditions. It is with regard to these institutions that most people foreign to the study of religion understand the word. It is also mostly these institutions which supply the model for what is counted as religious in most empirical studies of religion.

In the philosophic sense of the word on the other hand, "religion" is used when reference is made to dimensions of ultimacy in human experience. Religion is seen to arise as a response to these dimensions, as something which both provides them with intelligibility and exercises a motivational force governing life as a whole. This use of "religion" is found mostly when attempts are being made to say what religion really is or ought to be. It is found in the less empirical and more theoretical studies.

The link between the two uses of the word lies in the inspiration of certain great individuals. These individuals, the religious geniuses of ages past, some remembered and some forgotten, are what provided the impetus to the development of the institutional traditions. At the same time their legacies and those of their followers are seen to have contained that which satisfies the philosophically defined functions of religion. Accordingly, it is a characteristic claim of the institutional traditions that they fulfil the ideally defined functions of religion. They claim to be able to provide their adherents with a sense of the meaning of life and tend, in addition, to be exclusivist in their claims.

In recent times, however, especially in the West, institutional religion has come in for much critical attack. At a socio-political level it has been denounced as that which, far from being the thing which gives concrete expression to man's highest aspirations, is used by the powers that be to maintain the status quo or even to enslave the free. At an intellectual level the beliefs for which it stands have been declared void of meaning. Unfortunately, while institutional religion does exhibit many critical failings, many critics of religion have made the mistake of using this fact as sufficient grounds for the denunciation of religion as a whole. The proper conclusion, however, is simply that there are discrepancies between what religion ought to be and what the institutional religions actually are. Religion, in the philosophically defined sense of the word, may or may not find fulfilment in institutional contexts. In the latter case, individuals are likely to emerge in whom the resolution of philosophically defined religious problems is carried out more or less independently of religious institutions. Such individuals may be heirs to their tradition to the extent that they will have absorbed some of what

it has to offer, but they are often highly critical of its concrete institutional forms. When this happens a disjunction occurs between the evolution of religion as the continuing saga of man's attempt to articulate his highest values, and institutional religion as the context in which this saga is supposed to be played out. It is one thing to be able to trace a material connection back to some genuinely religious root, but another to provide adequate contemporary representations of the inspiration for which those roots stand. It may even be that the inspiration itself is no longer adequate or adaptable to the needs of the situation. Thus, while religious institutions may claim to be the spiritual heirs of their tradition, at many times in the history of the traditions they have been no more than formal heirs. At such times it is one thing to say what religion is ideally but quite another to say what it is by reference to the character and functions of religious institutions.

1.2 The Necessity for tracing Religion to Human Nature

While institutions come and go religion, in the above philosophical sense of the word, persists. Accordingly there persistently exist phenomena which are susceptible to interpretation as religious, sometimes inside and sometimes outside of religious institutions. The cause of this state of affairs is to be found in the concrete processes by which institutions lose touch with the inspirations which gave them their original significance. This in its turn is traceable to the dynamic inter-relationship of three things:

- (i) the nature of religion in its philosophical sense as an essentially individual human phenomenon;
- (ii) the nature of the institution as a corporate human phenomenon;
- (iii) the cumulative effect of ongoing history upon both individuals and institutional groups.

Religious institutions are critically affected by history for it is their claim to be able to put all of human experience into some kind of perspective. But while history as it unfolds has a way of adding ever new dimensions to human experience, institutions have a tendency to persist in their present course. Thus, while the historical situation may suggest that a re-articulation of values is needed, institutions tend

to resist such re-articulation. Eventually a point is reached where the religion, as institutionalized, is felt to be an inadequate expression of the valuative demands of the situation. These feelings have concrete loci in individual human beings. It is when human beings cease to discover in religious institutions an adequate articulation of their valuative dispositions that they leave the institution or seek to change it. In situations in which feelings are widespread it is valuatively articulate individuals who become the spearhead of change.

If religion is to be understood at all as having the significance which it claims for itself, then it must be understood at least as a permanent possible function of human nature, stronger in some than in others, more articulate in some than in others. If its social role is to be understood then the relationship between the religious individual and the society of which he is a part must be understood. It is with the investigation of these topics that the rest of this dissertation deals.

Chapter 2: Hierarchy in the Sciences

The system of scientific knowledge can and has been seen as forming a hierarchy e.g. Physics - Chemistry - Biology.¹ Such an arrangement is informed by a perception of hierarchical levels of organization with regard to the things in the world e.g. Atoms - Molecules - Organisms. It is sometimes difficult to legislate relative to entities on the borders of these levels. For instance, it is a matter of debate whether or not to regard the virus as a living organism. Nevertheless, there is general enough agreement with regard to the place of most things for hierarchical categories of the above sort to be meaningful.

In the human and life sciences an obvious hierarchy suggests itself i.e. Physiology - Psychology - Sociology - Ecology. At the physiological level the human being is investigated as a physically bounded entity incorporating a set of sub-systems which carry out material intercourse with each other and with the environment and in so doing provide the biological platform of life. At the psychological level that same human being is investigated but with greater attention being paid to certain specialized functions such as its ability to feel, value, think, and communicate. At the sociological level groups of such valuing, feeling, thinking, and communicating individuals are investigated. The ecological level then returns to the investigation of material links between human beings and their environment but now at corporate and not simply at individual levels.

Such a hierarchy makes good sense intuitively, yet when the various human and life sciences are surveyed they appear singularly incapable of coming to terms with one another. On the one hand there are socio-biologists who argue that all socio-cultural functions are reducible to genetic functions, on the other there is a tendency amongst sociologists to see the human being solely as a socio-culturally and environmentally determined product.

Such level-parochialism is not healthy science and there are signs that it is beginning to break down. Specifically a unifying perspective seems to be developing through the attempt to apply systems theoretic,

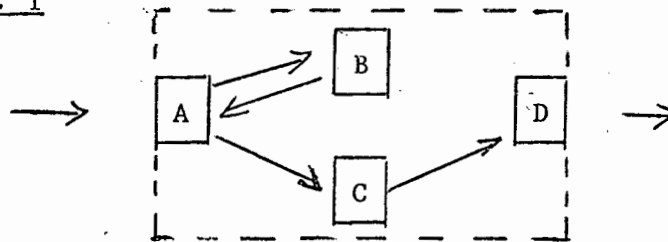
information theoretic, and cybernetic principles to all aspects of the study of man.

Religion as a function of human nature is certainly bound up with psychological and sociological processes. This dissertation, however, takes seriously as one of its points of departure, the commitment to achieving a unified perspective in the human and life sciences. Thus, religion while principally viewed here from the psychological and sociological points of view, is seen as nested between the physiological and ecological levels. It is therefore important that a workable notion of the relationship between these different interpretative levels be outlined. Such a notion will be presented in simplified systems-theoretic terms.

2.1 The Relation between Levels of Interpretation

In systems theoretic terms a scientific study of any system involves the analysis of inputs to and outputs from sub-ordinate units within the system. Since some of these units exist at the interface between the system and its environment this analysis also involves explication of environmental inputs into the system and outputs from the system into the environment. Within the system any behaviour is input and output simultaneously. It is output from a sub-ordinate unit when considered as the activity of that unit, but is simultaneously input when considered as acting upon another sub-ordinate unit. A simple diagram illustrates the situation:

Fig. 1



(A,B,C,D) is the set of sub-ordinate units in the system. Arrows indicate that output-input relations exist between some of these. A and D are boundary elements, the former receiving input from the environment and the latter generating output into the environment. In simple terms, what we are doing is naming units and describing their interrelations. But what simple terms obscure, this abstract generalization makes clear i.e. that strictly speaking the sub-ordinate units are treated as having an inscrutable interior. In a phrase made notorious by psychologists, they

are treated as black boxes.

It is a classic confusion to think of names as somehow getting at the interior or essence of the thing named. By the use of names in describing the sub-ordinate units of a system an illusion of understanding their interiors may be created. In fact, however, to the extent that names are descriptive of the thing named, what they usually fix upon is some primary behaviour or output by which the thing named can be recognized.

The systems theoretic model shows then that at each level of systems analysis there are sub-ordinate units which are treated as black boxes. What counts is to be able to give the input-output relations between these units as functions of one another so that the overall behaviour of the system can be predicted as a function of its environmental inputs and its internal states.

We are now in a position to see in a general way how the different levels of interpretation in the human sciences are inter-related. I shall use the case of physiology and psychology to illustrate this relationship.

C.E. Osgood has characterized an aspect of the psychological endeavour as follows:

"Psychologists ... limit themselves to observing what goes into the organism (stimuli) and what comes out (responses)."₂

This sounds like a classic statement of the S-R approach, notorious for its treatment of the human being as inscrutable. However, he qualifies it when he writes:

"...psychological theory, as distinct from psychological observations, is made up of hunches about what goes on in the little black box."₃

He goes on to suggest that these theories are selected from among neuro-physiological alternatives.₄

Osgood could have qualified his general statements above by pointing out that psychologists have an interest in a particular set of inputs and outputs, namely, those thought to have something to do with human emotions, motivations, and thought. In any case, if we now revert to Fig.1 we could see it as a very abstract characterization of the human being. A and D are boundary elements (eyes, skin, etc.) while B and C are sub-systems within the interior (brain, liver, etc.) The input at A is representative of all the forces from the environment which impinge upon the human being, while the output at D represents all the responses by which the human being impinges upon the environment. In terms of the way Osgood writes about psychology it is sub-sets of these two sets of forces in which the psychologist is interested as data. But in order to understand the relationship between these periphery phenomena, psychologists posit internal structures and their interrelations as underlying what is observed. The exterior, whatever it be, is taken to be a pointer to the character of the interior, however that be conceived. In the diagram these possibilities are represented by the sub-systems B and C.

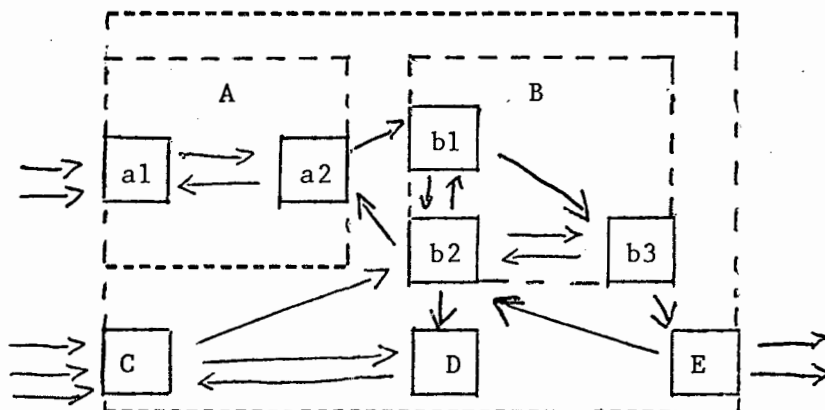
Now, physiologists are interested in exactly the same system, namely, the human being, but their emphasis is less on that system as an emotional, motivated and thinking entity, and more on it as something involved in exchanges of matter-energy within itself and with its environment. Thus, while the psychologist may be interested in output as an expression of, for example, emotional needs, the physiologist's interest is more likely to centre on the chain of energy exchanges and transformations by which the human being is enabled to generate that output in the first place.

For all their different emphases, however, there is one point at least at which physiology and psychology are not only complementary as in the above example, but overlap. It has to do with the processes of perception and with the way in which the resultant information is organized in the guidance of action. Perception is a physiological process and perceptual inputs are measurable in matter-energy terms. But it is also a psychological process whose inputs are describable in terms of their interpretative significance or meaning. Moreover, the transmission of percepts as a physiological process has been found to relate not simply to the human being as a biological entity, but to that being as an emotional,

motivated, and thinking entity.

Now, if science as a system of knowledge is to be coherent, then there must be recognizable links between the different levels of theoretic language when they share a common interest. In the case of physiology and psychology, perceptual inputs constitute an area of overlap. Thus, while the terms by which these two disciplines describe certain inputs may differ, they should be recognizable as different descriptions of the same thing in the areas of overlap. When interpretation is carried beyond the point of common inputs, however, the two disciplines begin to differ more manifestly in their approach. The one theorizes about the interior on the basis of inputs and outputs at the boundary, while the other actively dissects that interior. This difference manifests itself as a difference of level and detail when the structures of the two posited interiors are compared. It is not arbitrary but is related to the way in which the subject matter affects the method. Emotions, part of the subject-matter of psychology, simply are not amenable to dissection in the same way that bodies are. Nevertheless, a commitment to the coherence of theory still requires that the different descriptions be recognizable as descriptive of the same thing. As we shall see, in the case of the psychology of perception and action, there are such recognizable links with physiology.

A revised and slightly more elaborate systems diagram will help to make the situation clearer:



Much of what is contained in this diagram is purely arbitrary, but it can still be used to make the general point. The dotted line enclosing the set of sub-systems = (A,B,C,D,E), indicates that these sub-systems are all considered to be part of a larger system, the human being. Input to

the human being is marked as occurring at A and at C, outputs at E. The sub-systems B and D occur as parts of the interior of the human being. Further, the sub-systems A and B are sub-divided for illustrative purposes into further sets of sub-systems. $A = (a_1, a_2)$ and $B = (b_1, b_2, b_3)$.

Now, of all the inputs into the human being, physiology and psychology share a common interest in at least those having to do with perception. With reference to the diagram we may as well consider these as represented by the inputs at A. The inputs at C can then be regarded as all that which is of interest to physiologists but not to psychologists.

Output is shown as occurring at E. As with input, the representation of output is dual, indicative of the fact that while it may come from the same sub-system the significance of output will differ according as the level of interpretation differs. For instance, while the physiologist may be interested in the output in terms of its measure of the human being's ability to do work, the psychologist may be interested in the same output as expressive of the desire to implement certain goals.

Returning to the points of input, specifically those at A, we see that a path can be traced from the point of input through various sub-systems to the point of output. This can be taken as representative of the path linking stimuli and responses, the latter two being what Osgood characterized as the principle data of the psychologist. According to Osgood's view, the path itself and the sub-system structure through which it is mediated, is the subject for psychological theorizing. This theorizing is not uninformed, for it looks to neurophysiological alternatives. Neurophysiology, in Osgood's view, is a source of models on the basis of which psychological theories may be built. However, it will plainly not be at such a micro-level as the theorizing in which neurophysiologists themselves are involved. So, each will have its black boxes, but the black boxes of the latter so to speak, will be smaller than those of the former, whereas the psychologist may refer for instance to a sub-system within the human being which organizes perceptual information and puts it together for the guidance of action, calling it the representation level,⁵ the physiologist may refer to the same thing as the brain, giving a detailed breakdown of its different components

and of the relations which exist both internally between them and externally between them and other parts of the body. This sort of situation is represented in the diagram by the way in which A and B have been drawn as whole systems which, at the level of abstraction appropriate to the task of the psychologist would be treated as black boxes, but which become for the physiologist intricate sets of sub-systems in need of more detailed analysis. The inclusion of C and D in the diagram serves the purpose of representing, in a general way, the sub-systems of the human being in which the psychologist has no real interest but which form objects of interest to the physiologist.

Turning now to the question of the relationship between psychology and sociology, if we see sociology in a general way as the study of social systems, of the inputs and outputs through which they relate to their environment, and of the internal relations between their functional components, then there is a loose analogy between the human being as an individual system, and the group of human beings as a social system. The analogy is loose because social systems are less structurally evolved than are individual human beings, and their various components are functionally less well-integrated. Nevertheless, to the extent that both are systems in their own right, the analogy holds.

Given this analogy, psychology bears a similar relation to sociology as physiology bears to psychology, and vice-versa. What from the psychological point of view are inputs to and outputs from the human being treated as a complex system in its own right become, from the sociological point of view, inputs to and outputs from a sub-system within the larger social system. Depending on the level of generality, the sociologist may treat human beings unequally as functional components within a small social system, or he may simply group them together in an undifferentiated way so as to treat the group as a whole as the functional unit of importance. Treatment of the human being as a black box, the inner functioning of which is not to be speculated about is, from the psychological point of view, bad science, but from the sociological point of view unless that human being exerts such an influence on the social system that he cannot but be treated uniquely, it is unavoidable if generality is to be achieved.

Thus, depending on the level of generality, the same sort of relations exist between sociology and psychology as between psychology and physiology. Microsociology tends inevitably to psychology. The smaller the social system being analyzed the more important each individual as a psychological entity becomes. Consequently the same requirements with regard to theoretic coherence begin to apply. Where the microsociologist may have to see certain individuals as having certain broadly defined personality traits, the psychologist may provide a detailed psychological profile which, considered as a whole, accounts for those traits.

Depending again upon the level of generality and upon the extent of an individual's unique impact upon the social system, the interests of sociologists and psychologists may overlap at the point of inputs to and outputs from unique individuals. The difference in interpretative levels between the socio-psychological analysis of these forces and the psycho-physiological analysis of them would be shown by the fact that at the level of the former they would be dealt with virtually exclusively in terms of their meaning, this being given by their place and function at the higher level of generality.

This brings us to a further important point. I have dealt at fair length with a particular approach to psychology recognizable perhaps as behavioural. There is however another approach, one for which peripheral input and output also form the principal data but whose posited interior may be referred to loosely as psychic rather than physiological. So for instance for Freud, reported dreams were among the most significant outputs and the interior which he posited in explanation of the outputs consisted of the Id, Ego and Super-ego.⁶

Typically, psychologists split into two camps at this point. While those of psycho-analytic ilk respond negatively to the apparent treatment of the human being as a piece of biological machinery by behaviourally orientated psychologists, so the latter tend to see the former as involved in a kind of psychic mysticism, but whichever model is chosen, both remain models.

The suggestion that I would like to make is that both are important but that they draw their models from different interpretative levels. The

psychic interior to which behaviouralists seem so averse has its special significance at the interface of psychology with sociology, for it is at this level that input and output treated as communicative and symbolic behaviour becomes important. This is because the interface of psychology with sociology involves man's conception of himself as a human being whereas the physiological level excludes such considerations as a matter of methodological principle. Since personal values and personal meaning are so much a part of the psychic interior, and since these things are acquired in what may be called, if somewhat vaguely, the "social ambient", the proper level of operation of "psychic" theorizing would seem to be at the psychological-sociological interface. If this is so, it has the implication that the content of psychically posited interiors is more likely to be socio-culturally relative than is that of the behaviourally posited interiors. This, however, does not make them any the less significant.

2.2 Level Parochialism and Hierarchy

In its formative stages the following slogan was an important part of the armoury of the systems theorist: The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.⁷ The drift of the slogan is anti-reductionist. It is based on the view that as systems become increasingly complex so they begin to display new behaviours which could not have been predicted solely from an analysis of their components. Consequently, interpretative languages which may have been adequate in the analysis of the components, lose their adequacy with regard to the properties of the system as a whole, or so the argument runs.

The reductionist issue in the human and life sciences is less serious than another related and already noted issue i.e. level-parochialism. The old behaviourist or so-called S-R model of the human being is a case in point. This model no longer really needs objecting to. It has failed simply because it is bad science. Nevertheless, it is instructive to examine in a general sort of way the reasons why it could never have had any but a very limited field of application.

In systems theoretic terms and according to the way in which Osgood characterized psychology, the purpose of the psychologist is to under-

stand output as a predictable function of input. In complex systems, however, such understanding cannot be achieved unless the internal state of the system is also taken into account. Output is never simply a function of input but is a function of both internal state and input. Consequently, if the stimulus-response relationships in which the psychologist is interested are to be understood, then the theory must incorporate some model of the interior of the human being which includes an understanding of the processes governing the organization of input and output. Such a necessity has led to the abandonment of the S-R model in favour of the S-O-R model. In systems theoretic terms, what once was an inscrutable black box is now no longer regarded as inscrutable. And of course, commitment to theorizing about the interior has led psychology back to physiology at which level the interior is thoroughly dissected.

However, when interpretative needs force descent to a lower level of interpretation the problem of specious reductionism, which is simply level-parochialism at a lower level, becomes an issue. Moreover, the reductionist claim may appear to have been strengthened since the old system's theorist slogan is no longer seen to hold. The behaviour of any system as a whole can be predicted so long as the behaviour of and relation between the parts are known. Yet ironically in that area of science in which theoretic continuity has been established most clearly, namely, atomic physics and chemistry, there is no thought of reduction. The elimination of one in favour of the other is simply not considered.

The proper view then, is to see in every level of theory its special interpretative advantages. Every interpretative level may require descent to lower levels of interpretation in specialist areas so as to make the gross behaviour of the system explicable. The level to which descent is required is usually clear from interpretative needs. Where descent stops systems will be found whose interiors are left as inscrutable though other levels of interpretation may only begin there. Going in the other direction, it seems obvious that where we recognize systems of great complexity which exist in the world as systems in their own right, the lower interpretative levels simply become too clumsy and unmanageable to deal with them. The requirements of theoretic efficiency

necessitate ascent to higher levels of interpretation as systems become increasingly complex in their organization. What the lower levels gain in detail they lose in efficiency at those levels of complexity at which the higher levels have their application.

Chapter 3: Systems Theory and the Modelling of
Human Nature

With the publications of van Neumann and Morgenstern's "Theory of Games and Economic Behaviour", Wiener's "Cybernetics", and Shannon and Weaver's "The Mathematical Theory of Communication", the human and life sciences were launched decisively along new lines of investigation. Prior to that similar ideas, particularly to those of cybernetics, had been germinating in biological studies. Ludwig von Bertalanffy with his proposals for a general theory of systems was a leading figure in this regard.¹

Human systems, whether individual or social, display an ability to mobilize and co-ordinate the functions of various sub-systems in the pursuit and implementation of goals. The efficacy of the resultant goal-directed activity is judged by comparing the effects of activity against expectations. Fundamental to the regulation and control that all these processes involve is the exchange of information. The importance of the above theories lies in their development of well-defined conceptual schemes whereby to treat the processes of information exchange and auto-regulation.

In his introduction to Shannon's work, Weaver distinguished three levels at which informational problems could be investigated.² They were:

- (i) The technical level. This has to do with questions of the efficiency with which given messages can be communicated along given communication channels.
- (ii) The semantic level. At this level the focus of interest is on the meaning of messages and on attempts to develop quantificational measures of meaning.
- (iii) The pragmatic level. This has to do with considerations of the effects of messages. Of particular interest is the comparison of intended with actual effects.

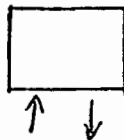
It is especially the latter two levels which have carried the application of systems and information theoretic notions irresistably into the human and life sciences.

But there is a danger in the use of these theories relative to human systems. It lies in the fact that the concepts of these theories do not always have a precise interpretation in these systems.³ Relative to non-human servo-mechanisms and communication systems the application of such notions yields a precise interpretation. At the biological and physiological levels, while their interpretation can be made relatively precise, the complexity of the data sometimes reduces them to heuristic value. At the psychological and sociological levels, levels to which in particular they have given a new interpretative impetus, it is difficult to assign them a precise interpretation. Consequently their use is often intuitive. At these levels systems and information theoretic notions function as paradigms or models.⁴

3.1 The General Model

My interest in regard to systems and information theory is in respect of their application first at psychological and second at sociological levels. It is not detailed for I wish to draw on systems notions only insofar as I believe they illuminate human nature as religious. The religious function in man I see as intimately related to his attempt to organize experience. It is then insofar as systems and information theoretic notions illuminate the way in which human beings organize their experience that I wish to use them.

We can represent the human being in its transactions with the environment as follows:



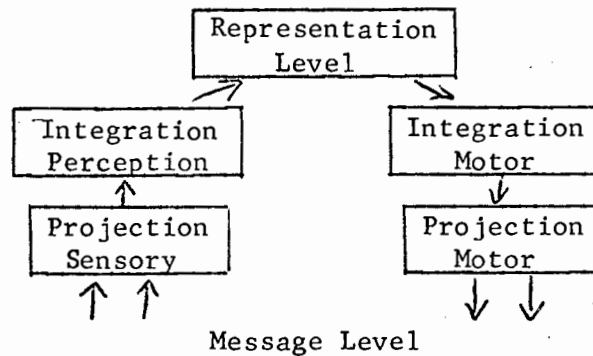
This is the most abstract representation that can be imagined. It commits us to the views that:

- (i) The human being has sufficient integrity to be seen as an entity in its own right distinct from its environment;
- (ii) There is interaction between the human being and its environment.

No commitments are made in this model with regard to what gives the

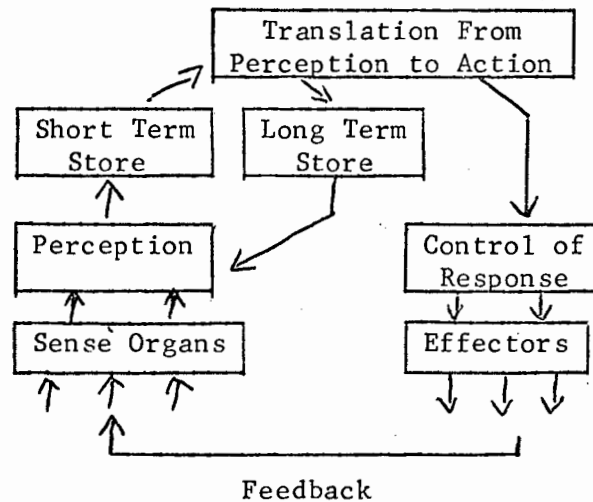
human being its integrity. Nor is there any commitment with regard to the nature of the forces through which it impinges upon and is impinged upon by the environment.

Such was the model, in abstract, of the early behaviourist psychologists. Known as the S-R model, it became notorious for the methodological injunction upon which it was based i.e. that the human being should be treated as a black box. An implication of this injunction is that the human will can be by-passed in the attempt to relate response functionally to stimulus. The model failed, however, simply because of its interpretative inadequacy. It gave way to the so-called S-O-R model (stimulus - organism - response) in which the internal processes mediating stimulus to response were given their due as playing a significant part in the relationship of the two. Systems and information theoretic notions began to play a part in the modelling. The following model due to Osgood, is a case in point:⁵



What Osgood calls the projection level corresponds physiologically to the sensory and motor peripheries. The representation level corresponds to the brain and is assumed to be the level at which the environment is modelled. It is also thought to be the level at which goals are formulated and perception and action organized around the implementation of these goals. Between the two levels is the integration level at which, as the name suggests, perception and action are somehow put together. It corresponds to the mediating structures of the central nervous system. From stimulus to response the whole process is conceived along information-flow lines. The informational influence upon the model is indicated further by Osgood's use of the terms "message level" for the environment.⁶ This is because input in the form of stimuli is felt to be informative as to the state of the environment, and output in the form of overt acts is felt somehow to encode the human being's intentions.

A later model due to Welford follows much the same lines as Osgood's only it is more elaborate and makes explicit the feedback relation on the basis of which auto-regulation occurs. It is reproduced below modified according to the diagrammatic style I have adopted:⁷



Welford notes that he could have included further relations between the components of this model. In any case, it is more elaborate than that of Osgood. Where Osgood had only a representation level, Welford has a short term and a long term memory in addition to which he has a centre in which responses are chosen on the basis of incoming perceptual information. He also makes explicit the fact that perception is not a one way process by including a reverse relation from the long term store to what he calls simply "perception". Lastly, the feedback relation from action to perception is indicated.

For my purposes it is not necessary to appeal to more models. Kjell Samuelson has gathered many of them together so as to show their similarities.⁸ The main points that need to be noted are the following:

- (i) There is an intimate relation between perception and action. Both are organized around the attempt to implement goals. First, acts are chosen on the basis of the available perceptual information. Second, the effects of action are constantly monitored perceptually so as to ascertain the efficacy of the chosen acts in their implementation of goals.
- (ii) Between the central organizing system and the sensory and motor peripheries there are important integrative mechanisms.

Thus, the mediation of stimuli from the sense organs to the brain, and the mediation of responses from the brain to the effector organs are not construed to be straightforward processes. Of particular interest in this connection is the relation that Welford has indicated as existing between the long term store and the integrative mechanisms of perception. It is there to account at least partially for what is known as the phenomenon of gating, for the mediation of stimuli is a selective process. Registered perceptions are the end result of what Bruner calls "the editorial policies" of the nervous system as a result of which much of what exists at the sensory periphery is systematically cut out.⁹

Perception then, according to these models, is seen to be a constructive process in which the human being plays an active part. When we look at this process more closely we shall see that it makes nonsense of philosophical notions such as that of the "unbiased report of sensory experience". This latter fiction, called by Ayer the observation statement, has haunted the philosophy of religion since its use in the formulation of the verificationist criterion of cognitive significance.¹⁰ Verificationism as formulated by Ayer has long been superseded. Yet much of that part of the philosophy of religion whose attention is focussed on the problem of the epistemological status of substantive religious pronouncements, can still be seen to be a response to it.

The general model of the human being as a goal-directed, self-adaptive system as I have presented it here, is sketchy. It will be fleshed out when we begin to look more closely at the relationship between perception and goals. Before doing that, however, two important defects in many information theoretic models must be pointed out:

- (i) It will be seen from the diagrams that no reference is made to that part of human nature which has to do with feelings and emotions. Nor is there any explicit reference to the will though some sort of willing is implied by the centrality of goals. Studies using information theoretic models are not entirely devoid of attempts to analyze these

areas, but what analysis there is tends to be piecemeal and unsystematic. Yet if the human being is to be seen as organizing perception and action around the attempt to articulate and implement goals, then a proper analysis of motivation is essential. This in its turn suggests the importance to these models of the analysis of feelings and emotions.

- (ii) There is a general tendency to use the concept of information in a way which blurs important distinctions. Osgood for instance refers to a message level without distinguishing natural from symbolic information. The latter terms are due to J.J. Gibson. He distinguishes between natural information which is related to its object by what he calls "laws of ecology" while symbolic information is related to its object by "laws of convention".¹¹ His point is that some kinds of information are about the environment in that they are construed by convention, to be symbolic of it. But there is a kind of information which is gained as perceptions are registered and which is, somehow or other, an experience of the environment itself. The perceptual processes as a result of which it exists, are those which have proved their survival value by supplying reliable environmental information. As we shall see, a similar though not identical point is made by Bruner when he talks about perception as a categorization process.¹²

3.2 The Selectivity of Perception

An interest in perceptual processes governs one side of the information theoretic model of human nature. At a strictly physiological level explication of these processes involves the attempt to understand them in terms of the mediation of matter-energy within certain physiological systems. At this level a primitive form of perceptual gating is found to occur as a function of inhibitory and amplificatory mechanisms in the nervous system.¹³ At the psychological level, however, the focus of interest switches from these processes as the mediation of matter-energy to the same processes as the

mediation of meaningful information. As a result some of the cognitive models proposed by psychologists border on being metaphysical. What they certainly are is metaphysiological. It is, in any case, an area into which I now propose to venture.

As seen by cognitive psychologists the principle function of perception is to satisfy the informational requirements of goals. This means that perception is partly concerned to monitor the efficacy of acts, both internal and external, in the implementation of goals. Since our perceptual abilities are limited the process must be selective. Selectivity is determined by that which experience has taught is relevant. Consequently, in skilled goal-directed activity all that which is available to perception but which is deemed irrelevant, is systematically gated. Gating here is not an automatic physiological function. Rather, it is a process governed actively from somewhere within what Osgood called the representation level. Welford has represented it as governed by the long term memory i.e. by that part of the representation level in which an internal representation of the environment is stored. In another study of perception, that of Forgas and Melamed, the loss of perceptual information is represented as a two-stage process. The first is seen to occur at a point where stimuli are first registered perceptually. The second is seen to occur as memory enters into the perceptual process by selecting what is supposed to be relevant from that which has been stored iconically after the first stage.¹⁴

Taken in toto our perceptual experience obviously plays some part in what we construe to be the nature of our environment. To use a universalistic term, it plays some part in our world-view. The findings of cognitive psychologists regarding the active way in which perceptual experience is governed by the informational requirements of goals has at least one implication for what we see to be the relation between goals and world-view. It can be illustrated as follows:

Goal₁ - Selected Perception₁ - Perceptual Experience₁ - W-View/Feel₁

Goal₂ - Selected Perception₂ - Perceptual Experience₂ - W-View/Feel₂

If we superimpose this model upon that of say, Osgood, then we can suppose the following:

- (i) Conscious goals are formulated at the representation level;
- (ii) Perceptual selectivity occurs due to the co-ordinated workings of the motor and perceptual levels, both being governed by the representation level;
- (iii) Perceptual experience is generated as a still mysterious function of the interaction of matter-energies at the points where stimuli are registered. Most people would probably locate this at the representation level;
- (iv) World-view or world-feel is generated as a function of the interpretation of experience including the selected perceptual part of it. This interpretation can be so immediate that interpretation is not always felt to have taken place.

As a result of this superimposition we would have to see connections running from Osgood's representation level to:

- (i) the motor levels. This would illustrate the fact that the gathering of information often involves particular physical orientations;
- (ii) the perception levels particularly that of integration. This would illustrate the fact that gating takes place as a function partly governed by the representation level.

I have declined to use Welford's model. The processes involved in learning and memory are still too poorly understood to back his supposition that a long term memory as an integral unit exists. Nevertheless, some sort of functional sub-division of Osgood's representational level is indicated by the above points.

The implication then is that individuals who appear to an observer to be under identical conditions of periphery stimulation could have entirely different perceptions of their environment should their goals differ. This, what amounts to their having different foci of attention, may not be significant if their difference of goals is momentary. But in the case of individuals whose goals taken as a whole have differed consistently their perceptual experiences taken as a whole may have been significantly different. Arguably they could be expected to have different world-views or, to use a term I shall use increasingly, world-

feels. An example might be people from very different cultures. This is partly the point that Levy-Bruhl appeared to have been trying to make in his references to "collective representations" and to the ways in which those of the so-called primitives might differ from those of the European.

The selectivity of perception as I have used it here related in a direct way to the determination of views on the world. It establishes a simple relation between an individual's goals and the way he is likely to perceive his environment. Nevertheless, I have used it as an entering wedge through which to explore the relationship between goals and world-views, particularly to the extent that the more perceptual part of experience is important for the latter. In order to pursue this question further it is necessary to consider the process of what I shall call, for want of better terms, "the internal modelling" of the environment.

3.3 The Internal Representation

Most cognitive psychologists make reference to an internal representation of some sort or another which, being a model of the environment, is acquired through learning experience. Welford, Forgas and Melamed, for instance, have their memory stores, Osgood has his representation level, Bruner refers to a system of perceptual categories, and so on. Evidence for the existence of such a representation is forthcoming from experiments on perception. These include studies which show that perceptual distortion of presented objects can occur along the lines of what can be construed to have been the internal perceptual sets of subjects. 15

The development of an internal representation of the environment seems to occur along with the development of skills by which to implement goals. It is manifest by the ability to anticipate what will happen on the basis of present perceptual information. Motor strategies can then be selected to accommodate expectations. As these strategies are implemented a continual selective monitoring of the environment is carried out and the resultant information checked out against expectations. This selective monitoring is itself a skill which, at sophisticated levels, enables the perceiver to check his expectations on a minimum of incoming information. This frees him to maintain a wide ranging alertness to the possibility of

the unexpected.

The development of such skills is a learning process. The tendency is to see it as one in which elaboration occurs through the development of complexes once certain simple components, whether on the motor or on the perceptual and representational side, have been mastered. My concern here is specifically with the perceptual and representational side. In this regard the notions of Bruner, though highly speculative, are a useful foil.

Bruner suggests that all perceptual experience is the end result of a categorization process. Categorization as he conceives of it, is a largely unconscious process whereby perceptions are registered in interpretative categories which the perceiver (at least when he has a sense of his separate identity) takes to be representative of the state of the environment. The end result of the perceptual process in this view is categorized perception i.e. perceptual experience as it occurs, as perceptions are registered, is meaningful. Bruner puts it thus:

"...we do not experience a going-from-no-identity to an arrival at identity, but the first hallmark of any perception is some form of identity..."¹⁶

At this point Bruner and Gibson, when the latter talks about "natural information", appear to be making a similar point.

The question as to the exact nature of the categories is a difficult one. For Bruner they "somehow represent" the environment and the recognition of "objects" in the environment depends upon the identity of the categories into which perceptions fall when registered.¹⁷ Learning experience then leads to the development of a system of categories which is somehow an inner representation of what the human being conceives to be its environment.

Systematic elaboration of the categories involves what used to be referred to as the recognition of recurring forms and patterns. With the advent of information theory a new term has been added to these i.e. redundancy.¹⁸

The notion of redundancy has a precise meaning in formal communication theory. It refers to the fact that information is often duplicated in a message-set. The more duplication there is, the greater is the redundancy in the set. It can be given a quantitative measure so long as authentic probabilities can be assigned to the members of the set. The amount of redundancy in the message-set as a whole is then taken to be the difference between the amount of information conveyed by the set as a whole and the sum of the various amounts conveyed by each member of the set on its own.

Application of the term "redundancy" to perceptual sets is suggestive of the possibility of quantifying the amount of information contained in items of perceptual data. There is a difficulty, however, i.e. that of assigning probabilities to environmental processes in a way which is non-arbitrary.¹⁹ Consequently the term remains for the time being suggestive only. What is involved in any case, is the recognition of two things:

- (i) Varying degrees of concurrence in the occurrence of components in complex events. Given the perceptual logging of such concurrence the perception of one component can be used to infer, with varying degrees of certainty, the presence of others.
- (ii) Varying degrees of predictability within sequences of events. Again, given the perceptual logging of such sequences the perception of one part of the sequence becomes predictive in varying degrees of its subsequent parts.

The systematic elaboration of categories occurs then as the conjoining of perceptual categories in accordance with what the human being has experienced as having occurred conjointly in past experiences. It makes for what Bruner refers to as the "varying veridicality" of perception i.e. depending upon the adequacy of the system, perception is predictive of future perceptions.²⁰ This extraction of redundancy or recognition of pattern within ongoing perceptual experience is inductive.

Now, if much of perceptual experience has occurred in the context of the implementation of specific goals, then much of the system of categories

will probably be grouped loosely into sub-systems reflective of those goal-directed contexts. Knowledge, therefore, to the extent that it is constituted of the system of categories, can be supposed to cluster loosely around goals.

Skill in perception is based, in a model of the above sort, on the development of sub-systems of categories which match the informational requirements of goals. In so doing they make anticipation possible. Uncertainty is thereby decreased thus leading to economy of decision. To the extent that uncertainty is not resolved selective monitoring of the environment will continue. But as the adequacy of the internal model increases, so increasingly fleeting perceptual glimpses can provide enough information for the taking in of complex situations.

Yet this same development of a system also accounts for some of the errors found in perception in which perceptual distortion occurs. These can occur whenever there is a mismatch between the environment and the internal representation. Error occurs as the passing of such discrepancies unnoticed, even when attention is fully focussed on the discrepant phenomenon. Bruner explains this in terms of the notions of perceptual readiness and categorical accessibility.²¹ On the basis of past learnt regularities the human being is readied, by the registration of one perception, for the occurrence of another. Internally this is conceptualized by Bruner as the greater accessibility of the representative category over others. The effects of categorial accessibility can be threefold. The greater such accessibility:

- (i) The smaller will need to be the appropriate stimulus for registration within that category to occur;
- (ii) The greater will be the range of stimuli that will be taken to fit that category;
- (iii) The more likely will be the masking by that category of others more appropriate to the stimulus.

Which categories are the more accessible at any one time will depend upon the nature of the system of categories and upon the individual's goals of the moment.

Sensory selectivity can be construed in terms of momentary differences

in focus of attention. But it should be clear now that the interplay between goals and perceptual experience is more deep rooted than this. Sensory selectivity operates continuously as a function of the need to satisfy the informational requirements of goals. Consequently, individuals from different environments, or using different strategies in the implementation of goals, or having different goals, cannot but help acquire different categorial systems. To that extent at least their views or feel for the environment will differ. Moreover, the perceptual systems they have already developed may actively inhibit their ability to develop new ones. This point will be argued further on when we discuss the way in which learning experience may leave physiological traces. Thus, it may be that characteristic redundancies, used in the development of the system already possessed, may simply be inadequate to the development of different systems. In other words, categorial systems may not differ only in regard to the content of what they represent, they may differ with regard to the characteristic patterning by which they have been systematized.

In summary then, goals enter into the determination of world-view or feel at least to the extent that:

- (i) Internal modelling occurs on the basis of selected perceptual experience;
- (ii) The function of perceptual experience is to satisfy informational requirements of goals.

Thus, internal representations may differ from one individual to another according as the strategies, both perceptual and motor, by which their goals are implemented differ; or according as their goals differ.

3.4 The Internal Representation and Belief-Systems

Attempts to conceptualize internal modelling appear highly speculative. Yet, it seems clear that some sort of modelling takes place. We have looked at one view regarding the way in which such modelling may occur in summary form. We have seen that on the basis of this view a strong link can be established between goals and world-view. But the use that I have made of the term "world-view" has not been conventional. It has been used to refer to a developed categorial system whose existence as an internal model of the environment is posited so as to explain certain features of perceptual experience.

But when we think of world-views we think of abstract theories and of the languages in which they are expressed. We think too of the thought processes by which they are arrived at. If my use of the terms "world-view" is legitimate, then we have here two uses of the term. The first relates to systems of perceptual categories and the second to linguistically articulated belief-systems. But the two uses should not be isolated. It is an intellectual artifact to do as I have done i.e. to consider the development of a system of perceptual categories, or if you will "experiential concepts", without considering the part that language plays in it.²² As Quine has remarked, at an early age the learning of language ceases to be dependent directly upon the keying of linguistic terms into experience, but can proceed on the basis of the language already learnt.²³

How then do the two things connect? Belief-systems are supposed to be interpretations of experience. Experience on the other hand, is supposed to be that which either verifies or falsifies beliefs. I shall use the views of early positivists as a foil to giving a simple account of the connection. It is not central to my purposes to do any more than that.

Early positivists conceived of the relationship between significant belief-systems and experience as being very close, so close in fact that belief-systems, no matter how abstract, should admit of a complete translation into sense-datum language.²⁴ The truth of interpretations could then be tested whether or not items of the sense-datum language implied by the belief-systems in question could be matched with sense-data. The latter occur in perceptual experience. Now, if the character of perceptual experience is due to the system of perceptual categories, then what the positivists were saying is that there is an interpretative language such that a one-to-one relationship could be established between its sentences and elements of the perceptual system. At least, that is one of the things they were saying. The interpretative thought through which significant belief-systems are developed would then have to have been seen as a separate cognitive function which used perceptions registered in the perceptual system as its raw material. Manifest language and its cognitive counterpart, whatever that might be, would then have to have been seen as a cognitive artifact with one of

its uses being in the interpretative cognitive function.

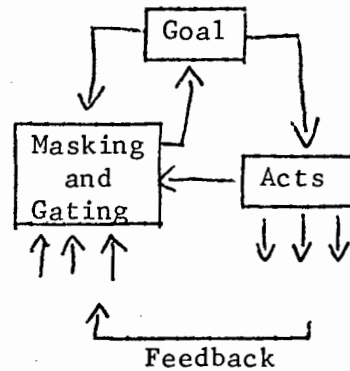
Early positivism came in for criticism from logicians for the view that a one-to-one relationship could be established between, on the one hand, isolatable linguistic elements of theory, and on the other, sense experience. Their criticism was based on the view that all interpretative statements are irretrievably impregnated with theoretic i.e. "non-observational", terms. Consequently, pure observation statements cannot be teased out of belief-systems. There is nevertheless, a loose relationship between language and experience in that terms are learnt under certain conditions of sensory stimulation.

The psychological critique of early positivism would have a different point of entry. In the view of cognitive psychologists the development of a system of perceptual categories is focussed around the informational requirements of goals. Consequently any systemization is adequate so long as its modelling of the environment is sufficiently well-matched to the environment not to inhibit the implementation of goals. Hypothetically, such a criterion is loose enough to allow for different perceptual systematizations to occur. This being so, perceptual experience is seen to be too unstable a bedrock to be counted upon as the common ground for theory in the way that positivists might have wished. It is conceivable that as the fabric of perceptual experience differs between different individuals, their internal representations could differ, not just in content, but in system.

Clearly, the learning of a language and with it of a culturally sanctioned belief-system, has a lot to do with the way we think of the world. Thus, the linguistic belief-system, through its having been assimilated in contexts which key it to experience, has an effect on the way in which we systematize our perceptual categories. Participation in socio-cultural activities then, tends to inhibit the development of the sort of perceptual relativity which has just been considered as a hypothetical possibility. Through participation in the socio-cultural environment a sufficiently common basis is laid for the sharing of common goals and of a common world-view.

3.5 The Complexity of Goals

The systems and information theoretic view of perceiving and goal-directed man is easiest to credit when we think in terms of one goal-directed activity at a time. The following diagram illustrated the position:



This can be superimposed upon the general model. The selectivity of perception is represented by the "Masking and Gating" box. Masking represents the fact that stimuli can be mismatched according to the way the perceptual categories have been systematized. Gating represents the fact that stimuli are selected on the basis of the way in which attention is focussed. Accordingly there is a relation from the "Goals" to the "Masking and Gating" box indicative of the fact that masking occurs through the way in which categorial accessibility influences the registration of perception. Another relation runs from the "Acts" to the "Masking and Gating" box as indicative of the fact that acts are used in establishing a focus of attention.

To take a concrete example: When we shop for food we are involved typically in certain paths of activity which are similar from one expedition to the next. We have our preferences of taste and we know where to go to buy the food by which these preferences are satisfied. In our getting there and in our actual filling of the shopping basket we will repeat standard behavioural habits which will include standard perceptual monitoring strategies. Typical experiences will be generated and a typical store of beliefs (items of knowledge) will be associated with these experiences. There will be a constant interplay between perception, thought, and action.

On the basis of this illustration it may seem fair to suggest that there is associated with every goal a typical range of experiences ranging from

the more perceptual to the more emotional, an associated range of beliefs, and a range of acts. But goals do not come so neatly parcelled. Typically they overlap; more immediate goals may occur nested within larger range goals. For instance, one part of the implementation of the goal of buying food may involve the more immediate goal of putting a specific item in the basket. Another part may involve totalling up the bill mentally, and so on. Moreover, goals are of widely divergent sorts. I can have a goal as simple as that of picking up a cigar, as in Wiener's example, or as complex as that of writing a novel.²⁵

This last point leads me to another. I think I can introduce it by posing a question: Why write a novel? And if your response to that question is purely mercenary then let me ask another: Why do anything? This question has to do with motivation and it leads us into an area which, as I have noted, has not been so systematically explored in the informational approach to the analysis of human nature. It is the area of what I have referred to as the feelings and emotions. Traditionally, feelings and emotions have been regarded as non-cognitive phenomena. But if beliefs and behaviours are backed by goals and if goals are themselves backed by feelings and emotions, then is such a characterization of the latter legitimate?

These are questions which, if asked persistently enough, lead us back to the religious function in human nature. In the chapters that follow a system of notions will be introduced in terms of which the religious function will be located.

Section B: Development of a Conceptual System

The purpose of section B is to introduce and argue for a system of concepts drawing upon the approaches introduced in section A. The concepts and their interrelations emerge as the system is developed. Definition is explicit but further elaborated in the way terms are used. The system will stand or fall by its own logic and by its usefulness in the interpretation of religion.

Chapter 4: The Environment, Experience, and the Context of Experience

The human being differs from the other animals in that he is born with fewer instincts. Consequently, learning plays a greater part in the development of his habits of thought and action. He is thus more free to develop his habits as peculiar expressions of his motivations. This he apparently does within the constraints imposed upon him by his environment. The result is that some individuals differ significantly in, to borrow computer terminology, their internal programming. This is manifest in the differences that exist between cultures. However, significant differences occur within cultures as well. Any major shift in cultural outlook involves the development of such differences.

Behaviour patterns and belief-systems exist as the manifest phenomena of culture. Confronted by their variety, it appears to be a spontaneous function of human nature to enquire as to which are the best. The questioning and selection, not only of behaviours, but also of substantive beliefs, is a function of value. In what follows I propose to develop usages for the terms: Environment, Quality of experience, Context of experience; relative to which this claim will be substantiated.

4.1 The Environment

The term "environment" often occurs in a technical usage in the social sciences. It is used to refer to the setting in which theorists locate the objects of their study. So, for instance, a psychologist or sociologist may refer to something called the social environment in which human beings are located. They may go further and speak of the home environment and the business environment in all of which human beings are active. But uncritical use of the word in this way can mask an important point. Whatever the environment is construed to be by the social scientist, he is limited in his understanding of it to his own point of view.

At one time this might not have been thought to matter. Scientists were supposed to be trained in recognizing all the relevant data. However, there was a tendency to regard data as that which could be

described "objectively" i.e. the physical features of any environment tended to be emphasized at the expense of their significance to those whose environment they constituted. The scientist tended to neglect the environment as understood by his subjects in his description and explanation of their behaviour. Since that time, however, the importance of the "world of meanings" in which human beings live as an explanatory factor in their behaviour has been recognized.¹ This has led to the term "environment" assuming an ambiguous role. Sometimes it refers only to the environment as seen by the scientist. At other times it is used to refer to that which those being studied see themselves to be active in. Sometimes it doubles for both.

The term "environment" has at least four usual uses, two of which have been alluded to above. It may be used to refer to:

- (i) the world as it really is, or to use Kantian terms, as it is in itself. This usage may or may not be coupled with the view that the world can never be known as it really is.
- (ii) the world as seen by the scientist and in which he locates the objects of his study. Traditionally the social scientist has been free to include or exclude in his conception of this world elements of what those being studied imagine that they are in.
- (iii) the world, in the social sciences, as conceived by those who are being studied. As remarked above, the greater the importance assigned by social scientists to this data, the more ambiguous has become the role of the term "environment".
- (iv) the world as the social scientist thinks that his subjects conceive it. Social scientists are seldom sufficiently self-critical to use the term in this way.

I propose to use the term in a more general but less dogmatic way than any of the above. My understanding of "environment" will become clear as I develop this usage.

The environment is at least what I suppose I am in. I see myself as

being a distinct part within it. There are other people in the environment. Moreover, from what I can tell they too seem to think that they are in an environment as distinct parts within it. Sometimes I and they may disagree with regard to what the environment is like which we suppose we share, but we seem to share the view that we are all in the environment. Perhaps this is one of the factors which contribute to our belief in something external to ourselves.

When faced with disagreement as to the nature of the environment we may argue as to whose view is true and whose false. Such argument is backed up by a commitment, apparently deeply-rooted in human nature, namely, that there is a basic structure to the environment about which we can all agree. There is however one group, mystics of the sort found in the Advaita Vedantin tradition, with whom most of us would have a particularly dramatic disagreement regarding the nature of the environment.² They regard the interpretative step by which most of us recognize a distinction between ourselves and the rest of the environment as a mistake. They do not see such a distinction. Moreover, no amount of disputation could change their view. Faced by such a disagreement we may be inclined to consider mystics to be involved in some sort of illusion. However, I propose to take the views of such mystics seriously. In other words, I suggest that they should be regarded as having a legitimate representation of the environment. At the same time, however, I do not intend to sacrifice my own representation of it, a representation in which human beings occur as distinct entities within it. What I suggest therefore is that there can be conflicting representations of the environment, that we can know that they conflict, but that they can nevertheless be considered to be legitimate.

Now, if I am to hold that two or more entirely different representations of the environment can make equally legitimate claims to being true, then it follows that I should be able to give an account of the environment which, in my terms, makes the relativity of truth possible. Such an account can be given, I shall show, if we define the environment no more rigidly than as a well of potential experience. A simple illustration will help to make this clearer.

Let us imagine that we are like plugs and that we can, within limits, shape ourselves. The environment is then to be viewed as that into which we are plugged. Clearly therefore, the shape that the environment will assume to each of us will depend upon the way in which we have "shaped up and plugged in". In other words, the appearance that the environment assumes for us depends upon our mode of relationship to it. Certainly, we are subject to constraints in our choice of ways to relate to the environment, but one of the points I argue in the rest of this dissertation is that we are sufficiently unconstrained to relate to it in comprehensively different ways. Accordingly, comprehensively different experiences of it are possible which, by interpretation, can lead to comprehensively different views of it. Hence my description of the environment as a well of potential experience. The experiences which we actually have of it depend upon our behaviour in it.

Returning now to a consideration of the mystic - in terms of the view outlined above the mystic can be seen to be one who relates to the environment differently to most of us. Consequently he has experiences rather different from what we experience most of the time. These lead him to express the view that no distinction between himself and the environment exists. On what grounds can such a view be disputed? I suggest that there are no grounds for dispute. If one has not participated in the discipline undertaken by the mystic one is in no position to judge the nature of the experience or the interpretation of it. Thus, if we are to accept the integrity of the mystic but hold to our own view, our different representations of the environment cannot be considered to have arisen because one of us has interpreted his experience falsely. Rather, they have arisen because at root we relate differently to the environment.³

The environment is then a well of potential experience. The experiences realized in it depend upon what is done in it. By interpretation of these experiences we come to an understanding of it. Our view of it depends fundamentally therefore, upon what we do in it. Sometimes when we disagree in our views about it, our differences may be traceable to the fact that one of us is mistaken. Sometimes, however, we may not be able to effect a change of view without effecting a change of behaviour.

Having argued for an understanding of the environment as something permitting a range of potentially comprehensively different experiences, it is appropriate to consider the nature of experience itself.

4.2 The Quality of Experience

Human beings occur as distinct entities within the environment. As such each is a unique locus of experience. There is a qualitative range to experience. This qualitative range is a function of the impact that our various transactions with the environment have upon us as responsive beings. It includes a full range of perceptual experiences and of emotions.

In modern times eight perceptual senses are usually recognized. Forgas and Melamed record them as sub-divided into three categories. They are:

- (i) The Exteroceptors - vision and audition;
- (ii) The Proprioceptors - touch, taste, and smell;
- (iii) The Interoceptors - kinaesthetic, static, and organic.⁴

Gibson, however, has remarked that perceptions are not so easily categorizable.⁵ He remarks that the three gross sub-divisions no longer appear mutually exclusive. How, for instance, is pain to be categorized? It occurs as a function of the touch and organic senses. Perceptual experience has come to be seen then as a complex. Gibson at least appears to be dubious regarding attempts to tease sense data out of this complex. There seem to be too many structural and functional cross-connections. The informational requirements of goals must be seen to be satisfied by selectively organized complexes of perceptual experiences.

On the emotional side there is even less clarity. Literature on the subject is vast and unco-ordinated. As one researcher remarks, many fundamental questions are unanswered and probably many have not even been systematically formulated.⁶ There is no list of basic emotions as there is of perceptions. It is territory into which I shall not venture except to limit myself to a few general observations:

- (i) It is not always clear where perceptual experiences end and emotional experiences begin. For instance, the pain-pleasure dimension involves both perceptual and emotional components.

- (ii) Emotions play a significant role in adaptation. When "adaptation" is taken in both its social and its biological senses, then this point can be paraphrased as follows: They play a significant role in the formulation of goals.
- (iii) Research has shown that a basic range of facial expressions exists which are paracultural in their expression of emotions. At sophisticated levels, however, social conventions can govern the expression of emotions in particular contexts.⁷

The first two points have at least one significant implication which is this: Emotions play an informational role in the formulation of goals. In other words, when goals are formulated, they are formulated with regard to both the perceptual and emotional meanings that the environment has. In this connection it is interesting that a recent researcher has suggested that perceptual-cognitive processes be seen as a part of emotional phenomena!⁸

It used to be thought that the cognitive processes underlying the organization of perceptual experience could be or were free from emotional influences. However, important functional linkages are being discovered between the perceptual and the emotional which suggest that this is not the case. What emerges as perceptual experience, it has been found, is subject to emotional influences. We may suppose, therefore, that emotion enters into the organizational processes underlying perception. Emotion, that is to say, plays a part in determining the pathways followed by thought. This sort of point has been argued amongst others by Polanyi when he draws attention to the part that aesthetic preferences play in the interpretation of experience.

Given the above considerations, I suggest that the quality of experience at any one time be viewed as a composite of the perceptual and the emotional in which the two are inextricably linked. For this reason both may be subsumed as sub-sets within the set of what I shall call "Feelings". In using the term "feeling" I intend it in the most inclusive sense possible. It includes all that we are aware of, however vaguely, and which, when processed, comprises our experience. The term

"feeling" is preferable to that of "sensation" as the latter fails to convey emotional depth.

So, as human beings we experience continually, but the quality changes from moment to moment. At any one time the quality of experience is a complex of feelings. Sometimes there is sufficient clarity within this complex for certain components to be recognized as more perceptual, others as more emotional. All-in-all, however, there is much that is unknown regarding the organizational processes underlying our experiencing. In any case, it is by interpreting this whole complex that we come to a view about the environment.

When one of the qualitative aspects of our experience is a felt order or organization, there is a spontaneous pressure for there to emerge an understanding of the nature of the environment. This understanding, what I go on to call the "context of experience", develops as we interpret the quality of experience.

4.3 The Context of Experience

The context of experience is what we suppose to be the ground to the quality of our experience and the backdrop to our activity. It is experienced by most people to be relatively coherent or integrated. Partly it is symbolized in conceptual schemes. As order is felt to characterize the quality of experience so the context is construed to be coherent or integrated. To the extent that a felt order is lacking in experience, to that extent the context is construed to be chaotic. Order emerges as we organize ourselves in ways which will be discussed.

At conscious levels the felt order is expressed in terms of context postulation. In other words, we develop conceptual schemes or belief-systems. In these the context, as we are aware of it, is symbolized. At this level, which involves the use of language, we are most likely to assume that the context as we feel it, is similarly felt by others. This is partly because language is a social artifact. It is learnt under conditions in which care is taken to ensure that we monitor the environment along similar lines, at least initially. Vision undoubtedly plays a most significant role in this regard. While interpretation of experience as a whole is what gives us our feel for context, it is

vision which provides us with the dominant "model" of what reality is like. Visual experience in other words, dominates our ways of thinking about structure even though it is our feel for the context of experience, being what we feel ourselves to be part of, which provides our sense of the nature of reality.

Except in perhaps three cases,⁹ the order experienced never seems to exhaust what is felt as the potential for order. Nor, when interpretations are expressed in conceptual schemes do they always communicate adequately the extent of order experienced. This, as we shall see, is especially true at the religious level. Words, being social artifacts, fail at the religious level to adequately express the experience of order due to the ultimacy and therefore uniqueness of the experience itself. Nevertheless, there is a kind of order at the religious level which I shall refer to as integrity within feeling.

4.4 Environment, Quality of Experience, and Context

Having developed the notions: Environment, Quality of experience, Context of experience; it is necessary to explore their interrelationship in greater detail.

The environment is a well of potential experience. The context of experience is what we make of the environment by interpretation of what happens to us in it i.e. by interpretation of the quality of experience. It is experience as a whole, the total complex of feelings, which is interpreted.

In drawing a distinction between the environment and the context of experience, I am not making an epistemological point. I am not, in other words, asserting that the environment as it "really" is can never be known. We are tentative about our interpretations because experience has taught us to be so, but so long as they remain adequate to our purposes they constitute the environment. We may legitimately talk therefore about what we know of the environment.

It may be asked what the purpose of the distinction between the environment and the context of experience is. The rationalization for this distinction is as follows: There is, it is usually assumed, one

universe, cosmos, or field of existence, but there are many ways of describing it. Some of these descriptive alternatives can be seen to be different descriptions of the same thing, others are conflicting and mutually exclusive. In the latter case questions arise as to which is true. One of the main points that I will argue, one which I have suggested already, is that this on its own is not a meaningful question. It has to be asked in conjunction with a question as to which goals are the best expressions of values. Thus while there may be only one environment, there are many ways of seeing it according as human beings have a variety of sometimes conflicting and mutually exclusive goals. So, perhaps we are all in the same environment, but what we feel, see and know ourselves to be in is the context of our experience. As far as we are concerned, the context of our experience is (at least part of) the environment. Moreover, it is legitimately regarded as being so if it is adequate to our pursuit of goals, but there are other goals, perhaps a reflection of different values, and with them may go other qualities of experience and other supposed contexts of experience.

Experience, having a qualitative range, is simply what it is. Psychologists sometimes distinguish consciousness or awareness from the sub-conscious. It is a useful way of speaking but a simplistic model. The quality of experience at any one time grades off from the more to the less conscious. Some feelings can either be fully present to consciousness or totally absent from it according as the focus of attention differs. Most gross perceptual experiences are like this. Other feelings can never be more than exceedingly subtle. Some of the so-called organic senses would seem to be like this. Evidence from bio-feedback suggests that feelings carrying organic information can be used consciously to modify organic functions.

Experience, with its qualitative range, is the pivot around which the physiological and psychic interiors can be seen to relate. The physiological is that in which experience is based. The quality of experience is affected in ways which we do not fully understand by events at this level. In this view, having some form of body is a necessary though not sufficient condition for being able to experience. But no reductionism of experience to physiological events is being

suggested. The one is necessary for the other to be possible, and each has an effect on the other in ways we do not yet understand and perhaps never will.

At the psychological level, experience with its qualitative range is the continually shifting ambient within which human beings function. By interpretation this ambient takes shape as the supposed context of experience. Within this context, a more or less well-integrated structure of more or less well-integrated sub-structures, human beings locate themselves as persons.

Social suggestions take an active role in the creation of a world of personal meaning and value. Thus as I have suggested, the psychic interior is best seen as occurring at the interface of psychology with sociology. The elaboration of meaning is seen to occur at this interface. The genesis of experience on the other hand, is best seen to occur at the interface of physiology with psychology. If this is so, the character of the psychic interior is likely to be more time and culture bound than is the character of the physiological interior.

A general account of the environment, quality of experience, and context of experience has been given. It has included an explication, if brief, of the way they are related. Much of what has been said has been hypothetical. It anticipates further arguments. This is particularly so in relation to the use that has been made of the notion of goals.

Our goals involve behaviour patterns which constitute the way in which we meet the environment. As a result of this meeting experience is generated. The qualitative range of experience is determined by what we are, what the environment is, and how we meet it. To the extent that the informational requirements of goals are gained in experience, goals enter into the interpretation of the quality of experience. The result of interpretation is the development of a supposed context of experience. Thus, goals play a role in determining the way the environment appears to us.

But goals are the end results of adaptive behaviour. Thus, while their role in determining what the environment becomes for us is significant,

their development occurs within environmental constraints. They are developed in an attempt to satisfy valuative inclinations within whatever constraints are discovered. It is to a more thorough investigation of this process that I now wish to turn. It will necessarily include the further introduction of terms used in a specialized way.

Chapter 5: The Valuative Basis of Action

The study of motivation is as poorly in hand as is that of emotion. No adequate and comprehensive theory of either has emerged. Yet, since the goals upon which we act constitute our mode of relating to the environment, understanding motivation is central not only to understanding what we do, but also to understanding how we come to our view of the environment. In what follows, however, I do not attempt to enunciate the motives to human activity. Nevertheless, I shall explicate a model of the human being which locates values, which I shall go on to explain as qualitative preferences in experience, firmly at the base of human activity. An understanding of the processes underlying the development of goals will then be enunciated which makes clear the connection between this development and the development of views about the environment. Since our motives are based at least partly in our values I shall consider some approaches to the study of motivation as a way into the topic.

5.1. The Reduction of Motivation to Needs

The concept of motivation is often connected with that of need. As biological beings, for example, we appear to be subject to certain biologically determined needs. The need for food and shelter are examples. Biologically motivated activity is then conceived to arise out of the attempt to satisfy such needs. The full range of needs is thought of as determined by the requirements of biological survival. Survival then is identified as the primary value at this level. Any process which runs counter to this value is identified as a malfunction.

Needs are also identified at psychic and social levels. Their identification usually depends on what are considered to be the requirements of psychic or social well-being. However, whether motives be identified with biological, psychic, or social needs, there are two dangers inherent in all such identifications. Both are especially prevalent at the biological and social ends. They are:

- (i) a tendency to reductionism.
- (ii) a tendency for theory to become prescriptive.

An examination of the reduction of motivation to need at the biological level will show how this occurs.

In reductionisms of the biological type attempts are made to trace all motivated activity to the satisfaction of biological imperatives. This, for example, has been done even for such apparently socio-cultural functions as altruism. While it is recognized that an individual may sacrifice his life out of altruistic feelings and thereby act in a way which runs counter to individual biological survival, it is argued that in the long run altruism contributes to the survival of the species. Such an explanation is ingenious and possibly true of some altruistic activity. Certainly, biological survival, whether of the individual or the group, is important as a support base for the "higher" functions. However, there are systems of action involving motivations relative to which biological imperatives are clearly superfluous.

In certain Eastern schools of religious thought counter examples to reductionist theories of the biological type are to be found. If the programs of these schools were to be successfully implemented the result would be a genuinely voluntary self-destruction by the human species of its biological existence. Moreover, in these systems a conscious choice is made against biological imperatives so as to express articulately what is felt to be implied by an absolute value.¹

The response of a biological reductionist to such a system would have to be that the mechanism governing motivation had somehow or other gone haywire. If the human being were to be considered as a biological entity only, such a view might have been fair. However, the human being is more than a biological entity, which brings me to the second point above, namely the tendency for theories of motivation which depend on the identification of needs to become prescriptive. Needs tend to be identified relative to some particular conception of well-being, whether of the biological, psychic, or social entity. Consequently, when motivated activity occurs which runs counter to this conception it has to be thought of as deviant. The possibility that such activity may arise out of legitimate but as yet unrecognized needs is methodologically excluded. In the case of the kind of biological reductionism mentioned above such exclusion cannot but follow from a decision to ignore all but biological survival as a motivating value. Consequently there is a failure to recognize that in the emergence of

systems more complex than the biological system new and qualitatively different values may emerge. Clearly, the human being has to be seen at least as a biologically, psychically, and socially motivated entity, each level generating its own values.

Curiously, while motivations have their significance relative to any one of the above three levels, they are all signalled in the same way. All are signalled as feelings.² Take for instance an example from the biological level i.e. the need for food. Except at sophisticated levels of activity, that which motivates us to eat is seldom if ever a recognition of this need. It can be any of a number of things, all feelings e.g. boredom, hunger, or frustration. When it is directly related to the need for food then it is the feeling of hunger, and even then the relationship is not absolutely direct. It is possible to have the need without the feeling and vice-versa. Moreover, while the need may be satisfied by eating, the satisfaction itself is also signalled by feeling, in this case that of satiation.

Except at sophisticated levels then, there is no conscious transformation of needs, whether biological, psychological, or social, into motives. Mostly it is feelings that move us to do the things that we do in the way that we do them. Sometimes the link between feelings and motivated activity is direct and sometimes distant. The further we move from the biological to the social levels the less direct the link may appear. At the psychological and social levels activity can be seen increasingly to be governed, not by immediately motivational feelings, but by feelings which have arisen as the result of the accumulation of social experience. In any case, in our activity we manifest motivated activity and act in goal-directed ways. But the roots of these activities are feelings, specifically they are governed by what I shall call our qualitative preferences in experience.

5.2 Qualitative Preferences and the Evaluative Mechanism

When we act we show more or less clear dispositions to favour certain activities above others. These dispositions are determined at least in part by our qualitative preferences in experience. We choose those ways of acting which generate the experiences we prefer. This is the view that feelings are at the root of what motivates us.

But experience through any one period of time is a continuously shifting complex of feelings. Some of these feelings motivate immediately i.e. they have within them a motivational component which generates a tendency to perform certain acts quite spontaneously.³ Pain is often such an experience. But the same complex may contain certain components which spontaneously generate contrary motivations. It is possible for instance, to do something which it is known will generate both pleasure and pain. In such a situation what is done will depend ultimately on the way the complex as a qualitative whole is weighed. This implies some sort of evaluative mechanism through which experience as a consequence of activity is evaluated and through which activity is modified in accordance with qualitative preferences in experience.

It was for a failure to consider the part that feelings at the more emotional end of the scale play in the formulation of goals that I criticized the information theoretic models of man as a goal-directed being. Accordingly, I suggest we posit an evaluative mechanism as part of the attempt to rectify this failing. If such a thing exists it is probably a complex system of mechanisms. As conceived here it exercises the following functions:

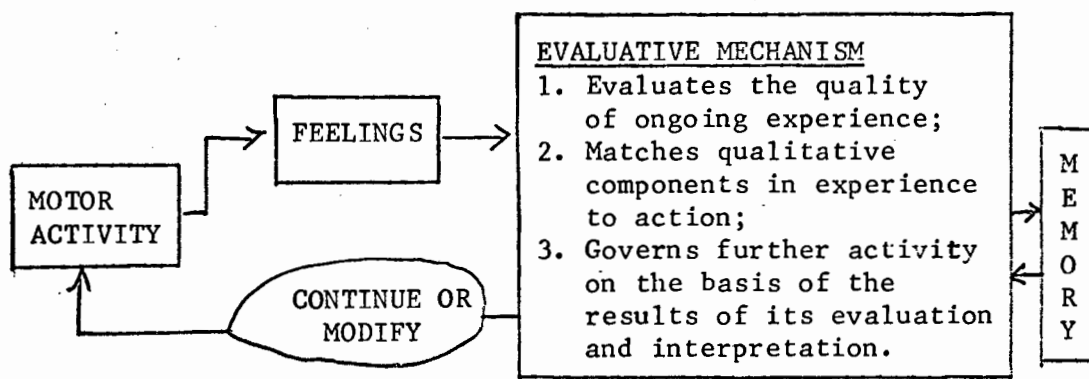
- (i) It establishes qualitative preferences in experiences;
- (ii) It governs the choice of activity as a function of these qualitative preferences.

The extent of its governance of activity in this way is both general and particular. We can see activity as concatenated both sequentially and synchronously of a range of basic acts. This concatenation is governed as a whole and in its parts by the evaluative mechanism as a function of qualitative preferences. This being so the evaluative mechanism also contains that which seeks to match qualitative components in experience to the act-components thought to generate them. Activity can then be modified in part or as a whole, depending upon the linking.

To the above analysis a further factor needs to be added i.e. the ability to remember the experiential consequences of past activity in some way or other. Given this ability a further facet in the evaluative mechanism's governance of action becomes apparent viz:

the ability to control activity so that the immediately motivating feelings within experience such as pain or pleasure do not always lead spontaneously to the correlative acts. Through the operation of this function we are able to undergo immediately unpleasant experiences and to persist in the activity which generates them because we have learnt that a delayed consequence of the activity is the generation of highly satisfying experience.

Putting all the above views together the following sort of model is suggested:



While this model could be superimposed upon the human being as a biological entity it is not so much a model of internal structure as a logical model. It is lacking in detail but contains the essentials as I have enunciated them. The evaluative mechanism is pictured here as a complex organizational centre. It evaluates the quality of experience, interprets qualitative components in terms of their having been generated by components of the complex act, assigns its judgments to memory, draws on memory when making judgments, and finally organizes activity. Whether or not activity is modified as a whole or in part depends upon the evaluation. This model fills the gap for which the informational model was criticized but is gross in that it does not detail the way in which the environment comes to be represented internally. Nor does it detail the use to which this internal representation is put in decision making. These are matters to which I shall return.

Taking the above view, our activity is governed by our qualitative preferences in experience. The latter in turn are traced as the consequences of our activity upon us as sensitive beings. Through this interplay we develop the more or less clear disposition to favour

certain activities above others. Now, our dispositions to value are manifested by what we do. They are manifested by the way in which we seek to relate to what we take to be the environment. But this in its turn is determined by our qualitatively preferred experiences and by the way in which the evaluative mechanism seeks to generate these experiences. Thus, our dispositions to value manifest the workings of the evaluative mechanism. Hence the name of the mechanism, hence also the title of this chapter. If the views that I have suggested hold, then the source of our values is the evaluative mechanism. Consequently, values, in the form of qualitatively preferred experiences, can be seen to underpin all human activity.

This view I will now defend against two criticisms. They are:

- (i) that I have reduced motivation to a form of psychological hedonism;
- (ii) that much human activity does not seem to be governed by values, but simply follows safe social conventions.

With regard to the first criticism I do not see my position as presenting a form of psychological hedonism for I intend "qualitative preferences" in an abstract sense. For instance, when an individual undergoes physically painful experiences for the sake of a moral principle I suggest that his activity be seen to be governed by his qualitative preferences. They are so governed because in a deep sense he feels better for doing what he does. However, there is still a critical problem here. It might be argued that so long as I am prepared to bury qualitative preferences deeply enough my assertion that we are motivated by them will not be open to criticism. However, I shall go on to argue that our development of characteristic motivated activities is related to a hierarchy of qualitative preferences. At the higher levels qualitative preference relates to extremely complex experiences which can override the obvious preferences which occur at lower levels, the latter being those with which psychological hedonism is usually associated. The best term that I have come across by which to characterize these complex or "deep" preferences is the term "enrichment". In seeking qualitatively preferred experiences what we are seeking fundamentally, is enrichment. But we do differ with regard to the energy we put into the search. This brings me to the second possible criticism.

It might be said that much activity simply follows safe social conventions and as such is not governed by qualitative preferences in any significant sense. Clearly, it is true that much activity does take its lead from social conventions. But this need not mean that qualitative preferences play no part. Rather, in healthy societies it is precisely the adoption of social conventions which is found to generate qualitatively satisfying experience. Societies, however, are not perfect. Conventions exist which, when adopted, do not generate particularly enriching experience, yet they are adopted.

The situation referred to above arises in the failure to integrate individual valuative inclinations with institutionalized social objectives. There is a relatively unimportant level at which this occurs. It has to do with the socialization process and with the way in which an individual will sacrifice selfish desires for fear of punishment. The resultant decision is then definitely traceable to the way in which the experiential consequences of differing acts are weighed by the evaluative mechanism. But there is a more significant level at which a failure to integrate can take place. It occurs relative to conventions whose observance is not necessary to the survival of society as such, but is necessary for the survival of that particular form of society. Typically such conventions do not satisfy the qualitative preferences of all members of the society, but as has been remarked, individuals differ in regard to the energy which they put into the search for enrichment. Consequently, many individuals in such a situation will simply tolerate the convention, taking an easy way out. Such a decision is due to a combination of two factors:

- (a) So long as the situation is tolerable attempts to change it may simply not be deemed worth the effort i.e. not worth the potential "pain" involved;
- (b) The organizational demands made upon the evaluative mechanism in such a situation may exceed its organizational ability.

The issue is a complex one. It is at the heart of understanding processes of social change. Accordingly, I shall postpone further consideration of it until these processes are dealt with.

Implicit in the above discussion is the view that different individuals

may have different evaluative mechanisms. There is also a suggestion that the evaluative mechanism itself operates under certain limitations. These I now wish to consider.

5.3 Limitations to the Evaluative Mechanism

There are three sources of the limitations under which the evaluative mechanism has to operate. They are:

- (i) that individuals differ in that the nature, extent, and intensity of their feelings may differ under conditions of identical stimulation;
- (ii) that individuals are always open to qualitatively new experiences;
- (iii) that there are varying limits to the ability of the evaluative mechanisms to organize.

(i) Individual differences.

Human experience is open to inspection only by the ways in which feelings may be expressed in overt activity. When in pain we tend to grimace or cry, when amused we smile or laugh. It has been pointed out that certain feelings, if we are to judge by facial expressions, appear to be paracultural. There is then a limited sense in which we appear to be similar in our make-up as beings responsive to input. But there are two important ways in which we appear to differ. They are:

- (a) similar or even identical stimuli can have markedly different impacts. This is particularly so as we move from the perceptual end of responsiveness to the emotional end.
- (b) some people are capable of experiencing feelings which are just not open to others. Thus we differ regarding the qualitative ranges of experience of which we are capable.

Differences of the above sort are probably a combined function of the nature of the individual and of circumstance. Each of the above differences has a particularly important implication. An implication of the first is that individuals will differ in regard to their dispositions to value, for their qualitatively preferred experiences

will be generated by different activities. An implication of the second is that the motivated activity developed by one individual may be totally beyond the comprehension of another. It may be so, not because they differ in regard to the impact that stimuli have upon them in a superficial way, but because the second individual may simply be incapable of experiencing what is experienced by the first.

(ii) Qualitatively new experiences.

The second limitation to which the evaluative mechanism is subject has to do with the fact that we may always be open to qualitatively new experiences. At any one time the qualitative range covered by our past experiences is likely to be less than that of which we are potentially capable. This will be a function of the things we have done in the environment in which we have done them. But we may change what we do or change that part of the environment in which we do them. It follows therefore that we may open ourselves up to qualitatively new experiences. It seems in fact that neither as individuals, nor as a species are we aware of the full range of experiences of which we are capable. This will be a point of some importance when we come to discuss the faltering way in which values are sometimes articulated. In any case, to the extent that there may be novel experiences available to us, to that extent we can never be sure that our qualitative preferences have been settled once and for all. Under the impact of new activities which are felt to be potentially more enriching than past activities, our hierarchy of preferences may change. Then our rating of activities in terms of their priority would change and we would manifest new and different dispositions to value. On the other hand, we could claim to be contented with the way things are and feel no impulse to broaden the range of our experiences by engaging in new activities.

The second limitation amounts to the following: The evaluative mechanism at any one time may not be fully informed. The importance of this point lies in the fact that qualitative preferences may change and with them our dispositions to value.

(iii) Limits to the ability of the evaluative mechanism to organize. The third limitation is a limitation of the evaluative mechanism itself. I have called it an organizational limitation, by which I mean an inability to cope with or to find a place for experience whether it be due to the complexity or the intensity of that experience. It is manifest when we cease to be able to evaluate the quality of our whole experience. Failure to weigh the complex of feelings generated as a whole by a complex of activities is one of the factors behind the adoption of tolerable but unsatisfying social conventions. It amounts to letting society do the job of organizing. But there is another instance in which the organizational limits of the evaluative mechanism is apparent. It has to do with the evaluative response to qualitatively new experiences. For example, say we have been introduced to a "good" red wine for the first time when all our lives we have been accustomed to drinking cheap and relatively "poor" red wine. In all probability we will prefer the wine to which we are accustomed to the good but strange one. If we are wise, however, we will suspend judgment at least temporarily, recognizing that the taste that distinguishes good from bad wines has been generations in the making. That which is immediately pleasing may be found wanting with time. Thus, cultivated taste develops as a preference for that which pleases and continues to please as time passes. It is a characteristic of such things, however, that the experiences they involve are highly complex. This is true of the experience of many cultural objects or objectives which have been generations in the making. Thus, when first confronted by them we are likely to say that they are strange, interesting, perhaps even exhilarating. But we are not always sure whether or not we enjoy them.

All the above limiting factors are sources of the different dispositions to value that we manifest by what we do. The first explains, as a function of the fact that individuals differ in their responsiveness, how different individuals can find particular activities developed by others to generate qualitatively satisfying experiences, senseless. The second limiting factor accounts for the

way in which individuals may change their dispositions to value as a function of the fact that the evaluative mechanism is never fully informed as to the qualitative range of experience. The effects of the third actually mitigate those of the first, for if our individual differences would tend to diversity our organizational limitations have the opposite effect. They lead us to adopt the most convenient, usually the social, means of manifesting dispositions to value even when these are potentially less satisfying than would have been those activities arising out of immediate personal dispositions.

Clearly, while I have dealt with the three limiting factors separately their effects in any individual or across any group of individuals may be combined. Responsiveness is not a static faculty, but may be developed in accordance with the organizational ability of the evaluative mechanism and of what it does with its basic materials, the individual's feelings. The greater the organizational ability of the evaluative mechanism the greater will be the range of feelings which it will be capable of organizing. Thus, a breadth of responsiveness in conjunction with a breadth of experience and the organizational ability to deal with them is what is involved in the diversity between the ability of individuals to feel and value deeply. If there is an imbalance in any one area e.g. responsiveness or experience, an individual may be "feeling blind" i.e. incapable of certain feelings such as, for example, compassion or anger. This is a topic which will receive further treatment when the evaluation of alternative religious values is considered.⁴

In any case, the combined effects of all three cause the difficulty we have as individuals in societies seeking to develop goal-directed activities which satisfy our qualitative preferences. To the extent that we succeed we manifest consistent dispositions to value. This consistency is a function of the fact that our activity has been found to be satisfying as far as it goes. When this has happened I suggest we see ourselves as having developed goals which can be thought of as articulate expressions of value.

5.4 Goals as Articulate Expressions of Value

If it is feelings that move us then this is clearest at the biological level. Survival in a biological sense requires the satisfaction of biological needs. These needs may be signalled in such feelings as hunger, pain, heat and cold, etc. The feelings motivate us to activity and we judge the success of our activity by whether or not the feelings are removed. In other words, the efficacy of our acts is measured in the qualitative changes that occur in our experience. The more efficacious our acts in this sense the more likely we are to settle upon them for the future. This process is the one described by the logical model of the functions of the evaluative mechanism. Eventually we develop consistency in our activities. They then manifest our dispositions to value in an articulate way. As such they manifest goals, the articulate expressions of value.

The process begins in earnest from birth as an experiment in which various paths of activity may be tried out for their efficacy. Initially it seems to begin with certain unlearned and inbuilt programs. For instance, the typical activity motivated by feelings of hunger or pain, is crying. In the accommodating environment into which many babies are born this is sufficient to provoke circumstances designed to alleviate the discomfort. Other inbuilt programs may then come into play e.g. the sucking reflex in the case of hunger.

Initially the goal-directed activities manifested by infants display recognizably bio-psychological motivations. Organic comfort in a narrowly defined sense appears to be the qualitatively preferred experience. But while satisfaction may be achieved through an act repertoire based on inbuilt and unlearned programs, the way in which the environment accommodates the infant's activity includes the trappings of social convention and culture. Thus, the elaboration by the infant of its act repertoire by learning soon replaces what may be innate tendencies to act with more complex skills developed in part as a response to socio-cultural prompting. So begins the process whereby the individual and the environment interact in the

individual's attempt to articulate values. With time and through learning the acts whereby qualitative preferences are satisfied or qualitatively satisfying experiences generated are continually modified. Modification occurs within the bounds of what is perceived to be possible. At a particular stage of sophistication this modification begins to appear to be more clearly recognizable as backed by psycho-social motivations than by bio-psychological motivations. Qualitative preferences appear to be related to the individual as a psycho-social rather than as a bio-psychological being. Individuals and groups then show an ability to decide on activities which run counter to what may be identified as the needs of biological survival. There is an appreciable increase in the complexity of qualitatively satisfying experience.

This overlay of what are initially recognizable as bio-psychological motivations with psycho-social motivations is not only apparent in cultural systems which consciously run counter to the requirements, say, of biological survival. It is evident even in the way we elaborate upon activities such as eating which served initially to satisfy hunger. By the time we are psycho-social beings the act of eating can have been elaborated to satisfy a whole host of qualitative preferences.

Now, the activities developed in the attempt to generate qualitatively satisfying experiences are motivated and as such goal-directed. This they are to the extent at least that ongoing activity is governed by the evaluative mechanism as a function of ongoing feelings. However, what the goals are is not always clear, even to the individual acting. While there may be movement or activity, just where it is headed or what is intended may sometimes be difficult to make out. This is because it is at root that feelings move. Knowing what the goal or range of goals are requires the ability to anticipate or to rehearse in some way or other what the consequences of that action will be. It is the development of this knowledge that turns experimental goal-directed activity into articulate manifestations of dispositions to value. It is to the extent that this has occurred that the individual can be said to have

goals which are articulate expressions of value.

The knowledge that is of importance here is of two kinds:

- (i) knowledge about how to implement the goal;
- (ii) knowledge of the potential consequences of the implementation.

An individual need not be able to express his knowledge in words. But some kind of internal modelling of the environment is being suggested. It is then in the development of articulate expressions of value i.e. in the development of goals, that a feel for the context of experience emerges. This brings us to the need to incorporate into our logical model of the functions of the evaluative mechanism the processes of internal modelling.

5.5 The Emergence of the Context of Experience

Initially it is feelings that move. These feelings are such that in some way they seem to generate particular movements spontaneously as a function of what they are. In this process it may feel as though the evaluative mechanism is by-passed. However, the evaluative mechanism is not uninvolved for long, if at all, for the adequacy of the resultant activity, no matter how spontaneously or directly it may have sprung from feelings, is subjected to testing by the evaluative mechanism through the evaluation by the latter of the feelings that follow. This evaluation is an enterpretative process. It involves the attempt to construe the quality of experience generated, as a function of what has been done.

The initial purpose of interpretation may be to relate particular activities to particular experiential consequences. In this way a catalogue can be built up of acts and their experiential consequences for use in the guidance of future action. Cataloguing or memorizing is a requisite if any degree of sophistication is to develop in the attempt to generate qualitatively satisfying experience. Through it the individual acquires the ability within limits to anticipate the experiential consequences of his acts.

The experiential consequences I have also called the varying quality

of experience. It comes, I have suggested, as a result of the impact that our interaction with the environment has upon us as sensitive beings. For any one period of time it is a shifting complex of feelings ranging from the more perceptual to the more emotional. I have suggested that there is no dualism here and that the perceptual shades into the emotional. In any case, it is this miasma that is interpreted by the evaluative mechanism in its attempt to understand the generation of experience as a function of what has been done.

Now, judging by what individuals do and say it is apparent that fairly early on in this interpretative process a tendency develops to distinguish between oneself and everything else. Just what the self and everything else is conceived to be may not be particularly clear, but some feeling that there is something "out there" seems to develop. It is only at extremely sophisticated levels of action and experience that this tendency apparently can be removed again. In understanding the development of this tendency Bruner's suggestion that perceptual experience is meaningful from the moment it is first registered is probably relevant. It is visual experience in particular but also aural experience which appears to contain within it the tendency to make an interpretative distinction between self and other.⁵ As soon as such a distinction is felt, what is emerging is a supposition about the nature of the environment i.e. the context of experience.

I have resisted using the term "world-view" for "context of experience" because the context emerges from all of experience, whereas "world-view" is suggestive of the old divide between the cognitive and the emotional. The feeling of pain as a consequence of what was done for instance, can lead to the association of emotional values with the things seen. They will become known to produce pain when related to in certain ways and this will be construed to be a function of what they are. They might then be feared for what they are. Context, therefore, develops as a feeling about things in terms of their perceptual and emotional values. What we actually construe ourselves to be active in is not some construct abstracted purely from perceptual experience, but contains in it that which generates our emotional responses to it.

The context of experience emerges then through the interpretation and evaluation of the quality of experience relative to activity. As such it is construed to be the ground to the different qualities of experience to which we are open as a function of what we may do.

It is now possible to deal in greater detail with what it is to be articulate in the expression of values. To be articulate is to know how to satisfy qualitative preferences in relation to what are known to be the consequences of different modes of activity. The consequences in question are experiential, but as interpreted they may be felt to occur as consequences in the context of experience. Being articulate has two sides to it then, a practical and a theoretical. On the practical side it involves having the behavioural skill to realize qualitative preferences. On the theoretical side it involves knowing what arrangements of context go with the satisfaction of these preferences at every point in their pursuit. The actual satisfaction of qualitative preferences occurs when a relationship to what is construed to be the context of experience is achieved and maintained such that the qualitatively preferred experiences are generated. While I have expressed this in a way which suggests that this stage is static this is not how it is intended. It may involve a continuous interplay between activity and the supposed context of experience in accordance with the way in which the former is modified to accommodate felt changes in the latter. All the time what is sought is qualitatively satisfying experience. It may involve having to undergo unsatisfying experiences knowingly on the way to generation of the satisfying ones. It may involve maintaining a delicate balance between action and context so as to sustain a particular complex of feelings until that complex is simply tired of. It may involve initiating a new line of activity in relation to what is construed to be the context in accordance with motivational components in certain feelings, a process whose spontaneity is interrupted as soon as undesirable consequences are registered as having occurred. Until the individual has become a complete creature of habit the process as a whole is a learning one.

5.6 Some Implications of this View

In this chapter the basis to activity has been traced to an

evaluative mechanism abstractly conceived as being that which establishes our qualitative preferences in experience. It is thus the source of our valuing, for the use to which qualitative preferences are put in the governance of action leads to our development of dispositions to value. We express these dispositions in what we do. Eventually we develop standard strategies by which to generate qualitatively satisfying experience. These are accompanied by the development of an understanding of the context of experience, a context construed to be that in which the strategies are played out. When this level of sophistication is reached we can be considered to be articulate in our expressions of value, we can be considered to have goals.

There are a few interesting implications of this view. Some correlate well with our intuitions regarding the relationship between values and goals. In what follows these will be explicated.

First, two individuals can have the same goals but have different values. In other words, two individuals can seek the same arrangements of context by the same means, yet have different qualitative preferences. Consider the following case: There may be two individuals who differ from one another as responsive beings. Thus they may differ in regard to what activities generate qualitatively preferred experiences. Yet, through participation in the socio-cultural process they may end up with the same goals. The one may do so because he genuinely finds participation in those goal-directed activities satisfying. However, the other may do so not for the same reason but because, while he is not entirely satisfied, he does not want to risk the pain which may be involved in deviation. Because the threat of pain is greater than his dissatisfaction he acquires the same goals. But clearly, he should not be considered to have the same values.

Second, goals as articulate expressions of value represent values. They are, as it were, symbols fashioned within the individual's context of experience by the manipulation of elements of that very context. It has been remarked that what is actually done in re-arranging context is carefully controlled by constantly monitoring the quality of

experience. Thus, activity can be modified to accommodate satisfaction of the same qualitative preferences in changing environments. It makes sense in this view therefore to see goals as context-bound but values as context free. A value may seek articulation in any context. It also makes sense to see values as more enduring than goals, for the context of experience is changing more rapidly than are man's qualitative preferences. Values then lie within the evaluative mechanism as an impulse determined by one's qualitative inclinations and they generate goal-directed activity.

Third, goals are produced via feelings not needs. Thus, the satisfaction of a theoretically identified value e.g. biological survival, may become a fortuitous side-effect of the activities which develop because of their ability to satisfy quite unrelated qualitative preferences. Hence my criticism of theories of motivation which take their starting point from some theoretic value such as biological survival or well-being of the social system. Goal-directed activity may fortuitously satisfy the requirements of these values and their source may in fact be these values, but their actual motivation may in the end be quite different. And if human activity is to be understood in both its "normal" and "abnormal" functions, then it is actual motivations that need to be identified.

Chapter 6: The Hierarchy of Goals

When goals have been developed which generate adequately satisfying experiences, learning may all but cease. The organizational function of the evaluative mechanism will then no longer be so much to interpret as to check. It will no longer be involved in the creative ordering of experience, but in the governance of action relative to the organizational work already done. Interpretation may still be involved, but in a lower key. This sort of stage is reached when the possible arrangements of context are so well known relative to the paths of activity by which goals may be implemented, that expectations are always confirmed upon choice of path. The functions of the evaluative mechanism can then be described in another way, one in which a far greater use of some sort of memory is implicit. We can state its functions as follows:

- (i) that it is responsible for goal-setting i.e. for initiating a general line of activity which may be felt by the individual to satisfy best his qualitative preferences;
- (ii) that in the governance of subsequent action it monitors the context of experience selectively in an organized and informed way so as to (a) keep track of the details of fluctuation in the context which may require modification of the activity along certain pre-determined lines, (b) check that the generally expected contextual consequences are occurring, and (c) keep a look out for the unexpected and possibly new which may require a change of strategy.
- (iii) The informational results of monitoring, interpreted through registration in the internal representation, are then used in the formulation of appropriate continuing activity;
- (iv) And finally, the overall quality of experience which results is still evaluated as more or less satisfying. Should the level of satisfaction fall the tendency will be away from the organization on the basis of what has been learnt back to renewed creative organization.

The above description of the evaluative mechanism is true to the extent that we have become creatures of habit. Apart from the last point it is much like the way in which the organizational function of the brain is described in information theoretic models of man. This is to be expected since these models take their starting point from a consideration of human activity when goals are pretty well on the way to formulation. But prior to this level is the learning process, stimulated by the search for qualitatively satisfying experiences.

The learning process through which goals are developed is usually conceived in the literature on the development of skill, as proceeding in a building block way. Simple skills become the habits of thought and action upon the foundation of which the more complex skills are built.¹ In the process of such building, a hierarchy of skills emerges. The hierarchy will be specifiable relative to both the structurally and sequentially concatenated components of a complex skill. Consider for example what is involved in driving a car. In learning to drive sequential and structural concatenations have to be mastered. For instance, changing gears involves the sequence: depress clutch - change gears - release clutch; and it involves the structural concatenation which co-ordinates clutch, break, and accelerator action.

Once complex skills of this sort have been mastered, any particular sequence of activities may be analyzable into a whole host of goals. There may be a main purpose behind such a sequence e.g. getting to work; involving in turn a series of lesser purposes along the way e.g. starting the car, driving it to work, parking, etc. The lesser purpose may be broken down into still smaller purposeful components e.g. starting the car involves putting the key into the ignition, turning it, and depressing the accelerator, etc. Main purposes too may be seen as smaller components within yet larger purposes e.g. for most people getting to work is an important part of making a living. By the time therefore that articulate expressions of value have emerged in activity, what is involved is a hierarchy of goals. The illustration I have used, however, shows only that any general goal-directed endeavour like that of driving a car can be considered to be hierarchically organized. This is an important sense in which goals form

a hierarchy. But it is only the starting point from which to consider the development of a more comprehensive hierarchy of goals i.e. that which governs not just one goal-directed endeavour, but the life-endeavour as a whole.

6.1 Orientations and Modes of Engagement

The term "orientation" has found a technical usage in the work of D.M. MacKay.² He introduced it as a term of convenience for what he calls the "total state of readiness" of an organism. The latter he describes as the embodiment of a total configuration of functional and more or less permanent linkages between basic acts which, as linked, constitute complex activity. What MacKay seems to have in mind is the following: We are capable of a range of basic acts, both external and internal. These can be concatenated structurally and sequentially to form complex behaviours. At any one time we will be capable of a vast number of such complex behaviours which can be thought of as a system. The system will manifest itself in routines and sub-routines in our behaviour. It is not an arbitrary system, but is one in which activity is matched to, in MacKay's words, the world of activity. The matching is determined as a function of what routines are thought to be needed in order to implement the goals of the moment in the perceived state of the environment. This system, considered as a whole, is what MacKay seems to intend by the total state of readiness i.e. by the organism's orientation.

As MacKay speaks of it orientation is a logical rather than an ontological model. By that he means, it is a thought-model. It is not one for which he attempts to identify explicit physiological localities. It is based on observations regarding the way in which we organize our activity. For MacKay our organizational abilities apparently suggest that something like an "orientation" is what our activity is founded upon. However, he makes no attempt to give the notion an explicitly physiological interpretation. Nevertheless, a physiological interpretation would seem warranted, for the orientation of an individual, in conception at least, is roughly similar to the notion of a computer program. It is, as it were, an internal physiological program which differs from a computer program in that it would seem to involve a measure of self-initiated change

and control. Just what, in MacKay's view, is responsible for the changing we shall see. For the time being it is sufficient to point out that in this view the orientation of an individual at any one time represents the way and extent to which he has organized his life-endeavours. While seldom fully established, an orientation is nevertheless the basis for the initiation and control of activity in the pursuit of life's goals. Having developed out of past activity it is that which, subject to whatever changes may be made to it, is brought to bear on future activity. In MacKay's conception then, the orientation is analogous to a life-program, albeit one which is incomplete and subject to change.

I shall advance reasons for not using the concept of orientation so comprehensively. Instead I shall suggest that it be used to refer to that which underlies particular areas of goal-directed activity as illustrated with reference to what is involved in driving a car. Whichever be the use of the term it is clear that when MacKay refers to "routines" and "sub-routines" the model is similar to that which I have introduced when speaking of the hierarchy of goals which is detectable relative to any particular complex goal-directed activity. What is suggested by the notion of "orientation" is that such a hierarchy is based upon some sort of internal structure. While MacKay does not give the term a physiological interpretation he comes close to such an interpretation when he talks of the way basic acts are functionally linked. There have been more explicit attempts to posit structures which would account for the development of skill. I shall confine myself to a brief explication of one such model, that due to Osgood.³

Osgood, it will be remembered, distinguished three levels at which humans as informational processors function i.e. the projection, integration, and representation levels. For our purposes it is certain structures which he posits at the integration level that are of interest. Osgood suggests that both perception and action are partly integrated in the mediating structures found at this level. What makes integration possible is the development of lateral connections between the cells of the nervous system. The connections, whether on the perceptual or motor side, are developed

through learning. This occurs when stimuli or sets of stimuli are repeatedly transmitted in conjunction with one another. Eventually, Osgood suggests, the constant conjunction may establish lateral connections between the cells involved such that, should one of the stimuli occur as transmitted along one cell, the laterally connected cell would be disposed to fire thus transmitting the other stimulus. Osgood suggests two strengths of lateral relation viz: the evocative and the predictive. An evocative relation is one in which the constant conjunction of stimuli leads to a connection such that the occurrence of one is a sufficient condition for the occurrence of the other. A predictive relation on the other hand is one in which the lateral connection is strong enough to alert the nervous system to the possible occurrence of the second stimulus given the occurrence of one, but is not strong enough to evoke it.

As Osgood recognizes, the model is highly speculative and incomplete.⁴ But the point of the model is to suggest that learning occurs through the way in which experience achieves structural modifications of physiological mechanisms. To have learnt a skill in this view is to have established a particular physiological organization. This organization then constitutes a structure which is the basis for learnt functions. F.H. George has collected various models of the way in which such physiological organization may take place.⁵ Hebb's cell assembly model is probably the best known. It is interesting to note, that in terms of a model due to Kappers, learning was actually conceived to involve the growth of nerve cells so as to form lateral connections of the sort imagined by Osgood.⁶

In whatever way it takes place, it seems that some form of physiological organizing must be involved in the process whereby learning leads to skill. The internal programming suggested by MacKay's conception of orientation is then to be conceived physiologically. It is in this sense that I wish to use the word "orientation". An orientation consists in a particular physiological organization which is the end result of the way in which physiological modifications have been established through learning experience. It is what makes complex activity possible. Practice of the simpler elements of a skill leads

to an internal organization upon the basis of which these elements can become mechanical functions, exercised at will. Increasingly complex skills can then be developed through the gradual elaboration of the simpler components. Given repeated practice these complexes can become in turn the more sophisticated mechanical functions upon the foundations of which skills of even greater complexity can be developed.

I have spoken of the way in which complexity can emerge through the elaboration of simple elements. It is important not to confuse simplicity here with detail, for elaboration can occur in two directions. On the one hand it can occur in the direction of greater comprehensiveness so that a complex skill is achieved through the additive elaboration of simpler components concatenated both structurally and sequentially but on the other hand elaboration may occur in the direction of greater detail. Complexity may lie in the way in which a general strategy is elaborated through its being broken down into ever more finely differentiated strategies so that what emerges is greater detail rather than greater generality. The acquisition of some complex skills may involve development in both directions. For example, in the development of a typical gymnastic routine attention has to be paid to detail in the achievement of neatness, while the routine as a whole involves the stringing together of various component routines. There is an increase in both detail and comprehensiveness as greater skill is achieved. The fact that elaboration can occur in both directions will be a point of some importance when we come to consider what is involved in religion.

In terms of the above view then, skill is made possible through learning. But learning occurs through the organizational effects that learning experience has upon the physiology. In this view a human being's learning history is considered to be structurally recorded. This structural record can be thought of as an internal program. It may be elaborated in either of two directions. To the extent that it may be changed, and elaboration is a form of change, to that extent it may be considered still less than adequate from the individual's point of view. The question then arises as to what governs the development of an orientation. In MacKay's terms it is something called the "orientating system",⁷ but for obvious reasons I have

called it the "evaluative mechanism".

MacKay notes that any behaviour based on orientation may not be perfectly matched to circumstances. In that case what he calls "logical" work must be done on the orientation i.e. on the system of functional linkages between basic acts.⁸ Some links may require strengthening, others may need to be created or dissolved. The orienting system fulfils both these functions and apparently determines which complex acts go with which environmental circumstances according to needs and goals. If an orientation is a program, then the orientating system is the programmer. Implementation of the program involves:

- (i) the governing of perceptual selectivity so that informational requirements are met;
- (ii) the interpretation of the information gained in terms of its significance for the goal in hand;
- (iii) the initiation of responsive action.

To the extent that the program is fixed i.e. to the extent that orientation is rigid, to that extent the orienting system need not be involved in its implementation except to start it. However, it is seldom that we become so rigid in our orientation. Mostly what is involved is probably a physiological organization in which predictive rather than evocative relations hold between the components. In such cases the task of the orienting system is to spot check at critical points so as to ascertain that expectations are being met. If expectations are not met then logical work has to be done.

Now, in my terms an orientation may also be incomplete and as such require elaboration. But when elaboration is felt to be needed I have suggested that the mechanism involved be called the evaluative mechanism. Moreover, elaboration is felt to be required not only when, as MacKay puts it, activity is felt to be imperfectly matched to circumstances, but fundamentally when activity is not felt to satisfy qualitative preferences adequately. The imperfection which MacKay notes is but a special case of that which I note. Thus while the orienting system and the evaluative mechanism as conceived overlap in function, the latter is somewhat more broadly conceived than the former. This is as a result of the fact that I have put qualitative preferences at the

root of the development of orientation rather than goals. Thus as noted, the functions of what MacKay calls the orienting system are carried out by the evaluative mechanism only to the extent that goals have emerged as articulate expressions of value.

In my view then an orientation is an underlying physiological organization which, when functioning, issues in goal-directed activity. It may exist at the integration level in some such form as is suggested by Osgood and as such would be partly responsible for the phenomena of masking and gating. It is also to be considered as identical to whatever physiological organization exists in the nervous system as the structural basis of activity. It is set into motion and the motion controlled by the evaluative mechanism. The manifest outcome is more or less energetic goal-directed activity. Such activity, the overt functional consequences of orientation, I suggest we call "modes of engagement".

A mode of engagement is the overt behavioural counterpart of an orientation. As with orientation it can be more or less well-developed. It is developed or acquired when we elaborate a particular pattern of activity in accordance with the governing function of the evaluative mechanism. This elaboration will, of course, go with the correlative internal elaboration of orientation. And again, as is the case with orientation, the elaboration of a mode of engagement can occur either in the directions of detail or comprehensiveness.

What is engaged with is the environment but what the individual feels himself to be engaged with is the context of experience. The quality of experience is generated as a function of what the individual is as a responsive being and of the way in which the environment is engaged in. It is this quality which is interpreted to yield the context and which is also used when the adequacy of modes of engagement in their ability to satisfy qualitative preferences, is evaluated. It should be clearer now why I have defined the environment as I have for the particular form which the environment takes for a particular individual depends upon his mode of engagement. It depends thus upon his orientation. But mode of engagement and orientation are in turn governed in their development by the way in which the evaluative mechanism initiates activity. This in turn is related to the

connection that this mechanism establishes between activity and the quality of experience that activity generates. Thus we come back to the valuative basis of action, seeing it now as resulting in orientations and modes of engagement.

6.2 The Orientation System

MacKay speaks of orientation as a whole, a total configuration of functional linkages between basic acts. It is a hierarchic structure which issues in routines and sub-routines calculated to fulfil needs and goals relative to the perceived state of the environment. Considered as a whole it is analogous to a life program, one which has been developed by the orienting system and which, to the extent that it is inadequate is always subject to development by this system.

I have suggested that the term be used less comprehensively so as to refer to particular units of goal-directed activity. I shall suggest the term "orientation system" for the whole. Thus, to have developed an orientation is to have developed a particular goal-directed function. As has been pointed out, such a function is usually specifiable as implementing a whole host of goals. In any case, the development of an orientation is governed by what I call the evaluative mechanism rather than the orienting system. This is because I imagine that it is qualitative preferences which are at the root of such development. By the time we manifest goals in what we do we can already be considered to have developed orientations through which qualitatively satisfying experiences are generated.

The overt side of orientations is what I have called "modes of engagement". They are the manifest patterns of activity by which we implement goals. When our activity begins to manifest consistency, that is evidence that we have developed a mode of engagement. Since it is overt, it is the mode of engagement which manifests our dispositions to value. It is structurally based in orientation but governed in its development by qualitative preferences.

When a particular pattern of activity is tried it results in experience of a certain quality i.e. its experiential consequence is a complex of feelings. If Bruner is right then certain feelings in the

complex, those which we have come to call perceptual, are interpreted spontaneously to yield the supposed context. This occurs even at fairly unsophisticated levels of infant activity. But it is the complex of feelings in part and as a whole which is evaluated as more or less preferred. Moreover, depending on the evaluation modifications may be made to the pattern of activity.

When activity is modified the quality of experience changes. But what qualitative changes take place will depend specifically on what modifications take place. Given this we can begin to explain how it is that we come to distinguish between the context of experience as we conceive of it in a general way, and the particular feel that it may have for us depending upon what we do in it. For example, let us assume that when I see fire for the first time I touch it as well but I do not like the sensation of being burnt. Conceivably, in trying to get rid of the unpleasant feeling I might just turn my head. While that might result in my no longer seeing the fire, I would still be subject to the unpleasant feeling of being burnt. Perhaps then I would take away my hand. The sensation would then change, there would still be pain but presumably I would be able to distinguish that pain from the former sensation of being burnt directly. The next time that I see a fire I would not be likely to touch it as well. The pattern of my activity will have changed and accordingly the feel that I have for the context of experience will differ. But depending on my interpretative inclinations I may wish to identify the context as similar to the previous one on the basis of the similarity between the visual experiences generated by the two. Thus, an understanding of the context of experiences at a general level may be developed, but the particular way in which it is felt to turn out will depend upon the mode of engagement used in it.

A mode of engagement has been settled upon once a particular complex pattern of activity consistently satisfies on the whole the individual's qualitative preferences. With that mode of engagement will go consistently recurring experiences of the context of experience, generated through interpretation of the impact that the individual's interaction with the environment has upon him. Depending on interpretative inclinations i.e. depending on that which arises

through the governance by the evaluative mechanism of the interpretative function, depending also upon the range of modes of engagement deemed possible within what is discovered to be a recurring context of experience, the individual may distinguish between the particular context as he experiences it and the context of experience as conceived in a general way.

A mode of engagement and the orientation underlying it may be varyingly fixed and subject to continuous elaboration in point of detail or comprehensiveness. As a sequence of complex patterns of activity it is seldom if ever that the pattern follows through unchanged from beginning to end everytime that it is initiated. Rather, at every point in the sequence a mode of engagement may involve a range of alternative patterns with each alternative contingent upon what may be felt as having occurred in the context of experience. Through learning experience the context of experience is recognized to be variable and as such to require modifications to activity which are contingent upon which variations occur if qualitative preferences are to be satisfied.

A mode of engagement then will involve the following:

- (i) a complex sequence of possible patterns of activity which are felt, in relation to the environment, to provide the best means of satisfying qualitative preferences or generating qualitatively satisfying experience in that environment.
- (ii) branching at critical points in the system so that a range of alternatives is provided which is contingent upon the particular arrangements of context which may be construed to occur at those points.
- (iii) selective perceptual procedures calculated to provide information specifically at branch points and checking procedures whose purpose is to see that expectations are met.
- (iv) government of the implementation of the whole by the evaluative mechanism which, in its governance, might make changes to the extent that these are felt to be necessary because of the experiential consequences of the mode of engagement.

In this view the hierarchy of goals which may be manifested by any particular mode of engagement is a hierarchy in two senses. Both senses are implicit in the example that I used earlier of driving a car to work. The two senses are:

- (i) that in which the hierarchical structure is defined by a scaling of its components in terms of domination or subordination. This kind of organization is typical of social systems the components of which are differentially invested with authority;
- (ii) that in which higher levels emerge as a consequence of the systematic integration of components, but in which the relation between sub- and super-ordinate systems is a reciprocal one rather than one of domination. This is the notion of hierarchy most true to systems theory. It is the one underlying the conceptions of the sorts of hierarchy introduced in chapter 2 above.

Modes of engagement and orientations involve hierarchies in both senses. While hierarchy as it is found in the first sense may not have connotations of authority, it has connotations of dominance through priority or preference. We can use the example of driving a car to get to work to illustrate what is involved here.

First, consider the act of driving a car. This is a complex mode of engagement with branching in the sequence at critical points representative of the alternatives perceived to be best in view of circumstances. Underlying such a mode of engagement is the orientation which is the structural foundations for the functional skills that driving a car involves. At any particular point in the implementation of the skill, what is involved is usually specifiable in goal-directed terms at a number of levels. For instance as an example of the second type of hierarchy the behavioural unit which we call "changing gear" involves both a sequential and a structural concatenation of basic acts to each of which we can give a description. We have to: Depress the clutch while simultaneously releasing the accelerator,

reposition the gear lever, and then reverse the first operation. Now, we can conceive of this unit as a whole i.e. as a super-ordinate activity involving the integrated performance of various sub-ordinate components. As a unit it occurs at a qualitatively different level of complexity to that of each of its components. We feel intuitively that the emergent integrated behavioural unit i.e. changing gear, should be considered to occur at a higher level than that of its parts, but that there is no scale of dominance or authority involved.

Welford has suggested that were we actually to ask an individual who was involved in such a complex task what he was doing, his answer would be determined by that level at which his attention was most concentrated. This in turn would be determined as a function of which description of the act would be felt to characterize the goal whose success was most in doubt.¹⁰ For instance, in our example an individual when asked what he was doing might respond that he is:

- (i) trying to change gears, or to turn a sharp corner;
- (ii) trying to drive the car without denting it;
- (iii) trying to get to work on time.

If the answer does indicate at which level attention was being concentrated, then it would probably indicate fairly reliably at which level learning was most likely to be occurring. In other words, in answering such a question an individual would probably be providing a good indication as to at which point he was elaborating upon his orientation.

But second, as an example of the first type of hierarchy, there can also be a relation of dominance or priority in the orientation involved in driving a car to get to work. It is indicated by the third example given above as a possible answer to the questions as to what is being done. In most cases, driving a car (to get to work) is the less important way of specifying what is being done. The greater priority and thus the goal-directed description of the act with the greatest connotation of importance, is that of getting to work. In fact, suppose that we have evolved a mode of engagement and an orientation upon which getting to work is based. The behavioural unit as a whole may be considered to begin, for example, with getting up in the morning and to end, barring irrelevant interruptions, with actually arriving.

At various points in the sequence of activity involved, sub-ordinate orientations will come into play. Driving a car may be one. It may be one of a set of alternatives occurring at a point relative to which the orientation as a whole branches. All these alternatives are supposed to enable the individual to cover the distance between home and work. Other members of the set might be: walking, catching a bus, getting a lift with a friend, or any combination of such. Each involves a sub-ordinate orientation which may be used to get to work. Moreover, each is likely to be a lesser priority than is that of getting to work. Interestingly, the set itself may be scaled by the individual in terms of preferences, with the evaluative mechanism determining the ranking order.

According to this example we see that particular complex orientations can involve complex but basic skills which may be used at will as sub-ordinate components of various different super-ordinate orientations. For example, driving a car may be used for a range of purposes such as going shopping, visiting friends, getting to work, ... and so on. In every case its use would not be exactly identical, for unusual circumstances may be encountered and routes may differ. On my understanding where ever there are such differences learning will lead to specialist orientations but the basic skill used along the way might be very nearly identical. They would be different to the extent that each route presented special obstacles or according to the effect that the nature of the super-ordinate activity had upon them e.g. one may drive to work to get there on time, or one may follow the same route on an afternoon drive.

The elaboration of different orientations and modes of engagement so as to secure different purposes is what is involved in the development of an orientation system. I have chosen to use different terms for the whole and for the parts for a reason. It is that in the development of the whole a certain amount of compartmentalization can take place, with whole behavioural units involving complex modes of engagement and orientations being clustered around particular kinds of purpose. This clustering and compartmentalization can occur to such a degree that the skills learnt and based in one compartment may be masked from another and therefore effectively barred from use in it.

This is a point which Clippinger has made particularly effectively.¹¹ He notes of knowledge that it is organized around goals in accordance with what are construed to be the informational requirements of those goals. But because of this organization what is known in one cluster, although it may be relevant to another, may be unknown or even contradicted by beliefs held in the other. For this reason views of the human being in which a more rather than less integrated degree of organization is implicit, are suspect. Thus I prefer the terms "orientation system" to the term "orientation" in reference to the whole. Each complex orientation may be more or less elaborate, but it is usually fairly well integrated. It has to be for it is by definition the structural basis for particular skills, but integration of the orientative system is an appreciably more difficult organizational task, one which involves the individual's attempt to organize his life as a whole i.e. to evolve a total life program.

The difficulty we have with regard to the integration of our orientation systems is due partly to the multiplicity of motivations to which we are subject. To use the terms adopted in this dissertation, it is due partly to the great range and complexity of the different feelings by which we may be moved. Some of these are fairly easily traceable to specific aspects of what we are. For instance, as bio-psychological beings we are subject to motivational feelings such as hunger or pain around which orientational units may be built. Similarly with the motivational feelings to which we are subject as psycho-social beings. For instance, we usually develop a complex set of activities whereby we attempt to maintain a balance between the needs for privacy and companionship, but all based in a complex set of motivational feelings. Typically then, as we evolve or acquire modes of engagement based on orientations on the basis of their ability to generate qualitatively satisfying experience, these will be found to occur as distinct behavioural units involving particular motor skills and particular knowledge clusters having to do with the arrangements of context in which the respective modes of engagement are played out. The more or less integrated set of such evolving units is the orientation system. It too is subject to elaboration and change, depending upon what orientations are included in it and how they are constituted and

organized relative to each other.

6.3 The Orientation System and the Hierarchy of Goals

As modes of engagement and the orientations upon which they are based, are developed, so the contexts of experience which are thought to be the backdrop to activity also develop. These construed contexts are got by interpretation of the qualitative range of the experiences which may be had in them. Since compartmentalization of orientation can take place the result as we develop an orientation system is that we see the context of experience itself to consist of distinctive contexts or sub-contexts. Evidence for the fact that knowledge is organized around goals in this way is found in the fact that what is familiar to us in one context in one orientation may be quite unrecognizable if we come across it in another.

I have referred to the use that social scientists make of the term "environment" and of the ways in which they may sub-divide it. For example, they may distinguish the home from the school or business environment, and so on. These distinctions are made on the basis of what contexts they see human beings to be involved in. But the designations as I have pointed out, run the risk of overlooking the different ways in which human beings themselves may divide their environment into contexts. For example, what may for one individual be the context in which he makes his living, may for another be a recreational context.

The tendency of social scientists is to sub-divide social systems into functional units as viewed from, say a sociological perspective only. But it is surely just as important that we understand the contextual map which people themselves may have of their environment. Such a map will be organized relative to the orientation system. It would probably include most or all of the following components in the case of most individuals i.e. Home Life, Education, Employment, Recreation, Religion.

Each individual develops relatively specialist orientations and modes of engagement in his involvement in each of the above kinds of context. Each specialist mode of engagement is usually an important element in

the generation by the individual of his qualitatively favoured experiences. Specifically what modes of engagement an individual has adopted relative to the above contexts will depend upon the range of alternatives which he perceives to be open to him. Usually these are culturally circumscribed. It is therefore at this point that the integration of individual motivations with social objectives is in critical balance. The range of alternatives on offer are what they are on the basis of what is socially sanctioned and what it is within the power of the society to enforce; but what the individual is seeking in choosing is qualitatively satisfying experience. The less well these things are integrated and the more widespread the lack of integration, the more likely are social changes.

Returning now to the individual, it is apparent that when we consider the orientation system as distinct from its components then the phenomenon of the hierarchical organization of goals emerges at a new level of complexity. Each particular complex or elaborate orientation may be the basis to the generation of strategies and sub-strategies relative to each of which a goal may be specifiable. Some of the sub-strategies are lower on a hierarchic scale in the sense that they are sub-systems within more complex systems. Others on the other hand are lower in the sense that they are lesser priorities. But all are simply parts of a particular complex orientation. Sub-ordination and organization takes place in a far more comprehensive way relative to the development of the orientation system.

When it comes to the development of the orientation system, the organizational problem is at its greatest. The individual in his development of such a system is involved in organizing whole complexes of orientations, for example, those involved in each of the general contexts referred to above. Moreover, their arrangement relative to each other and attempted integration is governed by the individual's qualitative preferences on the whole and on balance. In this task the individual in his capacity as a valuing being is fundamentally involved. To the extent that the task is successful whole complex orientations involving whole goal-complexes will be organized relative to one another on a scale of priorities. Hierarchy as it manifests itself in the orientation system has a definite connotation of dominance or priority. However, when the religious function is

considered in terms of the part that it plays in the organization of the orientative system we shall see that the very ability to organize implies hierarchy in the systems sense as well.

6.4 The Nature of Information

A short note on the nature of information seems warranted here, especially in regard to the relationship between information and the orientation system. It will not be comprehensive.

As noted, Weaver defined three levels of informational problem viz: the technical, semantic, and pragmatic. It is the second and third levels which are of interest here. Yovitz and Whittemore have suggested a generalized concept for the analysis of information at these levels.¹² It bears resemblances to the views of MacKay to which I have already alluded. In what follows I shall use both.

Yovitz and Whittemore suggest that information be defined as follows: It is "...data of value in decision making."¹³ In this view something is meaningful in a particular situation only if it is useful in some decision making process. Decision making requires a decision maker or mechanism and the need for decision making is conceived to occur as part of the implementation of goals. This view relates to the tradition of information science as crystallized in the work of Shannon and Weaver in that information as defined above is related to uncertainty. Clearly, if data is of value in decision making it is because it affects the decision maker's uncertainty regarding what action to take in the implementation of a goal. If it had no affect it would be, in the context of the pursuit of that goal, irrelevant. They continue their analysis with a presentation of the elements of what is involved in a decision making process. These elements are:¹⁴

- (i) a set of alternative courses of action;
- (ii) a set of possible outcomes contingent upon the decision as to which course of action should be undertaken;
- (iii) a function which relates these possible outcomes to conceptions of the arrangements of context which constitute the successful achievements of goals.

- (iv) a set of states of nature or, as I have called them, arrangements of context.

The model is neat as most informational models are. The decision making mechanism (DM) is conceived to be in control of all the above elements. Information then enters into the process by conveying data of value regarding which course of action is the best. As Yovitz and Whittemore conceive it, this data will relate to the context of experience i.e. information is specifically informative about the state of the context of experience.

While the tendency of Yovitz and Whittemore is to stress the positive affects of information i.e. they suggest that it "resolves or reduces" uncertainty, they do recognize that information can increase uncertainty if it is of the sort to challenge the adequacy of the model with which the DM is working.¹⁵ However, they suggest that even in those circumstances the effect of information should be regarded as positive, for it will contribute to the development of a more accurate model. This, of course, is not true in general. Sometimes the information which increases uncertainty does so only momentarily in that it is put to use in the subsequent development of a better model but sometimes such information may strain the organizational abilities of the DM to the point where no better model is forthcoming. In any informational model of human nature it is important to bear the organizational limits of what Yovitz and Whittemore call the DM in mind, for these limits play an important role in the way human beings resolve difficult questions of value.

In addition to this limit to the views of Yovitz and Whittemore, there is another. The situation they describe is recognizable as one in which modes of engagement and the orientations upon which they are based already manifest dispositions to value at a fairly sophisticated level. But the decision making process by which motivational feelings and qualitative preferences lead to this sophistication contains very important elements which are excluded from their model. Specifically, Yovitz and Whittemore have not conceived in broad enough terms of the way in which the adequacy of possible courses of action is evaluated. They speak of the "possible decision outcomes" in terms which suggest

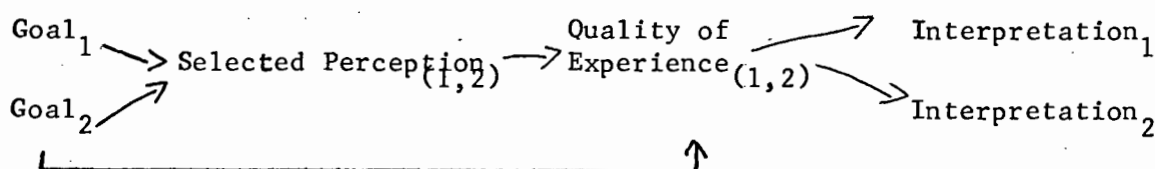
that these are related only to arrangements of context.¹⁶ But obviously, outcomes are fundamentally experiential. The matching function therefore is at root one which is governed by the qualitative preferences of what I call the evaluative mechanism. Evaluation is based on all the complex of feelings generated by activity. While some of these may be interpreted in terms of the context of experience others are more clearly recognizable as having emotional values.

The definition of information as data of value in decision making provided by Yovitz and Whittemore is useful but it is the whole complex of feelings which provides such data. This complex is generated as a function of what we are as responsive beings, of what the environment is, and of what we do in it. The special informational significance of the less perceptual feelings is that they are used to judge the adequacy of modes of engagement as articulations of value. To the extent that judgment is contingent upon what arrangements of context are deemed satisfactory, the context of experience will include emotional values. This is true even of hard science in which judgments regarding the adequacy of theories are affected by aesthetic feelings.¹⁷

Since information is that which is of value in decision making, the significance of what is experienced will be determined in relation to whatever goal or set of goals is in hand. This brings us to the question of meaning. It is an area into which I shall not venture except to draw out some implications of the view that the informational significance of experience is related to goals. MacKay suggests that the meaning of a matter-energy configuration be considered to be its potential selective function upon orientation.¹⁸ Re-expressed in my terms, the meaning of a feeling or complex of feelings would be its potential selective function on the orientation system, but this is a view which I shall neither accept or reject. What I wish to retain is the suggestion implicit in both MacKay and in Yovitz and Whittemore that what significance a feeling or complex of feelings has is related to the goals of the moment. As such it will be related to the orientation system. This leads to a further conclusion regarding the multi-dimensionality of meaning. This I can best illustrate with reference to an example.

Consider a situation in which two people are playing chess.¹⁹ Standing next to them is a disinterested observer watching, but without any knowledge of the game to help him make out what is going on. To this observer the movement of a pawn may mean nothing more than the displacement of an oddly shaped block of wood on a checkered board. But to the players it will obviously mean much more. If both are playing to win it may be a threat to one but a relief to the other. Simultaneously each may assign a further range of values to the move in terms of their orientative systems as a whole. If one were a politician he might liken it to a political strategem. The other, on the other hand, may see in the resultant arrangement of the board an aesthetically appealing pattern. The example illustrates this very important point: the assignation of significance to experience by interpretation of the quality of experience is a multi-dimensional process having as many dimensions as there are goals brought to bear on the phenomenon monitored and interpreted.

Early on in this dissertation I made much of the influence that the attempted articulation of values may have upon perceptual selectivity and hence on the feel for context. To that point the above now needs to be added i.e. that articulated values do not only govern the selection of perception but they also play a part in the interpretation of the perceptions selected. The following diagram illustrates this point by illustrating a situation in which two individuals with different goals nevertheless have similar selective structures:



We are now in a position to apply all the notions that have been developed and explicated to the elucidation of human nature as religious.

Section C: Application of the System to the Interpretation
of Religion

In this section key concepts in the interpretation of religion are developed on the basis of the foundations laid in the previous two sections. Religion at an individual level is defined and then, on the basis of a conception of the relationship between individuals and society, its emergence at a social level is explored.

Chapter 7: The Religious Function in Human Nature

The line of argument so far has been to suggest that human beings are fundamentally valuing beings. At every level of the development of modes of engagement and orientations upon which they are based, choices are governed by evaluation of the experiential consequences of activity. Within experience there are feelings or complexes of feelings which have a motivational component and, as such, may be a spontaneous stimulus to activity, but the ongoing evaluation of the experiential consequences of such spontaneously motivated activity soon becomes a factor whereby such motivations are governed. Consequently, activity becomes subject to control as a function of qualitative preferences in experience. The resultant modes of engagement, the products of the learning which makes control possible, manifest our dispositions to value.

Modes of engagement and the orientations upon which they are based may be more or less general in the temporal span with which they govern our lives. To take a simple example, that involved in driving a car is more general than that involved in changing gear. They may also be more or less elaborate in point of detail. Again to take a simple example, skill in changing gear can be taken to manifest a more detailed elaboration of the orientation involved than rough and ready changing of gears. Finally, they can be more or less amenable to change. This I suppose, will reflect the extent to which the orientational or structural base to a mode of engagement has become ingrained physiologically.

Any complex mode of engagement or orientation manifests two kinds of hierarchy, the first being that in which components are ordered in a relation of priority, and the second being that in which greater levels of complexity can be seen to emerge through the integration of components. But the two principles of hierarchy are not separate, for what goes into a complex orientation as a systemic component, will be governed by the attempt of the evaluative mechanism to balance qualitative preferences within what is possible. In other words, the systemic integration of components which produces greater levels of complexity involves choices in which qualitative preferences play a

part. Similarly, the priority rating of the components of an orientation complex is based on qualitative preference.

When we come to the orientation system as a whole it is again qualitative preference which governs the arrangement of complex orientations within it. Therefore, the evaluative mechanism as one which governs the control of activity in relation to the experiential consequences of activity, is seen to be at the root of the human being's organization of his life as a whole. That is why the view expressed in this dissertation is that human beings are fundamentally valuing beings.

Now, if religion were about value, then clearly the view expressed here would be that the religious function is an incorrigible factor in human nature. However, in the same way that we differ in our physical capabilities, so too we differ in regard to the way we value. Consequently, every individual does not exercise his religious function in an identical way to every other individual. Let us then see in exactly what the religious function lies and what are the sources of limitation and difference.

7.1 Integration as a Comprehensive Process

Considered as a whole the orientation system is a set of complex orientations. It is manifested in goal-directed human behaviour which is directed at objectives sometimes clearly in view, but sometimes exceedingly dimly. Any particular mode of engagement or complex orientation may be more or less determined or more or less elaborate. Elaboration occurs to the extent that a mode of engagement is felt or discovered to be incomplete i.e. not to satisfy adequately qualitative preferences. On the other hand, when a mode of engagement based on an orientation becomes established it can be assumed that the best accommodation of qualitative preferences has been found subject to the organizational limitations of the evaluative mechanism.

The continued organization of orientations within and relative to one another is what is involved in the development of organization in the orientation system considered as a whole. When the orientations

of which the orientation system is composed generate entirely qualitatively satisfying experience both within themselves and in the way in which they succeed one another, then the orientation system can be considered to be complete. To the extent that it is complete the life-endeavour as whole will manifest organization.

Hierarchy is found in the orientation system exclusive of that found in particular orientations in the way that whole orientational complexes are relatively weighted by the individual. Achievement of such an order is a demanding organizational task. Consider for example someone who is both a keen golfer and a keen research worker. Presumably his keenness would be due to the fact that the modes of engagement involved in each of these spheres were found to generate qualitatively satisfying experiences. But let us suppose that he is a little more keen on golf than he is on research, or that he has been so busy with his research that he has had no time for golf for a while. Then he may develop a hankering to go and play golf which actively competes with the motivations that keep him researching. However, golf for him, is a recreational pursuit, while research is his livelihood. Each of these two modes of engagement are likely therefore to generate complex feelings which satisfy slightly different qualitative preferences. When a situation of the above sort develops such that preferences are being felt to compete, then the evaluative mechanism as the source of values is faced with an organizational problem. To the extent that it successfully weighs each complex set of feelings relative to the other so that a priority rating emerges, to that extent the organizational problem is solved. If, however, it fails, then it seems to me that there are two options:

- (i) to adopt a solution based on social convention, but without that solution generating entirely satisfying experiences;
- (ii) to continue to experience unresolved motivational conflicts whose presence, presumably, would be manifest as an overall inconsistency in behaviour.

Neither option would, I imagine, be entirely satisfactory to the individual. In the first case a situation would develop to which we have already alluded i.e. that in which modes of engagement resolve

complex motivations in ways which generate a quality of experience which is tolerable, but nothing more. In the second case there is a plain loss of control.

The successful ordering of complex orientations in situations of the above sort involves the ability to assess and weigh with relative significance all the short and long term experiential consequences of the relevant orientations. Though conscious selection will play a part, it is an organizational task which proceeds surely rather more at sub-conscious than at conscious levels. To the extent that it is successful the individual's orientation complex as a whole can be considered to be integrated. The process is therefore one which we may call integration.

The relative weighting of complex orientations in this way need not be absolute but, as the example of motivational conflict used above shows, may be contingent upon circumstance. In the example it was suggested that an individual may be equally keen as a golfer and researcher, but lengthy involvement as a researcher may lead to his developing a conflicting desire to play golf. While each orientation in its own way generates equally satisfying experience it does so relative to the place and period of its implementation. When either one exceeds these limits the evaluative mechanism is posed with an organizational problem. Resolution of the problem will manifest itself as the development of new criteria regarding the proper time and place for the implementation of each of these orientations. These criteria need not be conscious, well-formulated ones, they may be no more than a now integrated set of complex motivational feelings. The point to note is this, that successful resolution of the problem will be manifest as the clear organization by the individual of his various life-endeavours, that this in turn will be manifest as a sense on his part for the proper time and place of the implementation of each, and that this implies a super-ordinate set of criteria whereby the motivational conflicts which would be generated by the orientations concerned, are resolved.

This integrative process is similar to one which is to be found in the integrated development of any complex orientation. It will be

remembered that modes of engagement were described as branching at critical points. These critical points were conceived to be situations in which alternative paths of activity could be followed. Specifically which path was eventually followed it was suggested, would be contingent upon perceived circumstances. However, the development of a range of alternatives contingent upon circumstances is governed at root by qualitative preferences, for it is the experiential consequences of each alternative relative to present perceived circumstances which are evaluated infitting alternatives to circumstances. This, at a qualitatively higher level of complexity, is precisely what is involved when an attempt is made to integrate complex orientations within the orientation complex. To the extent therefore that the attempt is successful at higher levels, the result can be seen as the development of a new higher level orientation relative to which the complex lower levels become branching alternatives whose implementation is contingent upon circumstances. It is important to remark that an individual need not be able to say what his criteria are for resolving the problem. He need not even be able to predict precisely at what time and place circumstances will be considered to be such that one mode of engagement is to be followed rather than another. All that there need be is an integrated set of complex motivational feelings which move him in one way rather than another.

In the same way that particular complex modes of engagement can be analyzed into higher and lower level systemic components, so too the new complex in which whole complexes have been integrated, can be thus analyzed. But whereas lower level modes of engagement involve gross physical activity, the newly emergent higher levels are likely to consist more of attitudes. The organized implementation of life-endavours will then manifest itself in a set of well-regulated patterned activities relative to which there is an overlay of consistent and general attitudes. It is these attitudes which will reflect what I referred to as the "deeper" dispositions to value. Our dispositions to value are manifest by what we do. At lower levels they are manifest by the ways in which activity is governed in relation to the experiences of, for example, pleasure and pain. At higher levels they are manifest as the attitudes which permeate

our activities, and at the highest level activity may become less and less overt until a point is reached where engagement consists almost wholly in attitude.¹ The attitudes will be related to our qualitative preferences at a deeper level. Ultimately, it is enrichment which we seek, subject to both the limitations in our abilities as valuing beings and the constraints imposed upon us by the environment.

Having established the process of integration as one which proceeds at different levels of complexity, and having implied that integration involves the progressive elaboration of a hierarchy in the orientation system which is reflected in the modes of engagement which are themselves the result of our values, it should be clear how religion will be defined. Religion as an individual function is that which emerges in the primary level of the attempt to organize the life-endeavour. To be religious as an individual, I suggest, is to have or to seek "primary orientation". Religious phenomena can then be defined as those which are generated as an effect of the human activity which stems from the having of or seeking for "primary orientation". Religious experience is generated as a function of the modes of engagement whose orientational basis is this having of or seeking for primary orientation.

7.2 The Development of Primary Orientation

The human organization of experience I have suggested, is permeated by an integrative process. The process is one in which alternative patterns of activity are evaluated for their experiential consequences and weighed relative to each other. Preferred patterns then reflect dispositions to value. The evaluative task, an organizational problem, increases appreciably in complexity at the higher levels. Yet basically it is the same i.e. it involves an attempt by the evaluative mechanism to sum and compare all the known experiential consequences of alternative activities; and then to establish qualitative preferences. To be religious is to have developed, or to seek to develop, an orientation in terms of which the orientation system as a totality is integrated and evaluated. It is conceived by extrapolation to be at the end of the integrative process.

Explained in this way, however, primary orientation is something of a conceptual notion only. It does not illuminate what it is like to seek or what is involved in seeking integration and evaluation at this level. In order to give greater substance to the notion I wish to turn to the ideas of Cumpsty.²

Cumpsty's chosen religious perspective in this paper is theistic. As he points out the theist is confronted by a problem when called upon to identify the divine.³ The problem is one of circularity and is exemplified by the way that many a Christian might respond to questions about the divinity of Jesus. If asked how he knows that Jesus is divine a Christian might respond by saying "...because he is like God". Yet, if asked what God is like the standard Christian response is that He is like Jesus. This sort of circularity is not generic to Christianity, but as Cumpsty points out is a danger inherent in any position which identifies the divine with something finite, whether a book, a person, an event, or any other finite thing. This is because, when once the identification has been made, other candidates remain. They remain unless the circularity has been overcome. For this reason Cumpsty argues that before any one finite thing can be identified as revelatory by an individual, he must have developed a yardstick of divinity. Such a yardstick, if it is to be found, is to be found in total experience. The totality of an individual's experience is all that is left when the elements within his experience have been rejected as inadequate. According to Cumpsty, therefore, it can only be a quality of total experience to which the theist refers.

For the purposes of this dissertation, it is Cumpsty's notion of total experience that has special significance. He suggests two primary uses for the term, one of which he explains as being at the level of concept and the other involving what we are as products of experience.⁴

In the first sense of the term, total experience is that which an individual brings to mind, if incompletely, when he recalls his history or the totality of what has gone into his past. It may include experiences which are directly his own or experiences shared

vicariously with others through his absorption of a tradition. The exercise is conceptual in Cumpsty's view because it involves conscious reflection. It is the individual's attempt to come to an understanding of what life as a whole is about. While that which comes to mind may be an incomplete record of his past, that which motivates recall i.e. the attempt to understand his life, is the attempt to bring to mind all of the past. What surfaces is, therefore, the end product of a sub-conscious organizational process through which events felt most to illuminate the whole are distinguished from the rest. 5

In the second sense of "total experience", a history brought to mind in the above way is not in point. Rather, total experience is that which has bequeathed to an individual an experiential inheritance made up of the effect that all of his experience has had upon him. The source of this experience includes parents, tradition, or any other thing in his milieu with which he might have come into contact. Total experience in this sense then is "all that which has made the individual what he is". Its importance for religion is due to the fact that it, in Cumpsty's view, is what must underlie an individual's response to any finite thing if the response is to be counted as having occurred at a religious level. A book, person, or event, has religious meaning for the individual when it evokes a response in him as the product of his total experience. Now, in a general sense, any individual at any point in time is a product of the totality of his past experience. What is intended here, therefore, is a special sense in which this is true. It is when the individual responds to things as an integrated product of total experience i.e. in the fullness of his being and with all that he is, that his response can be considered to have taken place at a religious level.

The two senses of "total experience" can be seen to be related more or less as is the conscious to the sub-conscious. In the first sense, total experience is that in the individual's past which can be brought to mind. In the second it is all that in his past which has left its mark on him whether those marks be realizable as memories or buried beyond recall. "Total experience" in the second

sense, therefore, has both a conscious and a sub-conscious aspect. It is linked to the first sense in that the recalled comes of the marks that it (total experience in the second sense) has left upon the individual. Moreover, although total experience as recalled may not be a complete life-history, it is nevertheless total experience as the totality of an individual's past which is processed when such recall is attempted.

Cumpsty's definition of God in the light of the above considerations is "...that at least personal factor which meets the theist in or behind his total experience".⁶ That which he discerns to have been at work in total experience when it is called to mind, is God, and those things to which he responds as revelatory when responding as the product of total experience are the things which most clearly represent what he has come to understand as God and as therefore illuminative of that quality in his total experience.

Primary orientation as I intend it need not involve a commitment to theism. It does however involve total experience as that which is somehow processed in the development of religious commitment. It will become clear, therefore, that total experience, understood in relation to primary orientation, is not only the foundation for an authentic theist commitment. It is involved essentially in the development of any authentic religious commitment.

For the purposes of further elucidation I shall refer to total experience in Cumpsty's second sense as "the totality of the individual's past learning experience". The individual as the product of total experience in Cumpsty's special sense is then "the integrated product of the totality of his past learning experience".

Past learning experience is, by definition, orientating experience. It is experience which has left its traces in the make-up of the individual. If an experience does not leave any trace, it might just as well not have happened. It is important, therefore, to bear in mind that the history which counts, is the learning history. That history is what leads to the development of the structures upon which

modes of engagement are based. These then result in the control which the individual is able to exercise over his future activities. This in turn results in the quality of experience being characterized by order and in a supposition about what context underlies that quality. All this is subject to certain constraints. The organizational limits of the evaluative mechanism is an internal source of constraint. There are obviously others with which we shall deal when we consider the influence of socio-cultural context.

Human motivations, however, are characteristically extremely diverse. Consequently, as the organization proceeds an orientation system develops which may be somewhat loosely put together. But if the life-endeavour as a whole is to be ordered, then the complex orientations included in the orientation system need to be relatively weighted. In achieving such an organization we develop a set of priorities manifest as a sense for the time and place for the implementation of the alternative modes of engagement which we have found on balance to generate the most qualitatively satisfying experience. At every point in this organizational task it is requisite that the experiential consequences of sets of complex orientations as far as they are known, be summed. In the process of summation and evaluation new levels of orientation emerge, ones in which the sets of lower level complex orientations become integrated alternatives contingent upon our suppositions about the context.

It is precisely this process which is involved in the individual's becoming an integrated product of the totality of his past learning experience. What distinguishes this particular integrative process from others is that the meta-orientation which develops if the process is successful, is one on the basis of which the experiential consequences of all lower-level orientations are summed. This meta-orientation is what is intended by "primary orientation" and as such differs from other meta-orientations which develop at lower-levels of integration. It is the highest level orientation in the orientation system. The experiential consequences which are drawn together in this process are, of course, the totality of past learning experience. If the process is successful the orientation system as a whole becomes integrated. It is a point at which an attempt is made not merely to order some from amongst the totality of alternative

objectives, but to evolve criteria whereby all objectives can be located in an ordered framework. This suggests that there must be two components to this organization. They are:

- (i) a sense for what paths of activity are appropriate relative to felt fluctuations in the context of experience;
- (ii) a feel for the character of the context of experience as a whole within which the fluctuations are felt to occur.

The way in which I have suggested that successively higher level orientations emerge bears a resemblance to certain ideas of Gerard concerning the emergence of hierarchy. Examination of these should help further to clarify how the summation of experience is achieved.

Gerard notes that a relationship is often perceived to exist between structure and function. The structure of a thing is the basis for the way it functions. This is a typical systems theoretic view. It is partly the way in which I have expressed the relationship between orientation and modes of engagement. Orientation I have suggested, is the structural basis for mode of engagement, the resultant behavioural function. Gerard, however, introduces into the structure-function relationship the notion of history. History he suggests produces structure which produces function which generates further history, and so on. At each recurrence of an element in this series, a hierarchically new level of complexity is introduced. This sort of series is suggestive of the process of evolution. At any point in its history an entity adapts structurally thus introducing functional adaptations into its behaviour. But these functional adaptations in turn result in a new history of involvement in the environment which in turn generates a need for new structural adaptations, etc. So we get the progressive emergence of ever more complex entities. The whole process is one which Gerard speaks of as a spiral or corkscrew. This suggests that he conceives of the emergence of hierarchy as a process which goes on to ever higher-levels of organized complexity.

Now, as I have conceived of orientation it is the product of a

history, specifically the learning history of the individual. It, in turn, becomes the structural basis for further behavioural functioning which produces more history. If that history is at all significant then it is a learning history i.e. it leaves further traces in orientation. The point about the modes of engagement is this: the ability of which I have spoken as the power to sum the known experiential consequences of lower-level complex orientations, is based on the fact that these consequences leave a structural record. It is this structural record which is somehow processed when the experiential consequences of complex modes of engagement are summed and compared. The processing itself is both conscious and sub-conscious for the manipulation of information involved is beyond that which we are capable of keeping present to consciousness. The results, however, are present in consciousness, whether as complex but vague motivational feelings, or as clearly felt impulses to activity.

A difference between Gerard's views and the views I have proposed is that, whereas Gerard speaks of the history - structure - function process as one which generates ever new hierarchical levels of complexity, I speak of the elaboration of orientation as a process which can proceed not only in the direction of higher levels, but also in the direction of greater detail at lower levels. There is a reason for this: It is that the development of higher level orientations through which the orientation system becomes better integrated often has to proceed on the basis of incomplete information. In other words, it is often required before the elaboration of the lower level orientations is complete. This in turn is due to the fact that complex but secondary orientations can only be as complete as the past learning history of which they are a product, will allow. If in the future they are found to be inadequate i.e. to generate qualitatively unsatisfying experience, then they may be subjected to further structural modification. The trouble is that, long before complex secondary orientations can be perfected higher level organizational problems are found to require solution. They usually require to be solved long before any complex but particular strategies have been perfected. The adoption of a solution amounts to an act of faith on the part of the individual,

for it involves a willingness to act on the basis of incomplete information at the lower levels. Such a willingness, as we shall see, is an important part of what is involved when individuals in a society entrust themselves to its educational processes, for education is a long term process whose value to an individual may be far from clear to him when he starts with it.

The integration of complex orientations, therefore, in addition to being that which results in the ordering of these orientations relative to one another, is a process through which long term general strategies are evolved whereby to proceed with life in the face of incomplete information at the lower levels. A meta-orientation at any level is the basis for a mode of engagement which is a general guide to behaviour though the details may be subject to further elaboration. Primary orientation (the primary meta-orientation) and the primary mode of engagement of which it is the basis, therefore have two facets:

- (i) They develop as a function of the integration of the orientation system as a whole. This process is, in a sense, backward looking in that it is that in which the totality of experience is processed.
- (ii) But in addition they constitute the primary strategy in continuing to deal with life. As such they generate a "forward looking" i.e. they are what is felt will be sufficient to the general realization of organization in all future experience.

At the point, therefore, at which an individual realizes primary orientations he may locate himself relative to a context which is felt to have pervaded all of the quality of his past experience and which it is also felt will be the basic ground to the quality of all his future experience. The location itself is active i.e. it involves a mode of engagement which is deemed the best in terms of what the context is felt to be.⁷

According to the above views, primary orientation may always be subject to change. This is because changes to any part of the orientation system may continue to be made under the impact of new experiences.

New experiences may motivate an attempt to re-assess the nature of the context of experience which may, in turn, lead to a need to modify mode of engagement and therefore orientation. Whenever such changes are made a re-structuring of the orientation system will be required. If this re-structuring is extensive enough it may involve the primary orientation and ultimately may even lead to changes in the primary orientation.

Returning now to Cumpsty, total experience as that which has gone into making the individual what he is as a product of his experience, can be seen to be the totality of that which has left its mark in his orientation system. In the special sense in terms of which it forms the basis for a religious response to things, it is the totality of past learning experience as recorded and integrated in the orientation system by primary orientation. As Cumpsty notes, the individual need not have actually achieved integration of his orientation system to respond in the above way, for it may be that that which evokes the religious response precipitates integration. Thus, something may be responded to at a religious level either when the basis to that response is an already developed primary orientation, or when that thing, in fact, is what precipitates integration and thereby the development of primary orientation.⁸

In the first sense of "total experience" it was noted that that which comes of the individual's attempt to bring to mind his total history is a selection from that history. It was therefore suggested that recall at this level is the end-product of a partly conscious, partly sub-conscious organizational and selective process. What emerges in consciousness does so if it is significant as an index of the character of an individual's life-history. But it is not consciously deemed significant before it is brought to mind. It comes to mind during a reflective process in which memories, as they are thrown into relief through a sub-conscious process, are consciously sifted through and relatively weighted. Depending on the sifting and the weighting, that which is selected at the conscious level then probably feeds back into the sub-conscious thus influencing what is next brought to mind.

The important point to note about this process, whatever be its mechanics, is that, while all of past experience is not recalled consciously, it is total experience as it has left its mark in the orientation system of which sense is being made. The result, given successful integration, is the development of primary orientation.

Neither of the above processes need lead to theism. Both, however, will be generative of what should be called religious experiences, for if being religious is the having of or seeking for primary orientation, then any experience generated in the development of primary orientation is religious. This raises the question of the status of mystical experience and of its relation to the kind of experiences which may come of the above processes. In this regard I shall limit myself to two suggestions. First, there is no difficulty in seeing what is usually called mystical experience to be based in the integrative process through which primary orientation is developed. Second, experiences based on the processes described above, even if less intense than what is usually thought of as mystical experiences, should be regarded as belonging to the same class.

7.3 The Uniqueness of Religious Experience

There are at least two senses in terms of which religious experience as that in which the totality of experience is met with is necessarily unique. It is unique in that:

- (i) of all human experiences it is the one individuals are least likely to share;
- (ii) within the experience of the individual himself it will not have occurred before.

I shall deal with the reason for uniqueness in the public sense first, and then in the private sense.

There are two main causes for the uniqueness of the experience in the first sense above. They are:

- (i) The fact that individuals differ as responsive beings or as valuing beings;
- (ii) The fact that their backgrounds considered as totalities differ.

The effect of these differences is to ensure that each person's total learning history is unique. Variance in responsiveness, variance in organizational ability, and variance in total background all contribute to variance in learning history. To the extent that we share a common humanity or a common socio-cultural background this uniqueness is mitigated, but taken as a whole it is clear that nowhere is the learning history of an individual repeated. Since it is precisely this learning history whose marks are left in the orientation system of the individual, the system itself can be expected to be unique. If, therefore, an individual achieves integration of this system, thereby becoming an integrated product of his total learning history, his responses to things at a religious level will be unique to himself. They will be so for that in which they are based i.e. primary orientation, cannot but be unique to him.

But the experience is also bound to be unique in the individual's own experience. Because it is an experience in which total experience is somehow summed or somehow presents itself to him, there can be no single past experience equivalent to it. It will stand out as an experience which is most unlike anything else ever experienced. This is perhaps one of the reasons why religious experience is referred to by such terms as "transcendent" or "supra-mundane".

It is the uniqueness of religious experience in both the above senses which makes it so difficult to communicate about. Communication takes place between individuals when the symbols they use have a common interpretation for each of them. At the religious level, however, there is no foundation upon which to base common interpretations of symbols if each individual's primary orientation is unique to himself. Moreover, the uniqueness of the religious experience within the individual's own experience may make it difficult for him to find symbols by which to express or communicate what has been experienced. This can occur if the symbols which he is inclined to use are too directly tied to the mundane. In this the effect of religious experience is no different from that of any other which leaves people at a loss for words. Substantive religious beliefs are genuinely attempts to

express interpretations of what has been felt to ground religious experience, but the conditions that make communication do not hold.

The problem of communication at the religious level is a complex one. The difficulties experienced with such communication are not surprising in the light of the above considerations. Nevertheless, attempts are made to communicate at this level and can, moreover, be considered to be relatively successful. The discussion of this topic, however, involves the functioning of religion at a social level. It is to the investigation of the religious function in society that we must therefore turn.

Chapter 8: The Religious Function in Society

To be religious, I have suggested, is to have or to seek primary orientation. As such it involves a basic attempt to organize the life-endeavour at the most fundamental level. Primary orientation is that part in the orientation system which constitutes a long term strategy and relative to which all secondary orientations are located on a scale of priorities. Its development is motivated by two fundamental needs which are:¹

- (i) a need to resolve conflicting motivations and establish priorities. The establishment of such priorities and the resolution of conflict at secondary levels is achieved through the discovery or development of super-ordinate qualitative preferences in experience. These super-ordinate qualitative preferences act as a yardstick by comparison with which the merits of the experiential consequences of lower-level modes of engagement are weighed.
- (ii) a need to develop a general orientation upon which to base the life-endeavour. This involves the adoption of a general life-strategy which is used as a guide even though details of the way to proceed have not or cannot be worked out. I have explained it in terms of the need to proceed in the face of incomplete information. The impact of society at this point can be significant since, in the choice of general strategy, it is often society which provides the range of alternatives from which the choice is made. A certain amount of faith and trust is demanded of the individual at this point, for in making a choice he gives himself over to a mode of engagement whose experiential consequences are not fully known. This is an issue to which I shall return.

Both the above needs or desires, if pursued to their logical

conclusion, lead to the development of primary orientation. They must do so, for it is only when total experience is taken into account, whether in the establishment of priorities or in the adoption of a long range strategy, that they are completely satisfied. Their satisfaction, however, involves a considerable organizational task. Here then is one basis on which people can be spoken of more or less religious. It is based on a judgment of individual integrity, according as some individuals pursue primary orientation more rigorously than others we can speak of them as more religious.

The definition of what it is for an individual to be religious in terms of the having of or seeking for primary orientation is open to an important criticism. It is that it is not sufficiently definitive to prevent any individual who has a primary orientation from having to be considered religious. Thus, individuals whose life is totally organized around, for example, the search for power or status, have to be counted as religious. Most people, however, would not be disposed to call such individuals religious even if their lives are fundamentally organized and meaningful.²

I shall argue, however, that the criticism falls away when the dynamics of the relationship between religion as an individual phenomenon and religion as a social phenomenon are understood. Statements such as: Power-seeking is his religion; are based on justified intuitions about the similarity between the pursuit of power as a total goal and what most of us would be inclined to regard as more genuine a religious quest. The uniqueness of primary orientation led naturally onto the problem of communication in religion and hence onto the consideration of religion as a social function. In the above criticism of what it is to be religious we have another urgent reason for considering the social issue.

8.1 Primary Orientation in Society

Clearly, if the religious individual, as defined, is a participant in society then his religious activity will be open to social inspection, it will be a social phenomenon. The occurrence of religion in society then, can be defined in a way which is continuous with the way in which being religious has been defined for individuals. Put simply, religion or religious phenomena occur

in society wherever there are individuals whose activity is governed by the having of or seeking for primary orientation. Any part of the social environment which is involved in the development by individuals of primary orientation is therefore a locality in which religion, as a phenomenon in society, is occurring.

To view the matter thus is to leave the identification of religion in society wide open. The occurrence of religion, in these terms, is completely free of any necessary association with what, by common consensus, are religious institutions. Rather than answering the criticism introduced above, this view may seem to intensify it. Yet, it is necessary to view the matter thus in order to maintain a continuity between the investigation of religion in society and the definition I have given of what it is for the individual to be religious. Moreover, it is clear when one surveys the activity of individuals that in fact virtually any part of the social environment may become that in which primary orientation is sought or developed.

In the West and Middle-east at least the devotion by some individuals of all their time and effort to so-called "non-religious" institutions e.g. those of business, does not pass unnoticed by the institutionalized religious traditions. It is at least part of what they mean when they speak of idolatry, of the worship of idols. However, as pointed out in chapter 1, circumstances can arise in which the formal representatives of a religious tradition i.e. the religious institutions, no longer fulfil their role by providing contexts in which primary orientation can be developed.³ The devotion of the institutions to forms of the religious tradition which have become outmoded in the light of new experiences was advanced as one reason for which such malfunction might occur. The whole prophetic tradition in Judaism and Christianity can be seen as a response to such malfunction. Under these circumstances then, the devotion of the institutions to their outmoded forms can become idolatrous. Newly developing alternatives, likely to be labelled blasphemous by the established institutions, can become the focal point for the adaptive evolution of the religious tradition. In the light of these considerations let me point out an advantage of seeing the occurrence of religion in society in the way that I have

suggested we see it. It is that the sometimes tempestuous history of the great religious traditions has occurred both inside and outside of what, at the time, were recognized as religious institutions. If we are to understand the dynamics of the way in which religious traditions evolve it is essential therefore to have an understanding of religion which frees it from direct association with what religious institutions signify. This condition, at least, is satisfied by the view advanced here though the criticism has not yet been met.

The criticism that the view of what it is to be religious is not sufficiently definitive, can be seen to fall away when an important distinction is made. It is necessary to distinguish the occurrence of religion in society from its actual operation as a social function. The occurrence is due to individuals who have or seek primary orientation, no matter what that orientation, while the operation involves the development of social institutions whose specific purpose is to be what we would call primary orientating for individuals. Thus, religion occurs in society wherever there are individuals operating at a religious level. It only becomes a social function to the extent that the activity of these individuals draw in or involves other members of the society at levels of primary orientation and primary mode of engagement. This leads to a further conclusion, namely, that those parts of the social environment in which or through the development of which individuals discover primary orientation, whatever they may be, whether recognized as religious or not, are to be considered candidates for the operation of religion as a social function.

In the same way that all other modes of engagement and the orientations upon which they are based are open to evaluation, so too with what might be proposed as primary mode of engagement and orientation. It is open to evaluation for its adequacy by whomsoever chooses to evaluate it. It makes sense therefore to refer to some primary modes of engagement and the orientations upon which they are based as better than others. I have said that personal integration is one measure of the religiousness of the individual. Those with the

organizational ability to remain integral in this sense are better at valuing than others without such an ability. However, what comes of the organizational process i.e. primary orientation, is dependent upon both organizational ability and the materials used. Thus, although an individual may be a superb organizer of his experience he may be feeling blind,⁴ i.e. incapable of, for example, anger. A superb "organizer" may then be good at valuing as far as his organizational ability goes, but we can say that we do not value his sense of values. At a more profound level the ability to value involves both a breadth and depth of developed responsiveness and an organizational ability.⁵ Alternative primary modes of engagement and orientation are then open to evaluation. The procedure behind such evaluation is continuous with that which is used in the integration of the orientation system. Evaluation is a function performed by the evaluative mechanism on the basis of qualitative preferences. If what is offered to an individual is seen by that individual to hold out a promise of generating enriching experience, then it will be evaluated positively. The capacity of modes of engagement and orientations to generate satisfying experiences is what counts in their favour in the development of an orientation system. The primary mode of engagement and the orientation upon which it is based is therefore evaluated by the individual in terms of what he conceives to be its power to generate the most profoundly satisfying experience. It is important to note here that the evaluation by an individual of something whose effect on his experience has not been tried in a direct way is a complex task involving all that he is as a responsive being. A decision to make a commitment in favour of a "primary orienting" institution involves faith and trust on his part in its power to do for him what it may suggest or claim that it can do. It also needs to be a long range commitment if the experiential implications of that which is offered are to be explored in any depth, for primary orientation is not easily come by. These are issues which will be discussed in greater detail when we discuss what I call "primary questions of value".

When primary orientation develops at an individual level there are two major components:

- (i) a general long term strategy or mode of engagement

relative to which the individual has a sense for what paths of activity or lower-level modes of engagement are appropriate in what contexts;

- (ii) a feel for the character of the context of experience as a whole, understood to be that which has both pervaded all of the quality of his past experience and will continue to ground the quality of his future experience.

Although any part of the social environment may be that in which individuals discover or develop primary orientation, it is recognizably what we identify as religious institutions which claim to provide these things. They sponsor views of how reality should be related to in relation to what they conceive to be the nature of "ultimate" reality. Moreover, they can be recognized to have been that which most obviously fulfilled the religious function in society. This is no accident. However, adequate or inadequate they may be at any one time, they are at least the formal contemporary representatives of what we are disposed to call religious institutions. As such they represent that which over the ages has come to be regarded, through a ceaseless process of evaluation, as most adequately enriching. Thus, although I have taken great care to discuss religion independently of references to these institutions or to what they represent, it must be recognized that they play an important role in influencing the directions which the attempted development of primary orientation by individuals take. Great stress has been laid up to now on the freedom of individuals in their choice of modes of engagement and orientations. This has been necessary to provide an understanding of religion which, while I believe it captures the essentials of what it is to be religious, is not bound to an institutional understanding of religion. In the light of the above considerations, however, it is necessary for us to begin to consider the way that society influences the individual's development of qualitative preferences.

8.2 Qualitative Preferences and Social Constraint

Let me return to the point at which a logical model of the functioning of the evaluative mechanism was introduced.⁶ This mechanism was seen to link activity to experience and to govern

activity on the basis of the evaluation of the quality of experience. Judging by the activity of infants we appear to be born with a primitive but effective repertoire of acts by which to achieve qualitatively satisfying experience. Initially at least there is no conscious planning in this. We simply seem to be subject to certain feelings, registered consciously, but spontaneously initiative of certain kinds of activity e.g. when hungry, we cry. Fortunately for us, the environment into which most of us are born is accommodating enough to answer our calls.

From the moment of the environment's first answering to our calls we are introduced to the trappings of social convention and culture.⁷ So begins the process of interaction between the individual and the rest of the society of which he is a part.

Now, whatever else they are, feelings are, in varying degrees, motivational. As is the case with infants so it can be at any stage of life i.e. the motivational components of feelings may generate activity which follows virtually spontaneously from the nature of feelings. But the evaluative mechanism is able to interrupt this apparently spontaneous relation between feelings and activity when once it begins to view subsequent feelings as a consequence of activity. Depending then upon the evaluation of what are construed to be the experiential consequences of activity, motivations are subjected to control, activity is modified, and long range goals are developed. These goals are the articulate expressions of value.

There are two components to being articulate in the expression of values. They are knowing how to arrange the context of experience and knowing what arrangements of context constitute the goal's having been achieved. I have said that an individual need not be able to say what these things are in order for it to be said that he is articulate in the expression of his values. However, in most cases language will play an important part in articulation because the acquisition by an individual of goals is closely related to his involvement in a socio-cultural environment.

When once an individual has developed a goal as the more or less articulate expression of his values, one of the procedures likely to be included as part of its implementation is a monitoring geared to the detection of whether or not all is going according to plan. This will involve the selective monitoring of the experiential effects of activity along the lines of expectations so as to both check that things are going well or to detect that they are going badly. This selectivity will be governed by "thresholds" determined as a function of something like what Bruner called "categorical accessibility". In order for a disjunction between expectations and what actually happens to be registered, whatever lies outside these expectations would have to exceed these thresholds.

Now, if the individual's externalized expression of values takes place in a social context, then others will be in a position to evaluate the effects of his activity, but this time in terms of their own experiences mediated by their own selective structures and within their own feelings for the context of experience. At this point social constraint can be made to enter into the individual's development of modes of engagement. It does so through the way in which the rest of the society of which an individual is a part subjects him to inputs which are designed to be registered as feelings within the quality of his experience. The inputs may be designed to encourage or discourage what he is doing by generating what it is thought will be feelings to which he will respond positively or negatively. Some such process is at work from infancy and is recognized in psychology as positive or negative re-inforcement. That which is used to re-inforce may be no more than a promise or a threat. To begin with, however, it is subject to grosser physical feelings such as pain or pleasure. Encouragement or discouragement in the form of conceptually formulated inputs become increasingly effective as the individual becomes an increasingly socialized being.

The inter-active process described above is finely balanced. The individual experiences the experiential consequences induced by society as only a part of the total experiential consequences gained or to be had by indulging in a particular act. Thus, the rest of his society has no absolute ability to modify his activities unless by gross

physical means. This is so because the individual, while being encouraged by the rest of society to act in a certain way, may yet rate the overall experiential consequences of the encouraged acts negatively, and vice-versa. He may therefore choose against what is encouraged or discouraged by social convention.

Nevertheless, the social influence is strong. It is so because the directions in which it attempts to steer the individual are not arbitrary. Mostly they have been developed because the modes of engagement which they involve have been found best to generate qualitatively satisfying experience for individuals when they act as members in a group. They have been developed as a result of the way in which the experiential consequences of each individual's activity in the group balance out in accordance with the ways in which those activities interrelate. For this reason they are capable when adopted and in varying degrees of intensity, of generating experiences which are likely to be felt as satisfying on the whole.

8.3 The Sophistication of Social Alternatives

The entry of social constraint into the modification and development of individual qualitative preferences is an important part of what makes the operation of religion at a social level possible. The inevitable uniqueness of primary orientation if and when it is achieved is mitigated by the extent to which secondary orientations are common. Social constraint helps to establish such commonality.

For the purposes of understanding religion as a social function, however, there is a more important facet to what confronts individuals in their involvement in society. It is the sophistication of social alternatives. In an important way, society is initially ahead of the individual as regards the modes of engagement which are capable of generating qualitatively satisfying experience. This is at least partly due to the fact that social alternatives have been developed as the end products of a learning history larger and more comprehensive than the individual's own. Initially, therefore, those born into a culture are in a position of having to catch up before many of the alternative modes of engagement offered to them can be evaluated. This "catching-up" is what education is all about, a point

which leads us back to orientation, for to be educated is to have been orientated in a certain way. Thereby the basis is laid for integral participation as a sub-ordinate system within society, the super-ordinate system.

It is useful at this point to make a distinction between social objectives and individual goals. Societies, being more or less well-integrated systems of individuals and their paraphernalia can be seen to have complex objectives requiring different functional contributions from different individuals or sets of individuals. Thus, social objectives in a general sense involve the integrated workings of alternative modes of engagement, with each such mode fulfilling a different functional purpose within those objectives. If the various functional contributions to the achievement of social objectives were not implemented, the achievement of the objective itself might be jeopardized. Individuals then, when confronted by social objectives, are presented with a range of alternative modes of engagement by which to participate in society. The socialization process involves the exploration by the individual of this socially sanctioned range of alternatives in order to discover which are most adequate as articulate expressions of his values. Initially this process may involve what we would be disposed to call co-ersion i.e. while the individual may want to do one thing in terms of his qualitative preferences, his society may introduce or threaten sufficiently "painful" experiences to result in his choosing, on balance, that which it advocates that he do. The justifiability of these measures is in that the individual ultimately, depending on his nature as a responsive and valuing being, may find that what appear to be undesirable modes of engagement actually generate new and more complex experiences which supersede the originally desired modes in their ability to generate satisfying experience.

The presentation by a society of various alternative modes of engagement to its members can save them time and energy by preventing them from trying unfruitful possibilities in the experimental process by which they develop modes of engagement. The members of a society at any one time are therefore in a position to benefit from the past experiments and discoveries of others. It is precisely for this
re

reason that social alternatives can become so sophisticated. Successive generations need not go through the same experimental processes that their predecessors have done in the search for modes of engagement which generate adequately satisfying experience. Rather, they can be orientated directly through the educational process and then left to improve or at least build upon that which they have been bequeathed. While certain parts of the educational process may be experienced as co-ercive, the merit of the resultant orientation will be judged by its experiential consequences. If an individual discovers that that which it is suggested he do consistently leads to new and qualitatively more satisfying experiences there may come a point at which he willingly entrusts himself to the educational process in the acquisition or development of orientations. Thereby orientations may be acquired at increasingly complex levels which serve as the structural basis for modes of engagement which generate increasingly complex and more profoundly satisfying experience.

The increasing sophistication of social alternatives with the passage of time can lead to a problem, however. It is that the more sophisticated a mode of engagement the longer the educational process is likely to be. Accordingly, it is likely to take longer for the individual to discover or to verify that such a mode of engagement is adequately satisfying. If the educational or orientating process itself does not appear to have its rewards, assent by the individual to participate in such a process might involve a considerable amount of trust. If the end is so distant as to be virtually meaningless and if the orientating process itself is not gratifying, a point may be reached at which the members of a society simply do not deem it worthwhile to commit themselves. The guardians of the tradition represented by such modes of engagement may then have to resort, in varying degrees, to sustained co-ercive measures in an effort to keep such alternatives alive.

These considerations lead to an important point. As Gerard remarks, in consenting to participate in society the individual may be limiting his freedom i.e. he may be subjecting his more immediate motivations to control. But he will only do so to the extent that he perceives the full range of experiential consequences which may be

generated by such participation to justify the personal sacrifices involved.⁸ To the extent that this is not the case, he becomes a potential focal point for social change, for it is the dissatisfied individual who is a focal point of change. When socially sanctioned alternatives are tried and found wanting an impulse is generated to improve those alternatives in their ability to generate qualitatively satisfying experiences. Individuals who attempt such re-articulation are at the growth point of tradition. The ability to re-articulate, however, involves a rare organizational talent. In the face of the difficulty of such a task many individuals may simply give up the attempt and continue to participate in unsatisfying social objectives. Participation is deemed preferable to the effort and risk that the attempt to re-articulate is seen to involve. The complexity that re-articulation involves is due to the sophistication of social objectives in the first place.

The interplay between on the one hand a socio-cultural tradition as it is represented in society by its guardians, and on the other its potential new members, is a finely balanced one. Gerard has expressed what I think best defines a healthy society though his dictum relates specifically to the biological level. He suggests that from the point of view of the super-ordinate system adapted or integral functioning has overtones of duty, but from the point of view of the sub-ordinate system it has overtones of pleasure. In other words, if the activity of an element in a system is viewed from the point of view of the system, then there is a sense in which the element is obligated to fulfil its role. If it did not, then the existence of the system might be jeopardized. However, when the element's activity is viewed from its own point of view, then the quality of its contribution to the integral functioning of the whole is very much dependent upon the extent to which participation in the system is worthwhile. The measure of its adaptation to the system is the extent to which it enjoys participating. The same can be said of the participation by individuals in society. From the point of view of the whole the willingness to abide by certain conventions or to make functional contributions is a duty, but such willingness will only

be forthcoming to the extent that participation is deemed worthwhile. The sophistication of social objectives may require co-ersion in the initial stages of the educational process and may eventually lead to their being rejected or falling into disuse. This is a problem faced by the guardians of a socio-cultural tradition with each new generation. It is important to note, however, that a culture can tolerate any level of sophistication so long as the educational or orienting process itself is and can be seen to be sufficiently rewarding.

8.4 Religion as a Social Function

Religion becomes a social function when the religious activity of an individual, as defined, draws in or involves other members of the society at levels of primary mode of engagement and orientation. This means that those parts of the social environment in which, or through the development of which, individuals discover primary orientation, whatever they may be, are at least candidates for the operation of religion as a social function.⁹ Such a definition borders on the quantitative in two senses:

- (i) the more individuals that are gathered together in a context which for them is genuinely primary orienting, the more adequate is that context as a manifestation of the social functioning of religion at that time;
- (ii) the longer a context survives as that in which individuals genuinely develop or discover primary orientation, the more adequate it is as a manifestation of the social functioning of religion over time.

It may be objected that in terms of the above measures of adequacy a long lasting and popular primary orienting social institution has to be considered religious even if we would not be inclined to call it so, while the discoveries of an individual, however valuable they may be, are not to be considered adequate if they have no social impact. There are two answers to this. First, however valuable be the discoveries of an individual they obviously cannot be considered to constitute the operation of religion as a social function if they

have no social impact, but second and more important, although the above measures are quantitative they are not arbitrary. Individuals are only involved in, and only continue to be involved in a primary orienting social institution if it genuinely is adequate as a context relative to which primary orientation may be sought. The quantitative measures of adequacy are adequate precisely because they are indicative of the power of that social institution to survive a continuous process of the evaluation of its adequacy. The point of view expressed here can be expressed in another way: It is not that good and truth will out, but that good and truth are that which "outs".¹⁰

In the light of the ideas so far advanced the complexity of the task faced by an institution which would claim to fulfil the religious function can be fully appreciated. The success of an institution as that which provides for religion at a social level turns on its power to unite individuals in a primary orienting context. Let us explore what this involves.

First, it was argued that individuals vary in the degree to which they are religious according as they pursue primary orientation with greater or lesser vigour. The limitations under which the evaluative mechanism has to operate are all of relevance here, but especially the organizational ability of the evaluative mechanism and what I have called "feeling blindness". Some individuals simply have a greater organizational ability and are less feeling blind than others and as such are to be considered as better at valuing than others.¹¹ This is not necessarily, it should be noted, an intellectual faculty. It involves the ability of an individual to grasp his experience in all its breadth and depth and to put it together in some way. Now, if an institution is to be primary orienting at a social level it must draw in individuals with all the differences of degree to which they are capable of valuing. This is not to suggest that it should sacrifice its integrity. If what it offers has sufficient "resonance" then it can unify. Individuals will be able to plumb it to whatever depth of feeling and understanding they are capable of doing.

Second, it was argued that primary orientation, if achieved, is unique to each individual. It has to be so for it comes of the attempt to make a whole of the orientation system. Since each individual's learning history must be relatively unique their orientation systems, however well or poorly integrated, are unique. Primary orientation is therefore unique. The situation is considerably aggravated in complex societies. Social objectives require a variety of different functional contributions. Thus, the members of a society are offered a variety of possible modes of engagement from which to choose. The more complex the society the greater the variety. The greater the complexity of a society, therefore, the greater must be the variety in the orientation systems of its members. Now, if an institution is to be that through participation in which the variously orientated members of a society may achieve primary orientation, it must offer something capable of meeting the variety of organizational problems which such a diversity of orientation systems will pose. This is a considerable organizational problem. It is not surprising therefore to find religious fragmentation in complex societies. Different religious "styles" cater for the different needs which involvement in different parts of such societies generate. It is also not surprising in the light of the pace of change that contemporary religious institutions world-wide should be under pressure to re-examine their manifest forms.

Third, the organizational problem of the would-be religious institution being what it is, that which evolves as amenable to the integration of the diversity that goes into it, is complex and sophisticated. If it is to reconcile and locate on a scale of values all of the modes of engagement of its potential members, then that which it offers must have the breadth and depth to do so. Over time, however, the tradition may develop such sophistication and the educational process become sufficiently unrewarding in itself for it to fall into disuse or become the obsession of a committed few.

The fact that religion has developed at social levels and survived long enough to be recognized as involving traditions indicates an ability to cope with the above difficulties. If they do, it is due

to the fact that they are not devised independently of the individuals for whom they cater. It is precisely because certain individuals have had the ability to organize their total experience, including all that which is shared vicariously with others, that that which emerges as primary orienting at a social level has the breadth and depth to unify. While the development of religion at a social level may eventually involve such an accumulated weight of tradition that its source is obscured, it is individuals, whether remembered or forgotten, whose discoveries will have provided the initial and continuing impetus for such development. This raises the question as to how that which is discovered is communicated. The question is two-fold:

- (i) How do individuals make known what their discoveries at primary levels of orientation involve, and;
- (ii) How is what is received from such individuals preserved or elaborated upon in its transmission to successive generations?

8.5 The Communication of Primary Orientation

Information passes between individuals whenever one of them has an effect on another. But communication is assumed to take place when the matter-energy that passes between them is assumed to have a common interpretation for each of them. How is this assumption checked, on what grounds do either the sender or the receiver assume that that which has passed between them is understood by each in the same way? The answer is that all they can go on are the overt behaviours of each other. Those behaviours which are construed by an individual to be related to the message are all that he has whereby to check what the significance of that message for the other is. Yet, this is sufficient. Overt behaviours manifest modes of engagement. As such they are indicative of the orientations which underlie them. What an individual does is then evidence of the way in which he has been orientated.

By participation in common orientating contexts individuals acquire relatively similar orientations. The extent to which their

orientations are the same can be checked by comparison of their modes of engagement. But to have acquired similar orientations in this way is not a purely abstract process. The development of an orientation involves the development of certain behavioural skills which are matched to what it is felt is happening within the context of experience. When an individual therefore checks another to see to what extent they share similar orientations he does so by checking whether or not the behaviour of the other is matched to what appears to be happening as he would himself match it. To the extent that it is, he is likely to assume that the other is similarly orientated i.e. that the other has developed similar skills and exercises them relative to similarly perceived happenings within the context of experience. He is likely to make the working assumption, as I think we all do under such circumstances, that he and the other individual share a relatively similar view of the context of experience. If the two share similar orientations he will go on to assume that he and the individual whom he is observing feel themselves to be active in the same context. However, if the observed individual apparently responds to the same things that he would in controlling his activity, yet indicates relative to other facets of his behaviour that this activity is not having an overall identical impact upon him, then the observer may distinguish the responses which they share from those over which they differ. For example, he may infer that they both see a tiger, but that whereas he is excited the other is afraid. In making such inferences the observing individual uses his own experiences as a touchstone whereby to make assumptions regarding what the other individual is feeling. Moreover, it is by inferring from the modes of engagement of the other individual what orientations underlie those modes, and then by linking that inference to the experiences he has when similarly orientated, that the link between his experience and that of the other is made. The linking does not involve the conscious use of a notion like that of orientation. It does, however, involve thinking and imagining, processes which can be explained as involving the internal implementation of orientation. In this I follow MacKay.¹²

Communication involves the use of symbols. It is assumed to have

taken place between two or more individuals when the symbols they use are assumed by them to have had a common interpretation. The quality of experience, at bottom, is that relative to which such interpretation takes place. Symbols attach to the quality of experience by a complex process of conditioning whereby individuals are orientated and learn to construe contexts symbolized as the ground to the quality of experience had on that orientation. This conditioning process, a socio-cultural one, involves the acquisition of a culturally shared orientation together with a shared idiom, the language, symbolic of the contexts supposed both to ground the quality of experience and to be the sphere of socio-cultural activity. Communication then depends upon the keying in of linguistic codes to relatively common orientations. Barring the difference between my use of "orientation" and that of MacKay, the point of view expressed here is a point he argues when drawing attention to the need to understand a speaker's intentions if his words are to be understood. MacKay argues that the understanding of a language-user will involve the modelling of his "goal-directedness" relative to the symbols he uses and that further, in such modelling it is the modeller's own "goal-directedness" which serves for the purpose of modelling.¹³

But language, when it comes to communication in religion, is notorious for being vague. There are at least two very good reasons for this. First, at the level of primary orientation, the level relative to which religious symbols have their interpretation, the establishment of common orientations across individuals is virtually if not completely impossible. The quality of religious experience, as we have seen, is unique to each individual. It is the area in human experience which is most personal, for it is based on the responsiveness of the individual in his uniqueness. As such, it is the area in communication which is least assured by being keyed into a common ground.

Second, religion involves the unique in yet another sense. Cumpsty draws attention to it when he discusses the "mythical" character of religious discourse. I have said that total experience is unique in that:

- (i) being all that which has made the individual a product of his experience it is no-where repeated;
- (ii) the experience in which an individual meets or confronts total experience must needs be unique in his own experience.

As Cumpsty points out, however, total experience is unique in yet a further way i.e. in the way that any totality must be unique.¹⁴ A totality is unique because there is nothing with which it can be compared. This makes communication difficult, for most discourse about things works by setting one thing off against another. When one wishes to communicate about the unique there is however nothing against which to set it off. Yet, there will be a quality to the experience in which the unique is met i.e. the experience will have a character, it will be of a particular (unique) kind. It is for this reason that Cumpsty suggests that all an individual can do in attempting to communicate about it is to "say what it feels like to be confronted by it".¹⁵ In other words, the symbols used by the individual will be bound immediately to the quality of his experience because they will not be able to locate that which is being communicated about in a supposed external reality or context of experience. Symbols used in this way are what Cumpsty means by mythical discourse.

For all the difficulties which attend it, however, communication does take place in religion. Moreover, religious symbols play a vital role in this process. This raises the question as to how the uniqueness of what it is to be religious for each individual is overcome in the emergence and operation of religion at a social level. In what follows, both facets of the communicational problem and of the way in which it is overcome will be answered in an integral way.

Every cultural tradition includes as a part, albeit a leading part, an institutional system which, by tradition, has come to represent the religious. In complex societies fragmentation may have occurred and there may therefore be, as is the case in our time, a set of such institutional systems. Because the means of communication have

improved so, the institutional systems of different cultural traditions co-exist in the same societies. Thus, in every cultural tradition there will be at least one set of environmental contexts by participation in which the development of primary orientation is guided, and a set of symbols through which the resultant experiences may be given form. Even in times when the recognized religious institutions are deemed to be malfunctioning, the discussion of religious problems and of what being religious involves, is couched in terms which reflect the influence of those institutions as formal representatives of religious traditions.

An important factor in the ability of such traditional systems to survive can be traced to the organizational limits of the evaluative mechanisms of the individuals in the society of which they are a part. While differences in responsiveness may prompt the development of different secondary and ultimately primary orientations, differences in organizational ability limit the extent to which individuals succeed in taking their diverse tendencies to a logical conclusion. The organizational work involved in the development of primary modes of engagement and orientation then, may be committed willingly to an institutional religious system. The authenticity of such commitment varies in accordance with the extent to which individuals genuinely test the adequacy of what is offered.

In the communication by individuals of what is involved in their having or seeking for primary orientation, therefore, the necessary uniqueness to each individual of what develops in the quest is mitigated by their participation in a common socio-cultural environment. Such participation leads to their adoption of similar orientations. This factor operates at every level of orientation and mode of engagement. The primary orientation of one individual, being that which integrates his orientation system, is likely to be better understood by others the more their secondary orientations are like his. This is what is achieved, though less and less the more complex the society, by participation in the same society.

Given such a basic common ground and the relative willingness of individuals to be organized, primary orienting institutions can

actively mould that which is developed as primary mode of engagement or orientation. In performing this function a central place is occupied by two kinds of symbol i.e. symbols for the context of experience and symbols in which what I shall call "Directives to Engage" are expressed. Since it is communication about the character of religious experience and about what, implicitly, is felt to ground it which is of central concern for the moment, I shall deal with symbols for context first.

Symbols for context at the religious level constitute, Cumpsty suggests, mythical discourse. By this he means that they are attempts to communicate about the unique which, being so, cannot operate in the same way that literal language does i.e. by setting one thing in the supposed context of experience off against another. There is, however, no absolute hiatus between the two kinds of discourse, for the meaning of symbols ultimately hinges on the quality of experience and this, in turn, hinges on orientation. If there is no hiatus in the orientation system, there will be a continuity in experience thus making a continuity of discourse possible. Cumpsty in his discussion about which symbols will most adequately communicate about the unique, indicates wherein that continuity will lie. He suggests that in the choice of which symbols to use when communicating about religious experience the most effective will be those which operate in other areas of relatively unique but similar experiences. That there will be such other experiences follows from the fact that the character of primary orientation is worked out in relation to and has an influence upon selected secondary orientations. If they are well-chosen the symbols will not only key into those secondary orientations which the individual discovers to involve a uniqueness similar to that had in primary orientation, but will involve secondary orientations which are relatively common across the members of a culture. The ideal symbol, by its links with areas of experience which are both shared by the participants in a culture and involve the unique in a way similar to the way religion in that culture is deemed to involve the unique, will have a power both to mould primary orientation and to interpret the quality of experience had upon it. It will fulfil both of these functions for the same

reason, namely, that it is linked to the secondary orientations which matter most and which are therefore likely to weigh most heavily in the development in that culture of a primary orientation through which the orientation system can be integrated.¹⁶ An example will help to illustrate the above argument.

In Christian discourse about God, God is referred to variously as a king, a father, a shepherd. These can clearly be seen to involve areas of experience which are likely to have been important and unique for those involved in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Moreover, in less complex times they are likely to have involved orientations which were relatively common to all individuals. In our time, however, in which kings and shepherds are disappearing and in which the role of fatherhood is becoming increasingly less well-defined, they are no longer so effective. From the above analysis it is clear why this should be so. The so-called "meaninglessness" of religious discourse is not due therefore to the fact that religious symbols for context cannot be about anything. Their contemporary vagueness is due to the fact that under modern conditions they no longer satisfy the criteria which are satisfied by well-chosen symbols. On the other hand, it can be seen why liberation theology should have emerged and the Exodus event become a central symbol.

In addition to symbolizing context, religious symbols are used more directly to evoke primary orientation by spelling out what the behavioural implications of a primary orientation are. These directives to engage, as I suggest we call them, are expressed as normative prescriptions in the West e.g. "Love your neighbour as yourself", or as paths to liberation in the East e.g. Yoga or the Buddhist 8-fold path. They are aimed at instituting common orientations by articulating the behavioural standards such orientations imply. The example set by certain individuals in the tradition who, as it were, exemplify what it represents, are then guides as to the meaning of directives to engage by being manifest expressions of the orientations underlying them. Modes of engagement are models for the behavioural standards advocated in directives to engage. Assent to and faithful practice of a common

behavioural code based on such models, can be presumed then to institute relatively common orientations. It is necessary to write in "relatively" here not only because some individuals may take a behavioural code more to heart than others, but also because the behavioural codes and the human models upon which they are based differ in the explicitness in which they articulate the implications for behaviour of an orientation.

An interesting difference between the Eastern and the Western religious traditions can be pointed out here. It is that in the attempt to communicate primary orientation in the East the emphasis is on directives to engage, while in the West it is on symbols of context. Compare for example the clarity of the implications for behaviour of yogic disciplines with the vagueness of the directive to love your neighbour. On the other hand, in the West a great deal of effort goes into the search for symbols of context which will mould primary orientation by adequately linking the unique to the relatively unique but shared. Confessions of faith become central in such a system in contrast to the toleration in the East of a variety of symbols of context.

8.6 Primary Questions of Value

Something of the complexity of what is involved in the emergence of religion as a social function should now be clear. In our time which has brought different cultural and religious traditions together as never before, this complexity has increased appreciably. Participants in all traditions have been subjected to such a range of new experiences that a general re-examination of the value of what the manifest forms of their traditions have to offer has been precipitated. Under these conditions alternative primary orientations come anew under evaluation for their adequacy. This brings us to what may be considered primary questions of value. Questions as to the adequacy of the various manifestations of primary orientation and hence as to the adequacy of those orientations as adaptive responses to the totality of experience are the primary questions of value to which all other questions are

sub-ordinate. They are at the root of all questions as to what are proper objectives. This raises the question as to what informs judgment regarding the adequacy of alternative primary orientations.

As with all other levels of orientation so it is at the primary level, that upon which judgments of adequacy are based are evaluation of the actual or construed experiential consequences. The term which best describes the quality of experience which is sought is "enrichment".¹⁷ Although analogous to "pleasure; happiness" it is far from being the same thing. At the level of primary orientation it is a long term conception and modes of engagement are sought which will be found to be adequately enriching in the whole life-endeavour. Further, to the extent that that which is enriching is gained through participation in and adoption of that which is offered by a tradition, it includes not only that which might come of the learning history of an individual, but that which has come of the learning history enshrined in the tradition. When this is done the religious quest ceases to be individualistic but becomes part of the religious quest of a community. What stands at any one time and place in a community as enriching is that which has stood the test of time, having emerged out of the quest of past generations as enriching.

There is a problem here, however. Given the complexity of primary orientation, given also that in the mixing of cultures individuals are faced with alternatives which may be so foreign that no links of the sort intimated above exist between their own experience and that which is offered, a question can be raised as to how to evaluate alternatives. In both cases evaluation has to precede the having of the experiences which the orientations may generate. The question then is: How is it that without being orientated in a certain way we can come to a judgment about its power to enrich. The answer, I suggest, is to be found in the concept of empathy.

Empathy as I understand it, is a faculty which we all possess with varying degrees of acuity. It is an imaginative ability to appreciate the quality of experience and the sense made of that quality through a

certain orientation independently of actually being thus oriented. This imaginative exercise does not operate in vacuo, it is not a vaguely based intuition. The capacity to empathize involves a sound capacity to assess and interpret manifest patterns in an individual's interaction between himself and his environment. These patterns, being based on orientation, provide evidence of the underlying orientational structure. Empathy is the ability to go beyond an understanding of this structure to an appreciation of what it would be like to be similarly orientated.

Since primary orientation underlies the life-endeavour as a whole, the ability to evaluate the religious commitments of another on the basis of empathy requires an ability to assess and interpret the totality of his interaction with the environment. Where primary orientation is concerned, all of the individual's activity is expressive of that orientation and of the quality of the life-experience it generates, even if sometimes remotely so. Western intellectual approaches to religion have erred here in expecting too much of the power of symbols of context to communicate. In fact at this level it is the individual as an expressive totality which is communicative.

If then that which is offered as primary orientation is seen to hold out a promise of enrichment, an individual may be drawn to make a long range commitment to it even should the immediate consequences of what it involves seem less than satisfying. Making such a commitment is what getting involved in institutional religion can be. Clearly it may involve considerable faith in the orienting power of the institution to bring about what it claims to be able to bring about, and trust that that which it promises will satisfy expectations. In the light of the diversity of what is on offer at the present time, it may be asked whether or not there is no single, most adequate primary orientation. This is a question which I shall not venture into. But it should be noted that in our time it becomes meaningful not just to speak of the quest of traditions, but of the quest of a community of traditions.

Appendices

Appendix 1The Advantages of this way of understanding Religion

There are a number of advantages in viewing religion along the lines with which it has been dealt in this dissertation.

First, the definition of being religious as the having of or seeking for primary orientation links religious activity directly to the rest of an individual's activity. To the extent that it is natural to attempt to organize the life-endeavour as a whole it is natural to be religious. Religious activity is generated as the result of a real process through which the human organism attempts to develop an integrated goal-system. This understanding of primary orientation is one which links it to every other facet of the orientation system. In these terms, all of an individual's activity is religious if primary orientation has been developed. This accords well with one of the conventionally recognized marks of what being religious involves i.e. that being religious is not just a part of the life-endeavour, but relates to every facet of it.

Second, this definition shows how the links between religious experience and the rest of an individual's experience are preserved. The quality of experience at any point in time is determined in part by the mode of engagement at that time which, in turn, is based upon the orientation of the moment. Since primary orientation is developed relative to a "summing" of already acquired orientations, the experience involved in the development or achievement of primary orientation will be linked to past experience. The specifically religious experience, however overwhelming it may be, will share features with other areas in the individual's experience.

Third, because the definition shows how religious experience may be linked to other experiences it shows how discourse about religion is possible. The experiential links provide the means for linking essentially unique religious experiences to other areas of experience which may be more shared. If discourse exists in these other areas they may then function to provide symbols for the

religious. Moreover, while the use of symbols in this way may involve analogy or modelling, there is no ground for asserting that they are about nothing. For, by the linkage of primary orientation to other orientations within the system, the interpretation of experience at a religious level is shown to be of a piece with the interpretation of experience as a whole. Religious discourse is therefore legitimately construed as of a piece with the rest of our interpretative discourse. Substantive religious beliefs are about something i.e. they are about that which has been construed to ground the quality of religious experience.

Fourth, the definition shows clearly at both the individual and social levels how difficult the religious quest can be. In terms of the way in which it explains the emergence of religion at the social level the contemporary fragmentation of values seen in our society is an entirely predictable phenomenon. Fragmentation would seem almost inevitable in complex societies. Further, phenomena such as the proliferation of unintelligible symbols in contemporary art also become explicable in these terms.

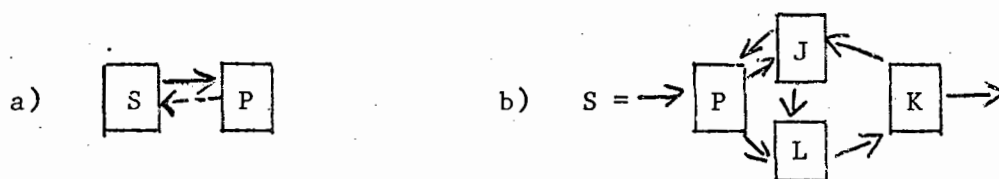
Finally, the definition is free of any appeal to manifest forms of religion. As such it is free of the kind of parochialism which plagues such definitions as that in which religion is defined as belief in god(s). It is a definition which is not bound to religion as it is conventionally thought of i.e. in its institutional sense. It succeeds, therefore, in being non-prescriptive and in leaving open the question as to which are the best values. At the same time, however, it does locate that which, I believe, has been the foundation for the generation of the great institutional religions.

Appendix 2

The Re-ification of Society in Social Theory

There is a vast literature which deals both directly and indirectly with the question of the relationship between the individual and society. My purpose here is not to review the literature or to resolve the problems involved. It is only to outline an abstract view of this relationship as I conceived it in the body of the dissertation. The outline will be developed in the context of a general criticism of much social theory in which the concept of society is re-ified so that it is seen as an entity which exists separately from individuals.

In systems theoretic terms there are two ways of representing the relationship between the individual and society. They are:



In each diagram society and the individual are represented by the letters "S" and "P" respectively. It will be most convenient to begin by considering the second one.

In the second diagram society is represented as a complex system consisting of various inter-connected sub-systems, one of which is the individual, P. Input into society is shown as occurring at P, while output is shown as occurring at K. However, this is arbitrary. It merely illustrates the point that the social system is open, entering as it does into relationship with the environment. The interconnections shown to exist between the sub-systems are also arbitrary. They are there merely to illustrate a further point i.e. that the integrity of the system is due to its interconnections.

The purpose of the diagram is to illustrate two points regarding the nature of the relationship between the individual and society. They are:

- (i) The output of the individual, P, is input for the rest of society represented by J, K, and L. The rest of society in turn provides input to P, in this case from J.
- (ii) The individual, P, is a part of society, S. In other words, society as a whole is constituted amongst other things of P.

What does it mean in this view to suggest that the individual is a determined product of his society? One thing it cannot mean is that society as a whole i.e. S, determines what P is and does, for there are no inputs to P from S. Nor are there inputs to S from P. Put plainly, P is part of S. Talk of the one determining the other or vice-versa is nonsensical for the one is the other (in part). It does make sense, however, to suggest that the individual, P, might be a determined product of the rest of the society of which he is a part. For this to be the case the output from P would have to be a determined function of the input to P from the rest of the social system, shown in the diagram to come from J.

There has always been a tendency to see the individual as a determined product of his environment, particularly his social environment, in social analysis. In early attempts to analyze society in systems theoretic terms this tendency was re-inforced by two dogmas:

- (i) The doctrine that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. As Ashby points out, however, if the coupling of the parts are known, then the behaviour of the whole can be predicted from that of the parts, (Ashby, 1956, pp49-53)
- (ii) The notion of homeostasis in terms of which the survival of a system is seen to depend upon its ability to maintain critical variables, whatever these may be, within certain limits. The need for the human being to maintain body temperature within certain limits is a case in point.

The view that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts led to a tendency to re-ify the whole so that, instead of its being seen to be constituted by the parts, it came to be seen as a separate and sort of mystical entity which bore down upon them. This is represented by the first diagram above. In this diagram the society, S, is what governs the input to the individual, P. The notion of homeostasis then led to a tendency to view any individual behaviour which threatened the functions of this mystical entity to be defined as deviant.

The first diagram above also includes an ambiguous output-input relation from P to S. This is because it is not always clear in theories of the above sort to what extent the individual is seen to be capable of modifying the social system by his behaviour. It is clear in these theories, however, that the social system is seen to govern individual behaviour.

In the context of the second diagram the above sort of view is, of course, nonsense. The re-ification of the whole so as to distinguish it from the parts is an illegitimate conceptual move, for the parts as constituted, are the whole. However, there is a legitimate interpretation of the first diagram. P can be taken to represent the individual and S the rest of the social system. But S in this sense is not the same as S considered to be the system as a whole. It is for a failure to track this important distinction that mistakes of the above sort were made.

In this dissertation the second diagram best illustrates what is conceived to be the relationship between the individual and society. Society is that which emerges at a new level of complex organization when an aggregate of individuals and their paraphernalia begin to act in a co-ordinated and inter-connected way. That with which the individual interacts is not society as such, for the individual is society and in fact the individual interacts on the rest of society and if he is determined then it is by the rest that he is determined. On the other hand, it is possible for the individual to have such an impact upon the rest of society that our spontaneous tendency would

be to see the determinate relationship as reversed.

For a system as a whole to be integrated, the parts are obligated to fulfil their roles, but if it is to be integrated the performance of their duties should give rise to pleasure.

REFERENCES AND NOTESChapter 2:

1. See for example R.W. Gerard in Buckley (1968)
2. C.E. Osgood in Buckley (1968) p186
3. Ibid, p186
4. Ibid, p186
5. Ibid, p187
6. See D. Stafford-Clark (1967) pp110-114
7. See for example L. von Bertalanffy (1969)

Chapter 3:

1. In the face of the difficulty of applying the concepts enunciated in these works to the human sciences the initial enthusiasm which greeted their publication seems not to have been sustained. The problem as Kerschner has explained relative to the use of Cybernetics (see L.R. Kerschner in Rose (1970) pp1215-1223) is that the human sciences lack the conceptual sophistication to make direct use of the formal tools provided in the above works. Nevertheless, all have served as a fruitful source of models.
2. Cited in Whittmore and Yovitz in Debons (1974) p32
3. In addition to Kerschner, see A. Rapoport "The Promise and Pitfalls of Information Theory" in Buckley (1968), esp. p141
4. Kuhn, T.S. (1970)
5. Osgood in Buckley (1968) p199
6. Ibid, p199
7. A.T. Welford (1968), p19
8. K. Samuelson in Debons (1974)
9. J. Bruner in Tiselius and Nilsson (1970), p116
10. A.J. Ayer (1946)
11. J.J. Gibson in Bernard and Kare (1967), p231
12. J. Bruner (1974), p8
13. H. von Foerster in Buckley (1968), pp173-178
14. Forgas and Melamed (1966), p8
15. Bruner (1974), p15
16. Ibid, p10
17. Ibid, p10

18. See for example D.M. MacKay "Towards an Information-Flow Model of Human Behaviour", in Buckley (1968), esp. p362
19. A. Rapoport "The Promise and Pitfalls of Information Theory", in Buckley (1968), p141
20. Bruner (1974), p10
21. Ibid, p15
22. The term comes from R.D. Turner in Bernard and Kare (1967)
23. W.V.O. Quine "The Scope and Language of Science", in his (1976) p232
24. R. Carnap (1967)
25. Wiener uses this example amongst others in the first chapter of his The Human Use of Human Beings, reproduced in Buckley (1968), pp31-36

Chapter 4:

1. R. Harvé and P.F. Secord (1972). It is particularly in their arguing a "dramaturgical" approach that they argue this view.
2. I have in mind here the Advaita Vedantin philosopher, Sankara. A selection of his writings is contained in S. Radhakrishnan and C.E. Moore (1957)
3. It follows from this view that were I to adopt the procedures of the mystic, then I might come to experience as he does. Then I would no longer agree with my present position including this account of the environment.
4. Forgas and Melamed (1966), p9
5. Gibson in Bernard and Kare (1967), p230
6. J.R. Davitz (1969), p(v)
7. Forgas and Melamed (1966), p336
8. Davitz (1969), p168
9. I am thinking here of (i) mystical experience of the Advaita sort; (ii) the experience of "being in a rut" in which it is felt that, although things are ordered they have become meaningless; (iii) experience of the existentialist sort in which life is felt to be so chaotic that no order is possible.

Chapter 5:

1. Jainism is particularly representative of such a program. See ,
Radhakrishnan and Moore (1957)
2. Welford (1968), pp323-324
3. Forgas and Melamed (1966), p336
4. See chapter 8 below
5. Hence their classification as exteroceptors

Chapter 6:

1. Turner in Bernard and Kare (1967), pp331-332
2. MacKay (1969), p96
3. Osgood in Buckley (1968), pp188-191
4. Ibid, p203
5. F.H. George (1965), pp110-123
6. Ibid, p114
7. MacKay (1969), p96
8. Ibid, pp95-96
9. They are developed in M. Bunge in L.L. Whyte, A.G. and D. Wilson
(1969)
10. Welford (1968), p195
11. J.H. Clippinger (1977), pp16-17,174. G. Harman in his (1973)
errs here in arguing that an inference can only be counted as
adding to knowledge if it is adopted along with all else that
we believe as part of a "total view". The demand here is for
coherence, but on the psychological evidence it would be
difficult to know when, if ever, we have achieved such coherence.
Harman's standard (p159ff) is better seen as an ideal.
12. Whittemore and Yovitz in Debons (1974), pp29-45
13. Ibid, p31
14. Ibid, p36
15. Ibid, p41
16. Ibid, pp34-35
17. This is the sort of point argued by M. Polanyi in his (1964)
18. MacKay (1969), p96
19. The example is due to MacKay though I use it to make a more
elaborate point. See his (1969), p109

Chapter 7:

1. Here again I have in mind the meditative mystics of the East. Their religious quest involves the minimum of overt activity but an extensive meditative program.
2. Cumpsty presented these ideas as part of a series of talks given at a conference of headteachers of the independent schools in 1978. They are written up as unpublished manuscripts under three titles:
 - (i) The Nature of Religious Experience
 - (ii) Religious Discourse
 - (iii) The Development of Belief and Unbelief
3. See J.S. Cumpsty "The Nature of Religious Experience" pp1-3
4. Ibid, p5
5. Cumpsty here has drawn on R. Niebuhr's The Meaning of Revelation though his point of view differs from Niebuhr's. For the latter revelatory events are those that become windows on history i.e. illuminate the meaning of history. For Cumpsty, however, a revelatory event must first have been verified in the individual's own experience before it will become authoritative. Hence he argues that revelation is that which illuminates or gives meaning to the individual's total experience. This is to say, it must first illuminate personal history. To the extent then that the tradition has written itself into the individual's personal history, that which illuminates it and thereby becomes authoritative will be articulated in terms of the tradition. This then may enable the individual to move outward from an understanding of the meaning of his life-experience to an understanding of the meaning of human history. See also M. Versfeld "St Augustine and the Politics of Time", in his (1972).
6. J.S. Cumpsty "The Nature of Religious Experience", p1
7. The terms I have used here suggest that the individual, at this point, has a sense of his distinctness within the context of experience. Mystics, however, locate themselves in the context in a way which leaves them with no sense of distinctness. "Context of Experience" has been conceptualized specifically to be applicable under these conditions as well.

If the terms are read with the emphasis on "feel" rather than "context", then an experience of distinctness is not implied.

8. See J.S. Cumpsty "The Development of Belief and Unbelief", pp1-7.

Chapter 8:

1. Primary orientation, transposed to a social level, can here be seen to steer a middle path between the views of the historical and the dialectical materialists. It escapes the metaphysical trap of the former by being related to the integration of secondary orientations i.e. it is worked out partly through the resolution of existing orientational conflicts, but goes further than the latter in that it is conceived partly as the development of a long term strategy needed to make up for the informational incompleteness of secondary orientations. See J. O'Malley in P. Walton and S. Hall (undated). C. Geertz's "Religion as a Cultural System" in his (1973) is also relevant here. His discussion of the way religion operates to secure individuals in ultimately meaningful contexts is expressed in terms similar to what I have suggested is the need to develop a long-term strategy in relation to a view of the nature of the basic constancy in the context of experience.
2. Tillich's definition of religion as "ultimate concern" has had to face this criticism.
3. See for example J. Dewey in Abernathy and Langford (1968). Dewey's judgment on institutional religion is harsh. He suggests that far from promoting the discovery and development by individuals of religious sentiments they actually inhibit such development. Individuals may be so put off by what they find in institutional religion that they do not realize sentiments in themselves which are genuinely religious.
4. See the section "Limitations to the Evaluative Mechanism", pp51-54.
5. If the "feeling blindness" of an individual is particularly startling we may go on to express our doubts about whether that individual is "fully human". There is also a link here with

those forms of "mental disease" in which a certain religious intensity is observed. The "logic" of such individuals is often remarked upon, but there is a wild imbalance in their experiencing. In the light of what has been said about valuing it should be clear to what extent judgments about mental imbalance can be evaluative.

6. See above, chapter 5, p48
7. To take a simple example, babies may be fed by the breast or the bottle, depending on cultural fashion.
8. R.W. Gerard in L.L. Whyte et al (1969), p223
9. See above p103
10. The first formulation is suggestive of faith i.e. no matter what the circumstances, good will triumph; while the second suggests trust i.e. the circumstances, whatever they may seem to be, involve the triumphing of good. Clearly, the two are closely linked.
11. See above p104
12. MacKay in Buckley (1968), pp367-368
13. MacKay (1969), p125
14. Cumpsty "Religious Discourse", pp1-3
15. Ibid, p2
16. It is in these terms that religious language can be understood as working through analogy or, in Ramsey's terms, as offering models for situations of cosmic disclosure. See his (1964).
17. Cumpsty "Speech, Experience, and Knowledge of God" (unpublished manuscript), p6.

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