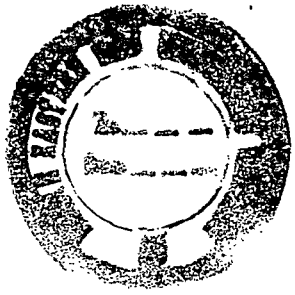
KNOWLEDGE OF CULTURE:

A Problem in The Theory of Knowledge



By

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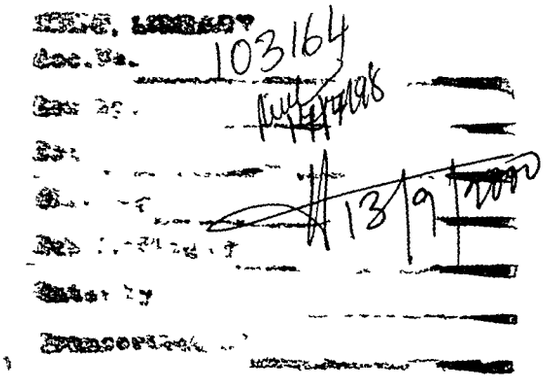

Certificate

Certified that the subject matter of this dissertation is the record of work done by Bishon Buam that the contents of this thesis did not form a basis of the award of any previous degree to him, or, to the best of my knowledge, to anybody else, and that the dissertation had not been submitted by him for any research degree in any other university.

In habit and character Bishon Buam is a fit and proper person for the degree of M.Phil.

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B. Buam

(BISHON BUAM)

CONTENTS

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Chapter I

The Problem of Explanation of Culture

In a fairly strong sense of the term 'conceptual relationship' the concept of culture has some 'conceptual' relationship or connection with the concept of individuation and that it is quite clear that our talk about knowledge of culture involves an explanation of the concept of meaning. This can also be seen in Levi-Strauss' ideas about "concrete facts" about certain cultures in the world: facts about how people of different cultures individuate material objects, persons, relatives etc. There is a philosophical need to make clear what question about knowledge of culture we <u>can</u> ask, since we distinguish between different kinds of knowledge and may mislead others if we ask the wrong questions. It is, I believe, quite philosophically unfruitful to ask only the question (which is quite popular) "How do men know culture?", because in trying to answer <u>this</u> question we are in the danger of becoming either psychological behaviourists (which is a fallacious position) or total sceptics (an equally fallacious position). The logical status of this question has

a similar depth (or shallowness) as that of questions like "Who created man?" or "How do we know anything at all?" They are shallow and at the same time puzzling because we don't quite know what kind of answer is actually wanted. They are like impossible questions, perhaps because, if Wittgenstein is right, we will have to be outside of life (of a system) to be able to judge life (that system).

So we do not stress much on the genetic questions of knowledge of culture. Therefore we ask the question "What is it to know culture?" meaning thereby how is it that as human beings we are in possession of knowledge of culture. For us this will be a fundamental question since we can ask quite different questions like "How does knowledge of tribal culture grow?" which presupposes an answer to the first one although in some cases these non-fundamental questions can be non-philosophical ones leading to some sort of scientific adventure or misadventure. There is a sense in which the problem of explanation or understanding of culture arises only with respect to an explanation of a culture. By that I do not mean explanation or understanding of a particular culture which can be thought of as a paradigm case of understanding of other particular

cultures; but what I mean is an understanding of a culture transcendentally so to say. This is because people from within a culture can transcend intellectually so to say and can judge or make moral assessments or any other assessments about their own culture just as people from an alien culture may attempt to do the same. Transcendence is crucial because inside a culture, man does not generally have problems of explanation of the <u>whole</u> system but has problems of explanation, or understanding of items within it such as material objects and their interelationships, human behaviour and relationships and so on.

Since our business is primarily with an explanation of the whole, the problem is actually a problem of analysing the concepts of man, culture and nature. It is quite non-controversial to say that the problem is a problem of analysing concepts which scientists (physical) have of man and nature and scientists (social) have of men and culture, on the one hand and concepts, which man, as it were, "a priori" has i.e. traditionally has about himself depending and varying according to what situation he is in, on the other hand. In an unconscious attempt to compromise the two extremes as mentioned above, the social scientists' research into understanding of societies and

cultures remained basically confused, because they are not willing perhaps or are not in a position to understand the starting concepts or basic concepts they use. Researches are conducted to try to get an explanation of a culture by explaining the phenomenon using the common social scientists' ground that an explanation of a particular phenomenon has to make a reference to something other than that phenomenon itself. However one thing that can be said here as a caution is that it would be un-Kantian and in some sense unphilosophical, to say that an explanation of a particular phenomenon comes from an understanding of noumenon since Kant's distinction between noumenon and phenomenon is certainly not a distinction between reality and what "merely" appears. A social phenomenon appears but it will be absurd to say that it merely appears. Of course it may not appear so vividly (and in fact it is this that is so characteristic of a (social phenomenon).

The problem of explanation or understanding of a culture consists primarily also in the problem of method, especially in philosophy. This has to be so since it would look awkward for a student of philosophy or a professional philosopher to compete with scientists in understanding of cultures and societies and explaining them.

A scientist, in the true sense of the term, ~~in the true sense of the term,~~ is one who seeks explanation, that is, he is not, for instance, involved merely in classification. Thus, if it turns to be true that we have solved this problem of explanation of a culture, the contents of the solution should, therefore, be of good guide not only to scientists with an interest in some radically different explanation other than theirs. And if we have doubts about that possibility, it may be pointed out that it is <u>necessarily</u> true that all scientists are human beings. However, if it does not turn out to be true that we have solved this problem it is sufficient if we have made a point that there are some concepts which are critical to any research work. (We can even say that the solving of the problem of explanation or understanding of a culture consists in the forming of the problem of method of how to talk and do research work on any culture. The fact that we <u>notice</u> confusion in the social scientists' work plainly indicates that we have some idea about some <u>unity</u> or order which we all attempt at expressing.

Following from the above we notice that we evaluate. Thus, there is a sense in which we can say we evaluate men but that only means we evaluate everything

or something or some theories about man, in other words, the concept of man. We evaluate, thus, the "ideal" description of man as a subject of enquiry by the natural sciences and by retaining that idea of a man being an object of nature we try to see if we can also say that man is a creature of culture and in what way. (But we find that we cannot do so because in evaluating man and the science around him, the concept of man as a creature of culture is found to be categorially different from any object of nature. Thus we are not talking about anything that can be verified by certain procedures but we are talking about certain concepts which we think can be intelligible. In so doing we wonder if there is a difference in the way in which man as an object of culture is made intelligible and the way in which a natural object is made intelligible. The attempt is also meant to remove misuses of the concept of natural object and also of man. This is so because of the dictum, that all that I perceive in cognition is not all that is real, and can be shared by scientists and philosophers as well. In fact, some people with regard to the problem of method of understanding a culture, went to the extent of saying that we should not get carried away by what we see.

As to the seriousness and importance of the problem of explanation of a culture like for example the explanation of the Jaintia culture, it is true that the contemplation of an alien or similar culture promotes, throws light on our own past as well as present. The task of philosophy is to see that once one can judge and describe another culture one should not distort concepts in so describing. This principle comes not from the relativist argument but from the argument that I am simply born to a culture and I don't have to have an articulated knowledge about that particular system to be in that system (culture) i.e. to be a participant in that culture but that if I transcend that particular culture (system) so to say to see it, as it were, from outside the adventure is to be regarded as serious as it concerns the meaningfulness of even oneself in the world (so I cannot distort concepts consciously or deliberately. Whatever insights I have I should not throw them away and give to ideologies so to say). This is also true of any observer from another culture because his understanding may be thought to consist necessarily also, as it were, putting himself inside another person, to catch the spirit, so to say, of that person or tribe [So whatever concepts one

uses one has to be very careful as they concern, as it were, the meaningfulness of the person or tribe which the observer has put his self into 7.[1]

Just as there is a problem in understanding nature as a whole (not just because of its vastness) so also there is a problem of understanding culture as a whole. One problem pointed out is that, (no description of the whole (i.e. in this context culture) can be reduced to description of the individual since culture in the social set-up is a rational system.) There is no doubt that there are dominating relations but that does not mean anything much to the main structure. Thus it is possible to start any attempt at explaining the concrete relationships between knowledge and social frameworks, whether these are manifestation of sociality, particular groups, social classes, without undertaking a precise and detailed analysis of the types of knowledge and their inter-connection

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1. This is an extension of Peter Winch's ideas in "The idea of a social science and its relation to Philosophy" - RKP. 1958 especially on the Chapter on Verstehen pp.113-116.

with the forms of knowledge. Knowledge of the other, or, if you like, of the "we" represents a particular type of knowledge. One cannot imagine any social framework where this knowledge and understanding would not be produced, because they i.e. (knowledge and understanding) are a constitutive element of social reality itself. In other words, the concept of knowledge and understanding of the other, the "we" is necessarily connected with the concept of social reality. In short, society is not an arbitrarily imposed structure. It is a kind of structure which is a relational one <u>in the extreme sense</u>, comprising of relations, sets of relations and sets of sets of relations. The knowledge of this type is bound to be not a simple one. This is so because the other can appear as father, stranger, friend, foe, protector, threat, emotion and can be either rational or irrational[2] or can even appear as a one-man institution.

Man as an object of culture is an actor on the

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2. Georges Gurvitch - Supplement "The Social Frameworks of Knowledge" Oxford Basil Blackwell 1971.

social scene and as a philosopher or as a scientist he can abstract himself from social action. Why sociological knowledge of culture is so different from any other knowledge is because it is more or less knowledge about or of man. In effect, the social scientist is a man observing man and explaining Man. It is possible for me to understand myself in possibilities. And if we have doubts that we can think not of Man but of only individual men then we would like to say that it is just impossible to grasp any assertion about men. We know we can grasp any assertion of that type in the background of the concrete subjectivity of the actor or the agent doing something on the reality. Thus the very act of speech is a commitment to sociality and implies a recognition that existential identity can be cohesive. In this connection, even the choice of the individual can be said to be determined or if we don't like that, depends upon history. And thus the <u>apriori</u> is what is revisable because we know what history means. It just doesn't mean the past and all its events but a choice by the people of certain events meaningful for them or should we say symbolic for them or which are made carriers of meaning. The explanation consists in the <u>apriori</u>, i.e. what is revisable although,

by definition, or necessarily cannot be changed.

The problem of explanation of culture is a second order question. The problem of knowledge of culture in its genetical and psychological forms, is a first order question. Just as there are doubts in the knowledge of the external world that are solved by certain methods, by referring thus, to empirical facts, there are also doubts with regard to knowledge of culture like, for instance, in the acquisition of language, that are solved by certain methods, — by referring to for instance certain experiments which show how a child learns a foreign language successfully even though he is not part of the "history" of that particular language.

Since the problem of explanation is as we have said a second order enquiry it is necessary to talk about the object of study and basic concepts of the first order enquiries. Thus we will talk of (1) Laws of nature (2) Rules of conduct/games (3) Choice. Why choice is also picked up is because when we make choices we interpret.[3]

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3. Maurice Natanson, "The Journeying Self". A study in Philosophy and Social role - 1970 Addison-Wesley Publishing Inc.

As to the necessity of our doing this, it is because of the fact that man is an object of culture as well as an object of nature.

(1) Laws of nature:- Let us take an example to show the way the concept "Law of nature" is used and understood. We know that the law of gravity operates and how. But when a spaceship or a space shuttle with the help of rockets could force its way out of the pull it does not mean that there is no law of gravity any longer. But as we know by experience, it is logically possible that there is no law of gravity in the 21st century just as this law (of gravity) is a result of the change of the mistaken law of weight following certain ancient people recognising in everyday lives the return fall into the earth's surface of an object thrown away from the earth's surface.

What (still) do we mean by a law of nature? How does a law of nature differ from what is called an accidental generalization or a generalization of fact?

> "If the difference is that the scope of the statement of law extends over possible as well as actual cases, how is the reference to possible case to be interpreted? We regard a general hypothesis as having been

> confirmed when we find that it is fulfilled in particular instances. ....(But) why then do we pick just the ones that we do? .... Our science commits us, not to a belief in regularity ~~thing~~ in general, but to a belief in certain specific regularities.... But what are the principles on which it operates."[4]

In a sense, 'law' means an objective relation or pattern in nature. Such laws exist in objective reality, in the sense that regularities or patterns exist, but certainly not in the form of proposition or verbalizations of any sort.

> "When the scientist writes down or says what he knows of a law, that statement is also called a 'law'.... the scientist's formula or sentence is not itself the objective pattern or relation in nature, it is a <u>statement</u> of that pattern or relation a rendering of it in verbal form.... thus the objective pattern of moving objects (a pattern which, in nature, does not exist in words or mathematical symbols at all) is the law of mechanical motion.... The various 'laws of motion' which have been advanced by scientists, such as Aristotle's law 'force equals resistance times velocity', Newton's law 'force equals mass time acceleration', or Einstein's law 'force equals the rate of change of momentum' are <u>law-statements</u> which express the law more or less accurately."5

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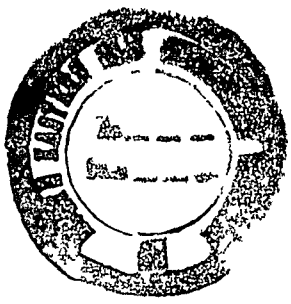
4. A.J. Ayer, "Philosophy and Science" in "Metaphysics and Common Sense", Macmillan, 1967, p.89.

5. Meaning in Culture: F. Allan Hanson, R.K.P. Ltd. 1975, p.64.

Now as to why must there be certain laws governing certain objects of nature and nature itself the only answer we can give is that if there are no laws then how do we account for this cosmic and natural harmony. Yet I still believe this is not a good answer, because it seems we are begging the question by saying that there is this harmony (natural and cosmic). Laws of nature are therefore more or less certain forces if we take it in this way. But there is a sense in which laws of nature cannot be destroyed just as any force can logically be subdued. The law of gravity if there is no more modification, still operates even if the earth and all the planets and stars and galaxies and black-holes are destroyed because we recognise the apparent non-operation of the law of gravity by referring to or by perceiving and understanding through the law of gravity. As to an answer or answers to the basic question of what justification (philosophical) we do have to believe and be convinced with scientific proofs that there are laws of nature, we cannot be sure. For anything to function as an order it does not necessarily mean that there is or there should be a law governing its function(s). Can't we philosophically or logically conceive a situation where we can perceive that there is order even if there



are no laws of nature or of whatever?

The human being's bodily movements (as opposed to person) are controlled by muscles and by certain stimuli or should we say genetical determinations whereas the person's actions are guided by will or by intention or by choice. In this context are we then obeying laws of nature as if we are obeying certain commands?

Modern sociology believes that understanding a social institution consists in observing regularities in the behaviour of its participants and expressing these regularities in the form of generalisations. But it is precisely against that idea that Alfred Schutz and Alfred Jules Ayer found certain philosophical problems.[6] In his book, Schutz says that "the person and his manifestations are not open to perception in the same sense as are the objects of nature. It is within the free will of the

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6. Alfred Schutz, Collected Papers I, The Problem of Social Reality by Alfred Schutz, ed. by Maurice Natanson.
   Alfred Jules Ayer - Metaphysics and Common Sense Macmillan.

person to disclose or conceal his acts or to keep silent, and this is quite another thing than not merely speaking. (However) Nature cannot conceal itself and therefore neither can man, in so far as his animate existence belongs to nature". And "only that part of human existence which pertains to levels below the realm of mind and freedom are accessible to experiments." In fact it is in the context of the cartesian trend of thought that we feel certain problems in connection with explaining man and his culture (because of the famous Dualism).

The importance of the talk about <u>laws</u> is because of the apparent reducibility of <u>laws</u> into <u>structures</u> or <u>orders</u> because on the one hand laws are no longer merely <u>commands</u> by God and are at the same time <u>indispensible</u>. We fail to understand how and in what way can laws be <u>forces</u> and how and in what manner can we make intelligible the idea that structures and '<u>orders</u>' of the reality (of anything) can be forces and not have any <u>necessity</u>.

> "The sociologist studies religion as a form of conduct based on the belief that social order is sustained by sacred order. He studies art as a form of dramatistic order which is believed to create and sustain social order. Scientists are not concerned with how communication with the supernatural deter-

> mines social order, or how the drama of art is used as a drama of social relations, but with the discoveries of 'laws' of uniformities."7

Scientists thus construct a functional conception of knowledge based on how things and events or conduct are related within a given field in which events occur in some kind of observable order. Any explanation of man and culture in this framework is bound to be hypothetical. There is an idea that in the sciences of nature, the subject matter is not "nature in itself", but nature subjected to human questioning. But it is difficult to see if that can be true of culture (although of course for most scientists it has to be) as it was allegedly true for "nature in itself".

For the sociologist,

> "Scientific knowledge consists of finding a relationship between an object that lies in the consciousness of people in society and an object, or 'thing', that lies outside of it. Scientific knowledge is not a way of going from an object already in experience to something that lies outside of experience.

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7. Symbols in Society - Hugh Dalziel Duncan, O.U.P. 1968, pp.228-229.

> It is rather, a statement of the relationship between the mind and whatever it senses or perceives,"[8]

although it is not true that whatever the mind senses or perceives has only to be "out there" in a reality which is conceived of in the sciences of nature as a kind of physical process in space and time. How do we account for objects that are carriers of meaning in a dream which for Freud will be carriers of meaning of the wish-fulfilment or for the apriori that we have in our cultural existence. In other words how do we account for concepts like tradition, spirit of a tribe etc.

Continuing this analysis, we also see that the social sciences seek to discover laws and if not laws, rules of "permanence in change".[9] They try to understand order and structure-in-society in the midst of changes. For them the problem is how can people bring change about in orderly fashion, and yet preserve order?

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8. Symbols in Society, Hugh Dalziel Duncan. Oxford University Press, 1968, p.229.

9. Ibid., p.229.

For some people the sine qua non of science is the 'covering law' form of explanation in which particular events are explained by subsuming them under general laws. Examples of various such explanations are given by F. Allan Hanson when he pointed out:

> "Here is an example:
>
> (a) This is a piece of sodium salt (an initial condition or assertion about a particular fact)
>
> (b) Whenever a piece of sodium salt is put in a flame it turns the flame yellow (a general law)
>
> Therefore,
>
> (c) When this piece of sodium salt was put in a flame, it turned the flame yellow."[10]

Another kind of explanation is that which utilizes "probabilistic" laws. In this connection, laws are expected to hold true with a certain "statistical probability rather than invariably. This is the sort of explanation one would use, for example, in accounting for the drawing of a black ball from a box containing ninety-nine black balls and one white ball...."[11] Covering law explanations like these

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10. F. Allan Hanson: "Meaning in Culture"; 1975 RKP Ltd. pp.78-79.

11. Ibid., p.79.

types seem to imply a Humean conception of causality, in that they focus attention on the regular co-occurence of observable events.

People often chide the social sciences because they cannot predict "human behaviour"; that is, they cannot predict exactly what any man or everyman will do in given circumstances. But as F. Allan Hanson pointed out, the institutional analysis is not concerned to explain 'human behaviour' in that sense, and therefore it cannot legitimately be expected to predict it.

(2) Rules of conduct/games:- The association of rules of conduct with games is by no means intended to belittle the notion of rules. It is in fact intended to explicate that which is so obvious and yet so complicated in the working. The first thing that comes to our mind when we talk about rules of conduct is the notion of a moral rule. A moral rule is a directive for right conduct to the effect that an act of a given kind X ought to be done on an occasion to which it is applicable.[12] One may identify

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12. Dorothy Emmett, Rules, Roles and Relations

moral rules with principles and regard only social rules as capable of being understood in terms of games. But this may be a mistake, and it may arise from an emphasis on the idea of "Role morality". It is sometimes unnecessary to be carried away by Kafkasque relativism. We can have a moral glimpse at "conduct" just as we can also have a different kind of glimpse at it. Our guiding principle in our thesis is that when we explain we need not just describe but we evaluate also (as opposed to prescribing). Between 'culture', 'civilization' and 'conduct', the apparently most value-free concept (referring to sociological statistics) is 'conduct'. Yet at the sametime it covers both the following dualities, between social morality and private morality, role-morality and "principle-morality", moral rules and social rules, games morality and moral principles (whether in bueraucracy, academics, friendship, or personal life), materialistic ethics and spiritual ethics, morality and immorality. For Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi "good" conduct means civilization.

Anyway as some people pointed out, the advantage of a rule is that it can be so general as to cover everyone in all situations without being tied down to any commitment and at the sametime be so particular as to cover particular

cases. This cannot be so as can be clearly seen in the definition by Emmett above (on "moral rules"). To make any analogy between moral rules and rules of games is pointless unless it is meant for explicating the concept of rule. One has, however, to be careful in spelling out the analogy because rules of games are more or less constitutive although there are maxims as to how to play well whereas moral rules are not really so. They (i.e. moral rules) have a status as rules of ettiquette have. From this we can say that to speak of a person facing moral problems as both moral and problematic is to presuppose that that person has some capacity for using his judgement and making decisions. But one peculiarity is that the constitutive rules governing the moral activity do not at all influence the regulative rules regulating that activity. The influence perhaps, if there is any such is, in other words, not direct as any constitutive game-rule is supposed to have. Even this soft version is lacking in any moral activity. The logical necessity of any constitutive rule to have an influence on the corresponding regulative rule is to be seen in that it is not possible to imagine a kind of game or activity which is rule-governed having only regulative rules without any sign of constitutive rules; although we can imagine a game

or an activity without any regulative rules. In paradigm cases of course there are always regulative rules accompanying constitutive rules.

Ignoring this thought it looks as if we can see why there is a structure in moral activities which is not similar like in to that of game or some other activity which is rule-governed. The answer seems to consist in the way in which moral activity as such is constituted, that is, in this context, made my man. In other words it is man who chooses his or her morality. This, however, should not be taken that morality is a matter of pure choice. It is a person who faces moral problems and <u>at the sametime</u> is not a victim of his problems. He creates his problem so to say. At the sametime it does not mean that morality is some kind of a goods that can be wished for or should be activated. There is no scientific reason for engaging oneself in moral activities but at the same time morality has a very indispensable relationship with the concept of a person who has got consciousness and self-consciousness.[13]

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13. (Normally we do not say a human being has consciousness and self-consciousness and it is right to retain this).

One statement that can be non-controversial about morality is that there are certain values in this world. Only persons with consciousness could have such an outlook and insight. Men thereby transcend brute facts and judge and lead their lives according to the judgements and values they have given. They are not in this context, engaging in role-playing; they are more or less sincere. Their moral activity very much determines and has an attachment on reality, independent of whether they are <u>given</u> the reality or they <u>create</u> it. The regulative rules are thereby on a status which a constitutive rule occupies. That is why there is some difficulty in carrying the analogy of a game to morality too far.

The logical status of rules (among whom social and moral rules form the majority of them) is such that it is always possible to disobey a rule. Thus to say that a rule is *not* a command (which is an injunction to a particular person or group on a particular occasion) is to say that as we have said earlier it is not so particular as to make it impossible to cover general cases. It is flexible but it is not at the sametime flexible forever. It can come back to its position. It does not direct anyone that acts of a

certain kind should or should not be done in concrete day to day life. We can twist Kant's explanation of rules in his "transcendental philosophy" by extending it to Moral philosophy (in the way we have pointed out earlier saying that rules (moral and social) allow the possibility that a person "may comprehend the universal in abstracto, and yet not be able to distinguish whether a case in concrete comes under it."[14] This leads to the difficulty in saying that rules are learned and habitualised, through examples and actual practice, adequate training for this particular act of judgement. Once one habitualises rules they cease to be rules. At the sametime this practice weakens that effort which is required of the understanding to comprehend the rules in their universality, in independence of the particular circumstances of experience, and so accustom as to use rules rather as <u>formulas</u> than as <u>principles</u>. It is very difficult to say with intellectual honesty that moral or social rules are not moral or social <u>formulas</u> even. That is to say in simple words that a person in the process of self-individuation has the capacity (which is necessarily assumed) to follow certain rules and yet be able to re-

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14. Critique of Pure Reason - Immanuel Kant.

flect on them and even have the choice of making them one's principles or formulas or otherwise or not.

It is in the above situation and context that moral rules as principles are and can only be used at all. If you cannot use moral rules in the above context you cannot use them anywhere else (whether you call them principles or not). On an analogy with games, it is to be pointed out that games can be played for fun or games can be played seriously; games can be played with fun for fun or games can be played for fun 'seriously'. Sometimes games are played for their own sake. Moral rules, on the other plane, as principles for action are more or less regulative rules. Kant, for instance, tried to bring out certain moral rules which he thinks are constitutive of the whole moral activity. It is to be pointed out however, that we can talk about regulative and constitutive rules (of any kind) only in an institution or a game and not for instance, in a happening or an event or a brute fact. Moral rules govern a serious game of moral activity.

Why man as an object of culture does not act according to laws of nature is not because there is another

force more powerful than laws of nature but because the concept of laws of nature does not apply to the acts of man forming a culture. Man acts not because there are certain forces forcing him to do but because he has certain principles he reflects on and consequently acts. These are more or less a priori. They are revisable but cannot be done away with. It is possible for a man to "act" mechanically but that does not mean that man really acted mechanically. The possibility of this man to reflect on what he thought he mechanically did is enough to show that he can either disclaim his being victimised by being the "actor" of that act and similar one in future or value-judge it as bad giving reasons like for example, that if he were himself he wouldn't have 'done' so. Actually there is not much difference between a principle and a formula thus. The only difference is that a principle is not that rigid as to deal with a specific situation as a formula would do. Man can stick to a principle and yet act different acts which when examined are under the same principle he held.

Thus in any explanation of culture where we cannot really make a watertight dichotomy between it and morality, it is to be noticed that "neither an ethics of rules, nor

of ends, nor calculation of consequences, can be simply applied to give sufficient answers to the question,"What ought I to do?". There is no way of evading the need for moral judgement, fallible but like other skills capable of improvement through exercise, and particularly through exercise in difficult situations."[15] This reminds us of Gandhi and we can now even give a place for his philosophy in our attempt to understand what it is to explain culture.

(3) Choice:- We have just talked about the logical assumption that a person has a capacity to make choices which play in the background of the various combinations of moral principles and that moral activity actually consists in making such choices. The concept of "culture-ability", that if you take away the concept of choice you are left with nothing and man as an object of culture is no more no less explainable in the way in which man as an object of nature is explainable.

The concept of choice is necessarily connected with the idea of a moral unity (C $\longrightarrow$ MU). Kant's idea

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15. Rules, Roles and Relations - Dorothy Emmett.

of moral unity is no more no less similar to his earlier convincing idea of the unity of apperception in the Critique of Pure Reason. This is so because freedom or choice is freedom to choose a way of life, the pattern of which forms culture, but it was never able either to choose not to be, or to choose not to be free. Kant is right in saying that "morality, by itself, constitutes a system". At the same time the unity is a purposive one. It means that as Kant says, moral laws as commands or principles cannot reside in a necessary being, as the supreme good, which allows the possibility of it. In fact it is anything contrary to this which led so many researchers to studying man as an object of culture as an object of nature and that moral activity is no more no less a role-playing, a non-serious game, or a means of avoiding stark realities of life or that a very complicated machine called man acts according to certain laws of nature which are more or less commands but with a status as any other ordinary law of nature would have.

There is a sense in which the very fact that *that* person is capable of culture logically assumes that he is (condemned to be) free or responsible for his identity in

the world. Using a soft version of responsibility, it is very convincing that,

> "to accept a role is to evade the responsibility of seeing that one is free not so to act, and of freely deciding what one wants to be. It is to evade freedom by sheltering behind one's social function.....*there is no need to play* this role, ...unless one so chooses."[16]

His freedom, thus, does not consist in his being able to 'fox' the scientific laws governing the human being and any other object of nature.

There is some relationship between what is "objectively" given and "subjectively" defined; there is something pre-given as somehow irrevocably, irretrievably and universally binding and also that there is some attitude on the part of the individual to what is given. The first is independent of the latter. It is ontologically inescapable that the 1971 India-Pakistan War took place in the 20th century being preceded by the 1963 Chinese

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16. Dorothy Emmett - Rules, Roles and Relations" Macmillan, p.152.

aggression or that the Nuremberg trial preceded the bombing of Nagasaki and Yokahama. Whatever attitude an individual may give to those facts, however he or she responds to them intellectually or emotionally, they remain unalterably the case. It appears that what happened happened. It is the attitudes or interpretations which differ, not the historical reality they seek to describe and understand. So is the case with myths and symbols which play a very important role in man as a participator in a culture. The emphasis on the contribution of consciousness of the defining force of individual interpretation, might seem to stand opposed to the facticity of the past. Had there been a discernable advantage to avoiding the force of the past, there will be no profit in trying to separate what happened from the schemes of understanding in which the past is placed so that it can be examined. "Being blown up in a mining accident is utterly different from being blown up by a grenade thrown by an enemy intent on killing, even if the physical damage is identical in both the cases" because "to say that history is grasped through schemes of interpretation means that the agent in historical enquiry is in dialectical contact with the reality he investigates."[17]

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17. "The Journeying Self, a study in philosophy and social role. Maurice Natanson; Addison, Wesley Publishing Company, 1970.

Choice is the engagement of the individual in the interpretation of reality. In short, to choose is to interpret and vice versa.

In culture, choice signifies the commitment of the individual to various options: to retain the tradition, to study the past in the form of myths and stories and think about it, to relate the present in the light of the past and to anticipate the future in terms of the horizon of the past.

We are oriented to the historical past because much of our present is, in effect, analogous to its quality of distance and inaccessability. As we have said earlier, what an individual chooses to fix upon, utilize, or celebrate in that communal totality depends on the criteria of relevance (as opposed to simple needs) which govern his existence and give an edge to his situation. Thus in a way, the life of the individual mirrors the course of civilization.

> "A student who goes off to college for his freshman year enters a world defined by his academic world, his teachers, his contemporaries, and the particular milieu of the campus. Whatever advice or recommendations, however

> detailed, have been given to him by parents, high-school teachers, advisers, or friends, it is evident that no amount of preparation will give him the concrete reality of his new situation in anything but rather general terms in loose outline. Nevertheless, he is able to organize his life and get on with the business at hand. He has never met a particular professor before, but he knows, in a general way, how to act with respect to him, how to arrange a meeting during office hours, how to prepare his course work for him."18

The idea that the notion of purpose is central to that of human action has long provided the background against which philosophical thought about morality has operated. Learning to act is learning to do certain things in certain kinds of situation, because to do so has certain consequences for the agent's desires. However, someone may be misusing a descriptive word if he applies it where the features specified in the meaning rule are not present, but to apply a moral word in similar circumstances is not a misuse, but an acceptance of different principles of conduct.[19]

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18. The Journeying Self - Maurice Natanson, p.19.

19. Morality and the Self-Michael Weston, p.8.

Usually when we talk about reasons a person has for not pursuing one line of conduct and engaging in another, we are trying to understand the reasons behind a choice.[20] To provide reasons, as we all know, is a way of expressing one's dedication to a goal or # an activity. However, the idea of the goal makes certain facts intelligible as reasons for action.

> "As a goal of the person concerned, it makes such facts reasons for him; and, *depending on the importance of the goal to* him, it will decide in cases of potential clashes, which goal, and hence which actions, are pursued."21

Man is, therefore, as an object of culture free not because he is able (or because he believes himself to be able) to 'will' what he shall do or say; he is 'free' because his response to his situation, like his situation itself, is the outcome of an intelligent engagement.

> "What is chosen is not an end or a means of achieving a wished-for end; what is chosen is an action with this specific meaning. Man may be seeking a satisfaction (he seeks) but what he chooses is an action."22

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20. Ibid., p.32.

21. Morality and the Self - Michael Weston.

22. On Human Conduct - Michael Oakeshott, p.39.

The freedom intrinsic to agency is, then, the independence enjoyed by the agent in respect of being a reflective consciousness composed of acquired feelings, emotions, sentiments, understandings, beliefs, aspirations etc. recognitions of himself and of the world of pragmata he inhabits, which he has turned into wishes and wishes he has specified in choices of actions and utterances. On this the Chapter III will be the best place for thorough discussion.

Chapter II

The Problem of Individuation of a Culture

The problem of individuation of a culture has its significance when there is an awareness of the distinction between the way material objects are individuated and the way individuation of persons and cultures is carried through, and the contexts in which both kinds of individuation occurs. The problem of individuation of persons and cultures generally arise in connexion with the identity of persons and cultures. The two things we will have to consider in this chapter, are (1) Are philosophical problems which arise in connexion with the individuation of material objects significantly different from problems (philosophical) which arise in connexion with the identity and individuation of persons, and (2) Are there philosophical problems which may be quite specific to the identity of a culture? The decision to put these two things primarily in mind is not arbitrary. I believe that any answer to the first question will give scientists as well as philosophers some kind of awareness, of the general principle or a metaphysic guiding any study of the world and persons, and that there

are things internal to an activity which can never be understood in terms of function or cause. The attempt to lay bare this in toto will be done in relation to the language-culture relationship problem; Any answer to the second question is in itself a sympathetic attempt to account for the cultural and the moral and affirm its importance not as a contingent phenomenon but something necessary.

The philosophical problems which arise in connexion with the individuation of material objects are most importantly problems of knowledge of these objects, problems of the logical status of these objects, problems of meaning in relationship with these objects, problems of substance and permanence, problems of perception, and so on. We need not specify them all. All we need is to at least show the minimal structure and logical status of these problems so that if there is any analogy or comparison with other types of problems, the similarity or the difference can be seen. In fact, I believe, we will fail to do this if we resort to specific explanations of specific problems. Thus, as an analogy, we, for instance, do not understand what science and scientists are generally up to

if we try to understand by refering or by explaining or analysing a particular physics Ph.D. research project in the same way a particular scientist does. We understand, however, by explaining or analysing the concepts scientists are using which are basic to their methodology.

In trying to explain the question which now arises, "What is it to individuate material objects?" we will first see the normal way we classify material objects. When we classify material objects we give the objects classified, names or words. These names or words are meant to denote and minimally identify objects from one another in our discourse. Now instances of various kinds from all over the world can be given. In fact, in this connection, it is quite refreshing to read "The Savage Mind" by Claude-Levi-Strauss especially the first chapter, where he talked about different classificatory systems with different kinds of classifications of different types. He gave examples of certain peculiar traditional classificatory systems which are so rigorous as botanical systems. He showed also that this type of classification is, unlike, botanical systems of the modern age, part and parcel of the identity of a culture. But this is no place for any explanation of

the contention.

Now, we can ask a question which is not a question about the dictionary meaning of "to individuate" but a question of the concept, of "what is it to individuate anything at all?".

Before we say anything more, I believe, we will have to bring out a kind of philosophical "hypothesis" so to say or an assumption for convenience's sake and for historical reasons which we cannot ignore intellectually. Our contention let's say is that the philosophical problems which arise in connexion with the individuation of material objects are significantly different from problems which arise in connexion with the identity or individuation of persons and (or) cultures and that there are problems which are quite specific to the identity of a culture. It is more of an assumption and less of a hypothesis because the intentions behind making this assumption are nothing less nor more than a kind of intellectual "diplomacy" so to say, to find a common ground between scientists, on the one hand, and philosophers, on the other.

So the problem of individuation is a problem of

"sameness". However this problem of "sameness" has a specific place of discourse. It is connected with the idea of "ordering" or structuring. This is so because, if we can say, we can never see reality as it is but only as we create out of whatever is represented. Another blunt remark we would like to make is that it is important or necessary for anyone capable of culture to order or structure the reality which includes everyday life most importantly, because the reality of everyday life is the experience that guides conduct in everyday life. In fact the basis of even ordinary communication is based on the idea that the objects of discourse are identifiable (and reidentifiable), individuated and ordered so to say.

Problems relating to individuation of objects consist mainly of problems relating to meaning and knowledge. Now it is philosophically fashionable to make a distinction between an investigation into the origin, methods and limits of human knowledge (what one might call psychological epistemology) and an investigation into the role which human knowledge as a concept plays and grows. This is in consequence of the recognition of conceptual difficulties arising when we ask genetic questions about

anything at all. For instance we have now realised the philosophical uselessness of asking questions like "Who created man" or "How do we know?". We realise that it is somewhat more hopeful to ask questions rather like "What is it to know culture?" and "How does knowledge about anything (and in this context, culture) grow?". The participant in a culture, however, does not have problems of the whole system. He has problems of individuating material objects like plants, flowers; people like relatives, young or old, white-skinned or brown-skinned. To put it in some detail let us bring out certain examples by Ruth Benedict in the book called "The Chrysanthemum and the Sword"[23] where she discusses about the patterns of thought and way of life of the Japanese. The problem consists in a Japanese dilemma of individuating which arises from leading a life which is both aggressive and unaggressive, both militaristic and aesthetic, both insolent and polite, both rigid and adaptable, both submissive and resentful of being pushed around, both loyal and treacherous, both

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23. The Chrysanthemum and the Sword, Ruth Benedict - Routledge and Keagan Paul Ltd. p.227.

brave and timid, both conservative and hospitable to new ways.

Now in our discussion on the concept of "individuation" or the answer to the question "What is it to individuate anything?" we cannot but make a distinction which is not in anyway devised to create a distance but only to be aware of the disadvantage of trying to understand individuation of anything including culture purely in terms of the way our senses operate and the way the human brain is designed to order and interpret the stimute which are fed into it. Of course this ordering is done on the spatio-temporal world. The distinction is as follows; on the one hand, individuating has the characteristics of (1) Ordering, (2) Structuring, (3) Schematizing, (4) Temporalilizing, (5) Categorizing, (6) Conceptualizing; on the other hand, it consists in (1) Evaluating, (2) Reasoning, (3) Self-expressing (culturally or individually), (4) Reacting to other systems, (5) Reacting to nuances etc. Now the working concepts of individuation mentioned above, are so to say concepts within a certain line of institution with a logic that is more or less clear. The working concepts mentioned in the latter are more or less concepts

which are open-ended. This will be noticed in the way concepts like Evaluating, Reacting-to-other-systems and Reacting-to-nuances of situations "behave" so to say. It is typical for these concepts to question even the rules and the institutions or the logic of any particular system. For Reasoning especially it is an attempt to reach for something that is beyond a particular situation or acceptance. Unlike the former where the way we organise concepts depends either on the categories and the way we are designed as the human mind (and some people even went to the extent of saying that it depends on the way our brain is made); of course this latter explanation is quite hard to swallow not because of any contradiction and falsehood it involves but because of the difficulty in bringing out the basic concepts and explain them relationally. This of course is an attempt which is semi-Kantian with a tendency to subscribe to the basic concepts and tenets of science (both social and physical). Let us, however, begin by saying something about <u>ordering</u>. By ordering anything what do we do? We either put thing together according to a pattern or a structure of a model. Imagine trying to order things without having in mind any plan. So also in structuring, although here, of course, it

consists structuring the society also. Another important concept of individuating is the concept of schematizing. It is, however, important here to bring some of the main ideas of the Critique of Pure Reason by Kant on this connection. Schematism as a chapter in the Critique of Pure Reason occupies a very important place. If we take it away we are left with the formal table of categories on the one hand and the analogies of experience, on the other hand. The "table of categories" has been argued that it is not complete but the reasons why it is not so are not clear. Some people give reasons by saying that the "table of categories" being a formal table cannot possibly include all kinds of combinations and this they did by making an analogy with the grinding machine which can operate only at certain specific speeds and at certain directions.[24] Now our argument is that schematism can still play an important role in any talk about ordering, structuring, conceptualizing or temporalizing. And the sense in which we give to the idea that all these concepts cannot be alienated so to say from any categories does not

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24. Jonathan Bennett - Kant's Analytic Cambridge Press.

in anyway commit us to the formal table of categories of Kant but only to the extent that when we order anything, structure anything, conceptualize anything or temporalize abything we do these things in the background of certain concepts which do not say anything about the world or in other words, put a limit to any use of any concept at all. This is to be taken as a preliminary attempt to show the importance of making intelligible the talk about ordering, structuring, categorizing, temporalizing or conceptualizing, because any clarity in this connection will have a very serious bearing on our talk about individuating material objects, persons and cultures.

Thus, to avoid any lengthy explanation on the idea above, we should bring out certain premises and conclusion. Our premises are:

(1) When we order anything we order in terms of a certain plan or a structure or a model

(2) When we have a model or a structure or a plan of anything we construct them in terms of certain limiting concepts (which do not say anything about the world but limit any discourse about the world).

Therefore,

(3) . . . When we <u>order</u> anything we order them in terms of <u>certain limiting concepts</u> (which do not say anything about the world but limit any discourse about the world).

Now that we have the above argument we begin by looking at the way we individuate objects as people do. It is not in any case an attempt to substantiate whatever we have hypothesize (because in fact we do not hypothezize) but it <u>is</u> an attempt to see if there are other concepts or rules or functions which the process, if we may say so, of individuation involves. This is because, on the one hand, we have a hunch that the process of individuation does have a different kind of meaning to the individual and the culture <u>or</u> if we may say, the subject that does the "individuation". On the other hand, the individual, or the culture or the subject doing the "individuation", cannot have any experience if he does not do anything to what is given, (socially given or otherwise). Now this experience can however consist of many extra-experimental forms. For example, acquiring non-technical knowledge.[25] Even with regard to technical knowledge,

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25. Michael Oakeshott, "The Rationality of Politics", Methuen & Co.

one can never learn anything about the technique which can only explain what to do if one does not go through the process of acquiring how to do. It is, in fact, said that these two kinds of knowledge form what we call skill. Because, on the one hand, one does not become a good driver if one only know the rules "which are, or may be deliberately learned, remembered and as we say, put into practice." On the other hand, one does not have any skill if one merely inherit certain tendencies or certain behaviours or (if do not like) has only myths which form the link so to say between the present and the past.

In this background, it is possible to start discussing the philosophical problems which are specific to the identity of a culture. But before we do that, let us repeat our argument with regard to the way we answer certain questions. Our argument is that in philosophy we individuate material objects indifferently from the way we individuate persons not because practically we do so but because the concept of a person is not reducible to the concept of a body. However, there is a common interest behind the need.[26] For identification we individuate

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26. Claude Levi-Strauss - The Savage Mind.

material objects, persons, cultures etc., for the sake of, so to say, making the reality intelligible and thereby not feeling alienated, so to say, from the situation we are.

As Levi-Strauss discovered, it is now possible to explain cultural phenomena other than language by using a linguistic model or theory of meaning. "The basic structure of language observed by the linguists exists in a great many other activities. Meaning, in social activities as well as in language, is thus not to be found in the designated activity but in the way it differs from other activities. This is true of 'even the mind of the primitive." The savage thirsted for objective knowledge and was adept at observing the concrete; the systems by which he classified plants, animals, and material objects were detailed and "sometimes even intellectually elegant. The results of his speculations (i.e. the savage's) were preserved in a "science of the concrete - the 'memory bank' of (skills) in agriculture, pottery, and the domestication of animals that had made possible the beginning of settled habitation in neolithic times."[27]

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27. "Structure and Society", by H. Stuart Hughes; from The Obstructed Path by H. Stuart Hughes.

By training and temperament, historians are concerned more with the content than with the formal characteristics of their subject. For Levi-Strauss it is different. He reminds us that content in itself had no meaning; it was only the way in which the different elements of the content were combined that gave a meaning. Of course it also follows that if once meaning has been drained of content, what was left? In this connection, for Levi-Strauss even magic is an attempt to make the world meaning or see meaning in the various phenomena. Magic for him has its logic also. So for him it is better instead of contrasting magic and science, to compare them as two parallel modes of acquiring knowledge.[28] This is, without giving any explanation, a result of a belief in the existence or the necessity of the concept of "basic mental structures". We are not interested in the existence and proofs which people demand from anthropologists, but our interest should lie, rather, in the necessity of the concept of "basic mental structures" in any attempt to talk about structures, ways of understanding any reality

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28. La Pensee Sauvage 1966. Harper & Row, 1968.

or individuation of cultures and persons and the world. On the design of this mental structure(s), the primitive thought like any other thought is designed to meet not practical needs but intellectual ones. Of course, people like H. Stuart Hughes have criticised Levi-Strauss of not completing the task he had set himself. "He had affirmed the existence of basic mental structures" and so "he had to prove it."[29] "He had declared that myths were capable of structuralanalysis" and yet "he had given only a few scattered examples". Our contention in this connection is that it is not necessary for us, as philosophers, to attempt to prove the existence of this "mental structure" for even if we can do that we have to show that it is necessary for such a concept of a mental structure to be in any concepts about structure of society and culture, of understanding any reality; and thus the concept of individuation will be understood better. "The world becomes intelligible as it becomes structured, primarily through the agency of language, secondarily through the

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29. 'Structure and Society', H. Stuart Hughes in Claude Levi-Strauss, The Anthropologist as Hero. Ed. by E. Nelson Hayes and Tanya Hayes. 1970 MIT

agency of magic, totem and myth."[30] This is quite meaningful when we remind ourselves of the thoughts of Ludwig Wittgenstein in his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus about the way we understand the world. George Pitcher in fact in his "The Philosophy of Wittgenstein",[31] clearly brought out the thought of Wittgenstein when he said that given only a description of the existence of objects without describing how these objects are arranged is not enough for anyone to get any idea about the world. But the question is "Where does this structure lie?". It looks as if it doesn't lie in the objects themselves not as a matter of fact but as a matter of the way in which the concept of arranging or ordering anything is made or used. And our belief in the apparent existence of structures of anything in a transcendental or non-internal way (transcental or non-internal to the phenomenon or phenomena), is out of convenience for want of alternative explanation. It will be clearer when we compare Levi-Strauss and Jung.

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30. "What is Structualism", by Peter Caws, in Claude Levi-Strauss, the Anthropologist as Hero, Ed. by E. Nelson Hayes & Tanya Hayes, 1970.

31. The Philosophy of Wittgenstein - By George Pitcher, Prentice-Hall Inc.

Jung does not have any tolerance for magical procedures. Jung's interest in myths is directed to the content of any myth rather than its form. For Levi-Strauss his direction is to the form of the myth. There is a sense in which one cannot have a structure of a content of any myth at all or of content of even the world as we see (i.e. phenomenon) and think (i.e. language), because the very fact that we have such a diversity of ways of speaking and words points out to the fact that no structure can logically be conceived on the content. A structure for any English dictionary is (1) "the manner in which something is constructed (2) the manner in which the elements of anything are organized or interrelated...."[32] But there is a defect in the above definition because "form defines itself by opposition to a content which is exterior to it; but structure has no content; it is itself the content, apprehended in a logical organization conceived as a property of the real".[33] On the one hand,

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32. The Random House Dictionary, Ed. Jess Stein, 1978.

33. Les Temps modernes by Jean Pouillon quoted by Peter Cans in "What is Structuralism?" From "Partisan Review, Vol.XXXV, No.1 (Winter 1968).

language, myth, and so on represent the way in which man has been able to group the real, and for him they constitute the real, on the other hand, "They are not structures of some ineffable reality that lies behind them and from which they are separable."[34] Also "to say that the world is intelligible means that it presents itself to the mind of the primitive as a message, to which his language and behaviour are an appropriate responses - but not as a message from elsewhere, simply as a message, as it were, in its own right."[35] We should not however be taken to have said that in finding out the meaning of, for example, a dream, we need not bother about the content. We have to also take into account the content. This is because if we know before we analyse the imagery of the dream that the images are sexual, we reduce form to content. The form need not be taken seriously because, at best, it is but a mask, a screen, an embellishment, a play of the content. Freud taught that the meaning of a dream must be derived from its form, as well as its content, but the content "sex"

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34. "What is Structuralism" by Peter Cans, ibid.

35. Ibid.

often is used to explain very diverse forms of the dream. On the social perspective, motives must be understood as man's need for order in his social relationships. Some kind of structure must exist in social relationships if we are to act at all. "Such structures range from the loose informalties of a small group sauntering down a street, to the highly formal "sacred" order of a religious body.... All we can stress as sociologists is the irreducible social element, the need for forms of relationships with others, which is the basis of human society. These social elements cannot be explained sociologically by anything beyond social experience itself.... Just as there is no act which is not motivated by some interest, drive, instrinct, or need, neither can there be action without some kind of form whose expression is believed to create, sustain, or destroy social order.

So it will be realised at this stage that we have an argument to the effect that philosophical problems which may be quite specific to the identity of a culture cannot be alienated from certain philosophical problems which may relate to the individuation of material objects and persons. Certain philosophical pro-

blems relating to individuation of material objects and persons are frequently raised to clarify or explain the concept of identity of a culture.

In the everlasting job of bringing out the identity of a culture we have to bring the concept of responsibility to bear upon the concept of meaning. This idea doesn't come into the picture as a consequence of the incidence in our studying man but because of the belief that meanings are neither arbitrarily given nor are objectively out there so to say. Thus among the Japanese, Ruth Benedict found that[36] the city, town, and village has responsibility not only for the politics. It is also responsible for the identity of a community. "As long as 'proper station' is maintained the Japanese carry on without protest. They feel safe."[37] The point of the argument is that it is hollow to talk about attempting to strengthen the identity of a culture by individuating material objects, persons and also if situations allow, cultures, if the idea of responsibility

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36. Ruth Benedict - The Chrysanthemum and the Sword (Patterns of Japanese Culture), 1946.

37. Ibid., p.67.

or should we say cultural responsibility, is not embedded so to say in the background and in the ordering of the given in the individuation 'process' (we use process because we do not have any other proper word). Before we go further, let us put our position clearly with regard to tradition and the concept of the past. Our concern is with history in its individuated manifestation, with the career of men in daily life. For instance we do not agree with Maurice Natanson when he says that man "assumes responsibility for a world he cannot affect, and yet whose reality depends on his attention and complicity...,"[38] because if you look at the world i.e. in history you see that history is nothing more than an intelligible account of events and actions in a certain way and that we interpret history when we make a choice of what should carry meaning in order to identify our culture. Thus the world is something we can affect, otherwise how do we account for the possibility of using objects as carriers of meaning; this idea comes out as a result that the world is the world of the intelligible, the world peopled with meanings. This sphere of discourse is contrary to what

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38. The Journeying Self - Maurice Natanson, 1970, p.115.

Levi-Strauss, for example, has said "in so far as language is concerned we need not fear the influence of the observer on the observed phenomenon, because the observer cannot modify the phenomenon merely by becoming conscious of it."[39] This kind of consciousness is consciousness of things as objects of knowledge. But besides this point we would like to ask how meaningfulness can be alienated from the world of experience. The argument is that the observer can modify the phenomenon "merely by becoming conscious of it". In fact one can never have any experience (arguments as to why can be had in the Critique of Pure Reason of Immanuel Kant), if one does not do something in the form of ordering, individuating that which is given as representation and the criteria of meaningfulness realised and operated. In fact we can even say that one cannot be said to have experience if one cannot apply the criteria of intelligibility to that which is experienced. To make Kant's position in this respect clear, we can say that an experience

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39. "Language and the Analysis of Social Laws", by Levi-Strauss, p.57 in 'Structural Anthropology' by Levi-Strauss, Penguin, 1968.

is that which means something for someone who experiences as different from a representation which an animal might get but which is nothing for the animal. Why experiences are intelligible is only because representations (including cultural and social) are meaningful to persons (capable of culture) i.e. capable of doing something to what is given as opposed to merely react or respond to what is a mere "stimulus".

In individuating material objects, persons capable of culture are in a position to convert objects of nature into objects of culture. This is the story. However the variations to this story are of course many. One of them is by Levi-Strauss himself when he talks about "the intransigent refusal on the part of the savage mind to allow anything human (or even living) to remain alien to it." It looks like an interpretation of the basic core of the story. Whatever the case then, the individuation-process is the core of a genuine science. Man's "desires are not limited to those things that are "good to eat; he is as much desirous of those things that are "good to think".[40] The

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40. Levi-Strauss And the Primitive - Robert L. Zimmerman in Claude Levi-Strauss, the Anthropologist as Hero, ed. by E. Nelson Hayes and Tanya Hayes, 1970. M.I.T.

"logic of the concrete" is a precedure of thought that orders and introduces system into what appears disordered and systemless, it does so in many different and subtle ways. This is done not just by classification but by explaining. But when anyone individuates anything, he does not explain anything. The explanation will be only of why he individuates this or that way and why this object as opposed to another object. Of course, it also follows that the individuation process has to be there also if one can explain anything at all, otherwise how can one base his meanings. Levi-Strauss, however, was wrong in saying that,

> "the ultimate goal of the human sciences (is) not to constitute, but to dissolve man....(that) this first enterprise opens the way for others.... Which are incumbent upon the exact natural sciences: the reintegration of culture in nature and finally of life within the whole of its physicochemical conditions."41

The individuation process is the attempt to understand one's life in relation to other things because things have meaning only in relation to other things.

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41. Savage Mind, Levi-Strauss.

This attempt also consists in systematic individuation techniques like theories. But in one way or another theories are interpretations. But the attempt is to live authentically and coherently. And one can live *authentically or coherently only if the world is meaning*ful for him as the actor or individual. And to interpret in this context is to self-interpret and to self-interpret is to open oneself to illusion or ideologies. Thus there is the need not only to see coherence or sense in man, material objects etc. but to embody the sense. This latter consists in practice-orientation of the actor in the social scene or the individual. Meanings thus become not mere epistemological but "experiential". This is because one cannot describe any feeling that is already there without *our experiencing.*

Chapter III

The Problem of the relationship between Language and Culture

There is to my mind, no argument against the contention that the reality of everyday-life is shared with others. But a more powerful contention is that the individuation/identity process of a person having culture consists in communication and the way I understand the reality around me since the way I understand the reality of cultural existence depends on the way I can make it intelligible to myself as a person having self-consciousness. Language thus consists not only in the communication process in the face-to-face, interpersonal situation but is the very root from which all this proces is made possible. Thus we will have to look into the way we organise what we receive as self-conscious beings, in the form of "representations". An answer to any questions on this will help us in understanding what and how people communicate. How is it the case that from the fact that certain noises are uttered meanings come into existence and communication starts.

It is interesting to look at the way a child learns words. The child learns by uttering certain noises imitating the more expert exponents of that language. He learns about mistakes while in the process of learning to say and understand a word. One who has a language does not mean that one is able to utter certain noises called words but one has a language when one can utter the words and also have a history of words and the whole contextual elasticity and rigidity a word has.

The sharability of one's cultural experiences forms the basis of his having a culture. Otherwise one is either a robot or a pure object of nature controlled by the forces of nature. However in the final analysis we share our concepts. This sharing may consist in mythological stories, legends, language-learning, moral-teaching and so forth. This sharability presupposes, however, the existence of some primary or necessary system of classification of the way we see the world or experience it.

In this connection, it is important to point out the necessity of the classificatory system in the self-individuation of a culture. One way of showing this would

be to argue in a partly philosophical manner that in so far as one is aware of individual object at all, one must use a minimal - or in Strawson's words- "basic system" of classification. Strawson's argument, it may be noted, is a conceptual one and not based on consideration of any particular language or culture. We might take Strawson as saying that every culture has its identity or is aware of itself, using or applying basic individuation - classification system, and this system is brought to bear upon a secondary individuation-classification system. This will become clearer when we talk about concepts in relation to signs and to myths.

Levi-Strauss brought out a very interesting concept in his book The Savage Mind especially in the chapter entitled "The Science of the Concrete". It is interesting to explain this concept because, I believe, it explains how exactly the secondary individuation-classification system is operated and is related to the basic individuation-classification system. For Levi-Strauss, the verb "bricoler" applies to ball-games and billiards; also to hunting, shooting and riding but mostly to refer to some extraneous movement like "a ball

re-bounding, a dog-straying or a horse swerving from indirect course to avoid an obstacle". And also the noun "bricoleur" refers to someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of a craftsman. For Levi-Strauss, even mythical thought is a kind of intellectual 'bricolage'.

A "bricoleur" is adept at performing a large number of diverse tasks but unlike the engineer, he does not subordinate each of them to the availability of raw materials and tools conceived and procured for the purpose of the project.

> "He is a man who undertakes odd jobs and is a Jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself man, but, as the text makes clear, he is of a different standing from, for instance, the english 'odd job man' or 'handyman'."42

The rules of the game of the 'bricoleur' are always to make do with "whatever is at hand".

> "The elements which the 'bricoleur' collects and uses are 'pre-constrained'

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42. ~~Ibidxx~~ "The Savage Mind"- Levi Strauss, p.17.

> like the constitutive units of myth, the possible combinations of which are restricted by the fact that they are drawn from the language where they already possess a sense which sets a limit on their freedom of manoeuvre".43

They, however, each represent a set of actual and possible relations. This is where concepts come into the picture. The work of a 'bricoleur' is, we can say, that he looks into the ways the concepts he has got operate with reference to a concrete reality and then somehow organises the reality he faces. The Engineer is always trying to make his way out of (and go beyond so to say) the constraints imposed by a particular state of civilization while the 'bricoleur' by inclination or necessity always remain within them. This difference is removable when we bring in the concepts of primary and secondary individuation-classification systems we have earlier mentioned. However, (probably it's besides the point), Levi-Strauss concluded that the engineer works by means of concepts and the 'bricoleur' by means of signs.

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43. Ibid., p.19.

There is a sense why the 'bricoleur' may not ever complete his purpose but he always puts something of himself into it, in his ever quest for a particular identity, a task involving a life-time of all the individuals past, present and future of that particular culture. There is another sense in which the artist of any particular culture represents the parallel means of achieving self-identity not by individuating or classifying material objects but by creating "a material object which is also an object of knowledge."[44] And the fact that art changes from one trend to another, even within a particular culture, points out the fact that the everlasting quest of self-identity of any particular culture involves using many means one after another, if one means does not seem to lead to identity-affirmation. This applies to myths and dreams also.

Myths are far from being "the product of man's myth-making faculty, turning its back on reality."[45] This is because there is an obvious sense in which a myth has its own reality, i.e. it cannot be true or false as a

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44. Ibid., p.22.
45. Ibid., p.16.

matter of fact. A myth may be "crude", but that is another thing. In myths the mythical thought orders certain other sets by means of one particular set and that is language. Of course it is true that it is not at the structural level that it makes use of it. About language being a structured set we all have different opinions but not that language has different structures corresponding to different ways of study; for example, a language has phonological, syntactical and many other structures. However, concepts appear like "operators opening up the set being worked with"[46] and the signification the concepts made possible, neither extends nor renews the set. Mythical thought is imprisoned in the events and experiences which it never tires of ordering and re-ordering, interpreting and re-interpreting in its attempt to link insights which are so limited in number, limited by space and time. In fact it seems to me that it is because of this that there is a philosophical uncertainty that "art proceeds from a set (object and event) to the discovery of its structure and myth starts from a structure by means of which it constructs a set."[47]

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46. Ibid., p.20

47. Ibid., p.26.

The idea or theory of any model or structure on the one hand and the idea or theory of a mundane existence on the other hand, is linked, or, should we say philosophically bound together. This is because of the special status which basic or necessary concepts have in the basic or primary system of classification of the world. Necessary concepts look like rules. The advantage of having the concept of a rule as opposed to other concepts, is because a rule can be so general as to cover all cases or instances where the rule logically applies and can be so particular as to cover particular cases which can never be made stereotyped proportionate to any general principle. Taking one angle of the above, we can say that the idea or theory of a model or structure has an analytical relationship with the idea of experience being organised or of chaotic "experiences" being recognised as such, in an organised or non-chaotic background.

For any structure or framework or model to be recognised as such, it is necessary for that structure to be at least in principle intelligible to me. If anyone says that one can "recognize" structures of frameworks or models in the world without any of them being intelligible (even

in principle) we can say in the manner of Immanuel Kant that that "recognition" is a "recognition" of non-organised, chaotic fleet of representations. Of course it is very necessary for us to be clear about what this recognition process consists in. In other words we have to be clear about how language, knowledge and mundane existence are structurally connected or otherwise.

We would, therefore, discuss something of cybernetics, a study of human-control functions. In this respect Wiener has some interesting things to say as pointed out by Levi-Strauss. Wiener maintains that the "nature of the social sciences is such that it is inevitable that their very development have repercussions on the object of their investigation."[48] The 'coupling' or the duality of the observer with the observed phenomenon is lacking in fields of physical sciences. Levi Strauss gave the following examples:-

In astrophysics the above is lacking "where the

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48. Levi-Strauss - Structural Anthropology, p.55.

object has such vast dimensions that the influence of the observer need not be taken into account and in atomic physics where the object of study is so small that what counts for us is only in the mass effects". In the field of social sciences, the object of study is affected by the observer. The phenomena subjected to sociological or anthropological inquiry are defined within our own sphere of interests. They concern questions of the life, education, career and death of individuals. Therefore the statistical runs available for the study of a given phenomenon are always for too short to lay the foundation of a valid induction. This is true of language. Language is a social phenomenon but it is different from any other social phenomena in that it manifests two fundamental characteristics namely, that, firstly, much of linguistic behaviour is said to lie on the level of unconscious thought and secondly, that since language appeared very early in human history we can study it scientifically only when written documents are available since writing itself goes back a considerable distance and furnishes long enough runs to make language a valid subject of mathematical analysis. To make clear on the first point we can say that when we speak, for example, we are <u>not conscious</u> of the syntactical and morphological

laws of our language. Also we are not ordinarily conscious of the phonemes that we employ to convey different meanings.

It can be seen therefore that in language, as a social phenomenon manifests both independence of the observer and long statistical runs. This is dangerous because there are some people who have thought to even say that it is difficult to see why certain linguistic problems could not be solved by modern calculating machines; machines which can be "fed" with equations regulating the types of structures with which phenomemics usually deals and can therefore obtain a "computation of the totality of phonological structures for n oppositions (n being as high as one wished).[49]

The interest consists in Levi-Strauss' argument that since there is obviously a relationship between different "structural modalities of the same language", there must be some such thing as the concept of a "metastructure" which "would be something like the law of the group consis-

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49. Ibid., p.58.

ting its modal structures".[50] The intention of the argument however, is to see if it is possible to effect a reduction (in the manner we pointed out in connection with language), in the analysis of other forms of social phenomena and to see if they consist of systems of behaviour that represent the projection, on the level of conscious and socialized thought, of "universal laws which regulate the unconscious activities of the mind". Fashion and advertisements are good examples. "Fashion actually is, in the highest degree, a phenomenon that depends on the unconscious activity of the mind", this was what was seen by Levi-Strauss thirty years ago.

In this connection, we believe that if the ideas of Chomsky can be put together with some of Wittgenstein's, may lead to a very powerful theory of culture and of understanding culture. This belief has a prima facie acceptability since both of them have had a lot of influence on the development of linguistics and philosophy of language and have inspired many philosophers to re-examine the various

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50. Ibid., p.58.

concepts evolved by various experimenters and observers.[51] Modern anthropological linguistics do not attempt to "deal with deep structure and in its relation to surface structure. Rather its attention is limited to surface structure, to the phonetic form of an utterance and its organization into units of varying size."[52] In fact Chomsky in no uncertain terms stressed the point that the idea that the study of language should proceed within the framework of what we might nowadays call "cognitive psychology" is sound. Of course that is up to our interpretation. For Chomsky, language is more or less a manifestation of the behaviour urged by the human mind and that only within this context can we perceive the larger issues that determine the directions in which the study of language should develop. In Wittgenstein, the entire discussion of language is dominated by the idea of a rule and of the inalienable connexion between the concept of meaning and that of a rule.

There are some people who have raised problems of

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51. "The Current Scene in Linguistic: Present directions", pp.3-7. Reibel and Schane (1969) - Modern Studies in English. Prentice-Hall.

52. Ibid., p.3-7.

the existence of rules of language.[53] Oswald, one of them, said that these rules are in a sense non-existent. They are <u>in a sense</u> non-existent because there are different ways in which something may be said to exist or not to exist. For example, the existence of a flower is not like the existence of a belief, or of a poem, or of a word. So <u>in what other sense</u> then, can we say that the rules of language exist. Oswald pointed out that there (for example) is an obvious way by which we can show that rules may exist and that is by refering to games such as chess or football or other activities like law. It is no doubt true that here the rules exist in a form in which they can be produced and consulted. Now with language: Are there, (then), similarly rules for using such words as 'red' and 'pain' which could be produced and consulted? Are there occasions when I, a speaker of English, might want to consult such rules, as I might consult the rules of a game or institution? It is said that there is no need for a native speaker to consult rules of simple words because he knows them too well. But "should he not be able at least to state them?"[54] Most people if asked

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53. Oswald Hanfling - "Does Language need rules?" - The Philosophical Quarterly July 1980 - Vol 30 No.120.

54. Ibid.,

to give the rules for such words, would find it difficult what to say. It is also said that the rules of a language are "implicit", but what will it mean for a rule to be implicit? For some people, language-speakers (native) "are in the position of someone who has learned to play chess without ever having the rules formulated."[55] This is a conceivable way of learning to play chess. It is also possible to learn chess by having the rules formulated. But what does that mean? Probably, it refers to the secondary language-learning process like learning the uses of unusual word or words used in special situations. But the learning and the use of such rules presuppose a mastery of the language which itself could not be achieved by having rules formulated. A game, or any other activity, may be said to have rules even though no rules exist prior to the playing of a game or acting an activity. We can make up the rules as we go along.[56] Thus the players or participants (as the case may be) may act in "accordance with a rule that 'grows'

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55. The Philosophy of Language - Ed. J. R. Searle Oxford University Press, p.47.

56. Philosophical Investigations - Wittgenstein.

in the course of the game without ever being stated."[57]

But language is not a game. When a child has learned to speak, we do not say he has learned how to play a game. This is not how the word 'game' is used. If two people have a conversation, we do not (except in a metaphorical sense) say they are playing a game. It is however, known that language has certain things in common with games. That is why Wittgenstein found it helpful to make an analogy between games and language, compare them, to consider language from that point of view. There is also a sense in which games differ from other activities including language in the quality of creativity. They also differ in the quantity and intensity of creativity.

Chomsky made a distinction between what the speaker of a language knows implicitly or is competent and what he does or performs. Chomsky pointed out also that in the traditional view, a grammar is an account of competence. It describes and attempts to account for the ability of a spea-

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57. "Does Language Need Rules?" - Oswald Hanfling.

ker to understand an arbitrary sentence of his language and to produce an appropriate sentence on a given occasion. If it is a secondary learning process or a pedagogic grammar, it aims to discover and exhibit the mechanisms that make this achievement possible. The competence of the speaker-hearer can, ideally, be expressed as a system of rules that relate signals to semantic interpretations of these signals. For the grammarian thus, the problem, is to discover this system of rules; the problem for the philosopher is to discover general properties of any system of rules that may serve as the basis for a human language. In other words, to elaborate in detail the general form of language that underlies each particular realization, each particular natural language.

Learning for Chomsky, is primarily "a matter of filling in detail within a structure that is innate".[58] This 'filling in detail' is, however, rule-governed that there is a right and a wrong way of doing things. Doing

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58. Noam Chomsky - "Reflections on Language", p.39 1976.

things in this context is involving in language-games where we commit mistakes and thus follow rules. Learning how to follow rules is gaining mastery of a technique; it is acquiring a skill. Teaching someone how to follow rules is training him in a technique; it is developing in him a skill. Knowing how to follow rules is having a skill; it is being able to engage in a practice. This is because in every art and science, and in every practical activity, a technique is involved. But technical knowledge is not the only element of knowledge involved in any human activity as the Rationalists hold and thus it does not mean that only a technique is involved. In fact to form a skill, technique and what Michael Oakeshott calls "technical knowledge" have to combine. To take an example, this can clearly be noticed in cookery and in fine arts like painting, music and poetry. And without deviating from the context, this applies, without any need for qualification, to language-activity and if we don't like this, at least communication-activity. And language-activity or communication activity is more or less a skill as we have pointed out above, not because it is a kind of game which can be identified ultimately with a manifestation of a certain kind of skill(s). For instance, the game of football is the game played by people manifesting

certain skills; and since skills are not mere abilities but knowledge also, the game of football can only be played by people who know about the concept of football. A wicket-keeper of cricket can manifest his ability to catch by catching a football, and a football being bigger than a cricket ball he can do it well and thus may thought to be a "good goalkeeper" but he is not actually manifesting the skill of playing football since, for instance, as a goal-keeper he has to know that certain relationships exist between him and other members of the team and that his goal-keeping does not consist only in being able to catch a ball (football) but in playing football. Of course language is not a game in this way but at least a cautious analogy can be made.

The precaution consists in the context relating to rules. Earlier in Chapter II we have been talking about the constitutive/regulative distinction in the light of Dorothy Emmett's book "Rules, Roles and Relations",[59] which led us to the idea that there is a logical necessity for making

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59. Dorothy Emmett - Rules, Roles and Relations.

a place for a third kind of rule since there are cases where it is very difficult to consider something as coming under constitutive or regulative as easily as the distinction is supposed to cover. Thus to a certain extent the border between logic and experience or practice is very unclear. There are overlappings and we cannot deny this as a matter of fact. This is the case in connection with language and the meaningful also.

For Wittgenstein, the comparison of language to a game was not meant to suggest that language was a pastime, or something trivial: on the contrary, it was meant to bring out the connection between the speaking of language and non-linguistic activities. In fact the speaking of language is part of a communal activity, a way of living in society which Wittgenstein calls "form of life". It is as we have pointed out earlier, through sharing in the playing of language-games that language is connected with our life.

The relationship between language and culture is for Wittgenstein and to a certain extent, Chomsky, consists not only in the above but also in the role a word of a particular language plays in the whole life of the tribe.

This consists in that language is not merely a more or less systematic inventory of the various items of experience which seem relevant to the individual, but is a self-contained, creative symbolic organization, which not only refers to experience largely-acquired but actually define cultural experience for us. This however does not mean that the study of language by itself would suffice to exhaustibly show the general character of thought and meaningfulness of any experience and discourse. This, of course follows from Immanuel Kant's arguments[60] with some extensions. The arguments Immanuel Kant put forward were about the concept of experience as such and are not competitive explanations of a similar kind which psychologists and scientists are attempting at producing. The problem of innate ideas or innate capacities can only be solved by having a background which is not based on the empirical but on the analytic and conceptual.

A human language is an extremely complex system. To come to know a human language would be an extraordinary intellectual achievement for a creature not specifically

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60. "Critique of Pure Reason" - Immanuel Kant.

designed to accomplish this task. A normal child acquires this knowledge on relatively slight exposure and without specific training. He can then quite effortlessly make use of an intricate structure of specific rules and guiding principles to convey his thoughts and feelings to others, arousing in them novel ideas and subtle perceptions and judgements. By thus studying the properties of natural language, their structure, organization, and use, we may hope to gain some understanding of the specific characteristics of human intelligence. We may hope to learn something about human nature; if it is true that human cognitive capacity is the truly distinctive and most remarkable characteristic of the species.

"How comes it that human beings, whose contacts with the world are brief and personal and limited, are nevertheless able to know as much as they do know?" This is Russell's question:[61]

Hume presented with a substantive theory of "the

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61. "Human Knowledge: Its scope and limites" - 1948.

secret springs and principles, by which the human mind is actuated in its operations".

For Chomsky "each grammar is a theory of a particular language, specifying formal and semantic properties of an infinite array of sentences. These sentences, each with its particular structure, constitute the language generated by the grammar. The languages so generated are those that can be "learned" in the normal way. The language faculty, given appropriate stimulation, will construct a grammar; the person knows the language generated by the constructed grammar." The idea of "innateness" is to be found in every "theory of learning". But what is a theory of learning?

Investigating the cognitive capacity of humans, we might consider, say, the ability to recognize and identify faces on exposure to a few presentations, to determine the personality structure of another person on brief contact (thus, to be able to guess, pretty well, how that person will react under a variety of conditions), to recognize a melody under transposition and other modifications, to handle those branches of mathematics that build on numeri-

cal or spatial intuition, to create art forms resting on certain principles of structure and organization, and so on. Humans appear to have characteristic and remarkable abilities in those domains, in that they construct a complex and intricate intellectual system, rapidly and uniformly, on the basis of degenerate evidence.

"To have a mind is to have the capacity to acquire the ability to operate with symbols in such a way that it is one's own activity that makes them symbols and confers meaning on them."[62] Mind for Chomsky is an innate capacity to form cognitive structures, not first-order capacities to act.

For him, the conceptual competence-performance distinction seems a prerequisite for any serious investigation of behaviour. Human action can be understood only on the assumption that first-order capacities and families of dispositions to behave involve the use of cognitive structures that express systems of (unconscious) knowledge,

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62. Anthony Kenny: "The Origin of the Soul" in Kenny et al 1973.

belief, expectation, evaluation, judgement, and the like.

Suppose that in investigating organisms, we decide, perversely, to restrict ourselves to tasks and problems that lie outside their cognitive capacity. We might then expect to discover simple "laws of learning" of some generality. A more elaborate study of cognitive capacity raises still further questions. Thus, some intellectual achievements, such as language-learning, fall strictly within biologically determined cognitive capacity. But we can consider problems that lie at the borderline of cognitive capacity. Chess, for example, is not so remote from cognitive capacity as to be merely a source of insoluble puzzles, but is at the same time sufficiently beyond our natural abilities so that it is challenging and intriguing.

"The study of chess-playing programs may teach something about the theory of chess, but is unlikely to contribute much to the study of human intelligence."

In the case of human cognition, it is the study of the basic cognitive structures within cognitive capacity, their development and use, that should receive priority, I

believe, if we are to attain a real understanding of the mind and its workings.

"A relation of compatibility holds between the grammar constructed at a given stage of mental growth and linguistic experience, as analysed at that stage by mechanisms of mind." "Language is not only learned but taught, and this "teaching" is essential to establishing the meaning of linguistic expressions," is not supported either on empirical or conceptual grounds.

These are more or less stray Chomskian thoughts; but it is worth considering them in relation to many things that Wittgenstein says in connection with the nature and role of language and our capacity to wield it. Think, for instance, only of the idea that although language must be a rule-governed activity, not all rules can be "learned"; "learning" just as much as justification must come to an end. In the ultimate analysis we are just able to wield language-and-this ability cannot be explained in terms of our having "learned" or "taught" all the rules. It will be fascinating to explore the connection between this thought of Wittgenstein with the Chomskian notion of innate ideas.

Chapter IV

The Problem of the relationship between Man, Nature and Culture

The way we understand people will reflect what we take them to be; what is the nature of the human being, the person and man? Is the human being essentially a rather complicated machine? If so what is wrong with cybernetics i.e. in trying to understand how it (the human being) "works" in the same way that we try to understand the workings of a computer or a chemical factory. Or does the fact that we are conscious, and perhaps that we exercise freewill and recognize a realm of values, render the mechanical approach entirely misleading? Or can we say that the human being is really just an animal; and so people are either machines or animals? The issue of the status of the human being or the person has philosophically crucial dimensions. This is not an assertion but a claim. Factual evidence is of essential importance just as the interpretation of it is.

It seems that there is an obvious difference between the "ideal" description of man as a subject of

enquiry by the natural sciences and a description of man as a "creature of culture". A philosopher's task here need not necessarily be to try and give a correct answer in this conflict; he might conceive his work simply as that of a proper formulation of the problem of understanding man as an object of nature and as an object of culture and how we understand the various corresponding descriptions.

Before we go any further let us ask the question if there might be a distinction of quality between man and other terrestrial animals. The idea that there might be such a distinction is, for instance, to be found in Wittgenstein and others. The pursuit of this idea can be seen as an attempt to explain the concept of man as such, culture as such and nature as such. Any other explanation will have to accept or start from this attempt or theory. The distinguishing mark has to arise from the framework of quality and not from something else (We are using the word "quality" in somewhat like the sense in which Immanuel Kant used the word "categories" in the Critique of Pure Reason).

A very good argument to this effect can be found

in Jonathan Bennett in his book called Rationality.[63] Bennett started with an argument about the way in which the concept of behaviour may be explained. There are two kinds of behaviour he pointed out. These are (1) "Regular behaviour" and (2) "Rule-guided behaviour". This can help us in achieving philosophical elements not only in the context we have picked up above but also in contexts involving specific explanation of certain cpncepts. And when we look for distinguishing marks we are not looking out for synthetic truths of a certain sort. And when Kant and Wittgenstein stress upon language as being necessary for any judgement making they are not saying that judgements cannot be made if there is no spoken language or written language. This is not however obvious. In fact, if we agree with Bennett, it can be argued that it is dangerous to speak of judgements without a structure of meanings and just absence of language. The world of the meaningfulness is different from the carrying out of the meanings into the world, so to say. And as we have made ourselves clear by saying that the concept of language is such that it does not include only the particular spoken

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63. "Rationality: Jonathan Bennett, 1964
Routledge and Keagan Paul.

languages and written languages which I term "meaning - carrying out techniques". It includes also items in the world, which are different from words, and which have a dimension which is generally referred to as "symbolic". Indeed any item in the world might acquire such a symbolic dimension, and of course, some of these items may be specially devised such as, works of art. We may take language in this wide sense and discuss the possibility of it making the crucial philosophical difference between man and the rest of the animate and inanimate world. However it will be more convenient, as Bennett does, to build our argument taking language in the narrower sense of a system of words and sentences in which one does in a fairly straight forward sense, things such as make statements, issue denials, ask questions, answer them, order others to do things etc.

So we go back to the argument for a distinction between "regular behaviour" and "rule-guided behaviour". Bennett gave an interesting example to explain his theory. His example is like this:

> "A honey-bee finds a source of sugar, imbibes some of it, and then returns to the hive where it performs a dance. Other

> bees observe this dance and then fly straight to the food, unaccompanied by its original discoverer. If we know where a given bee has discovered some sugar solution, and what the latter's concentration is, we can predict certain features of the bee's subsequent dance; and from watching a dance we can predict where the bees which observe it will subsequently fly. These predictions are possible because apiologists have found rules which correlate certain aspects of each dance with (a) the distance between the hive and the discovered food, (b) the direction from the hive of the discovered food (for distance over 100 metres), and (c) the concentration of sugar in the food."

And further he says,

> "Apian dances share several important features with human talk, and it would be puritanical to froun upon the bold use, in an informal experimental report, of the natural and inviting metaphor which says that the bees have a 'language', and that they 'understand' one another's 'reports' of discoveries of food."64

One feature which is implicit in language is the concept of reason-giving or rationality. This is recognised by ancient philosophers likd Aristotle and by modern philosophers like Immanuel Kant. For them both, "rational nature" is what really distinguished men from other beings -

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64. Ibid.

at least from all other terrestrial beings. But Aristotle went to the extent of concluding that "theoretical reasoning must be the highest of human activities; for, though reason is indeed employed in practical matters, he thinks it plain that the timeless, incorruptible, non-sensuous objects of theoretical contemplation provide a worthier field for reason's activity than the humdrum situations and predicaments with which practical deliberation has, often inconclusively, to do."[65] Aristotle himself talks of the life of the rational soul as consisting in comtemplation, "Such a life would be too high for man; for it is not in so far as he is man that he will live so, but in so far as something divine is present in him; and by so much as this is superior to our composite nature is its activity superior to that which is the exercise of the other kind of virtue. If reason is divine, then, in comparison with man, the life in accordance with

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65. "The Primary of Practical Reason," by G.J. Warnock, in "Studies in the Philosophy of Thought and Action" selected and edited by P.F. Strawson. Oxford Paperbacks 1968.

it is divine in comparison with human life..."[66] Aristotle also said that Plato was apparently justified in dividing the soul into two parts, one rational, the other irrational. The irrational part itself he divides into what he calls the vegetative and the "appetive". The appetitive part may be in some degree rational, when the goods that it seeks are such as reason approves of. Reason alone is apparently purely contemplative (at least for Aristotle), and does not, without the help of the appetitive, lead to any practical activity.[7]

It is usual to try and understand the difference between men and other animals by referring to capacities or competencies which men have and animals do not. Such an approach, however, is frequently philosophically unsatisfactory. This is so because the proof of the capacities or competencies in question is taken to consist in relevant performances. And such a proof frequently has nothing to do with the conceptual connection between the idea of a particular capacity or competency and the idea of

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66. A History of Western Philosophy - Bertrand Russell, 1945, pp.171-173.

intelligence or rationality which is taken to be peculiar to man. Thus confronted with behaviour such as that of Von-Fisher's bees or that of some variety of ants the notion of a capacity tied to the idea of performance is quite likely to give us the idea of a difference in degree between man and bees or between man and ants. On the other hand, a philosophical enquiry into the idea of rationality which might be involved in the notion of linguistic capacity might yield quite different results. Continuing our discussion on bees, we would like to point out the reason why many people fell into the temptation to say that bees have an elementary language or at least that the bees' behaviour is quasi-linguistic. The reason is that the essential thing about a language is that patterns of behaviour on the part of a creature come to stand for things other than themselves; for states of affairs in the world in which the creature lives. Where a pattern of behaviour is part of a language there are rules linking the behaviour to features of the world so to say. The behaviour thus is, symbolic in the sense that it 'signifies' or 'means' something. It is thus the fact that the dance movements of the bees seem to stand for something or to represent a feature of the bee's

environment that gives rise to the idea that they constitute a language.

Bennett, however, argues that if we think of linguistic behaviour as behaviour that correlates with states of affairs in the creature's environment we can pinpoint the uniqueness of human language. For Bennett the non-human animal can only represent in its current environment. The human being, on the other hand, can represent states of affairs that obtained in the past, and even states of affairs that are general.

What is meant by past states of affairs is clear. The existence of pollen in such and such a place would count as a current state of affairs, and the honey-bee 'language' seems capable of representing this; but the existence of pollen at such and such a place 'this time last year' would be a state of affairs that obtained in the past, a state of affairs that Bennett argues bee 'language' cannot represent. Of course an example of a general state of affairs would be a fact that "pollen is usually found most on tropical flowers." For Bennett such states of affairs cannot be represented in bee 'language'

either. To be a little bit Kantian, we can say that a "general state of affairs is a number of particular states of affairs somehow brought together", and Bennett thinks that "this 'bringing together' or synthesis is a capacity unique to human language".[67] Probably for Bennett it can only be said that "animal quasi-linguistic behaviour can always be regarded as nothing but direct responses to some particular feature of the creature's environment'."[68]

It can be imagined how the mother deer 'warns' her offspring of any impending danger in the form of a tiger by beating the ground with her feet. The beating of the feet can be interpreted as meaning (in this context) "the tiger is approaching". The deer's "action" can be understood as a direct response to a feature already present in the environment, probably, the scent of the tiger approaching (tigers are quite smelly). We can say that the smelling of the scent simply triggers the response

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67. The Philosophy of the Social Sciences - Vernon Pratt, Methuen, p.32, 1978.

68. Ibid., p.32.

in the form of the beating of the ground with the feet.

Studies of animal behaviour enable us to interpret their communication in every case following some basic pattern. But this wouldn't help us especially with complicated communications of the bees and others. However not to complicate things too far we can say that if the bee-dance for instance, is "to be understood as a "statement", the "statement" must be understood as non-general, (that is, as 'particular'), and to be in the present tense: 'There is pollen in direction X, Y flying minutes away'."[69] Let us consider statements made by men during a business session of a company board of directors; the chairman noticing a director rubbing his moustache and nodding his bald head may pass a judgement-statement or may at least be convinced that one of directors is in agreement with a suggestion made (if the Press were to be present there). His judgement-statement would be a particular one about something in the present and could be construed as a simple response on the Chairman's part to the visual impression of the director

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69. The Philosophy of the Social Sciences - Vernon Pratt, 1978, p.33.

rubbing his moustache and nodding his bald head. But if the judgement-statement were to the effect that business people usually rub their moustaches if they have nodded their head (bald or otherwise) when they are agreeing to something, he would be making a general (judgement) statement which could not be construed on the same pattern. In saying that business people usually rub their moustaches (if they have) and nod their head (bald or otherwise) whenever they agree to anything, he is going beyond any memory trace "he might have of past impressions: he is synthethizing a number of visual impressions, embracing them in a single general statement."[70] It can also be seen that visual impressions brought together in a general statement are not restricted to the present. "Making a general statement thus involves the ability to make statements about the past."[71] What is special about human beings is that they can arrive at an appropriate response to the situation in which they find themselves by bringing to bear general statements or judgements, which they are able to arrive at

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70. Ibid., p.33.

71. Ibid., p.34.

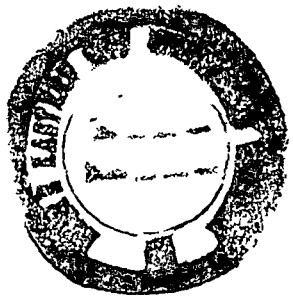
by an act of synthesis applied to several experiences they have had in the past.

There is a way in which an appropriate response may be discovered by an individual, and it is one which has been also argued to have a profound bearing on the nature of human life. This is the idea of teaching or learning from others. What is relevant in this idea is that in the process of learning, we have something that does play a specially important role in the human species, and more so is the reality of individuals being actively taught by another. A group has a tradition when its way of life has been handed down to it from previous generations. It is tradition that learning from others brings with it. Thus the people's ability to learn sometimes by imitating others and by responding to others' teaching creates the possibility of tradition.

The distinction that we have already implicitly made between learning by imitation and learning in a situation of active teaching is important. Perhaps many lower animals are capable of 'learning' by imitation or by what the behaviourists have called, the method of 'trial and error' (e.g. the rat in the maze). But a typical

situation of teaching in the human case is quite radically different. It involves asking of questions, producing arguments, showing the rightness or wrongness of a particular argument, employment of criteria of truth and falsehood and so on. It is quite clear that activities such as this are possible only within a general capacity for language. Consider in this connection several remarks made by Wittgenstein on the connection between the meaning of a word and the learning of the meaning or teaching of the meaning of the word.

If thus in man's linguistic capacity we have a truly distinguishing mark of human beings, it should not be surprising that man as an object of culture is so obviously different from the rest of the world of nature. Culture, of course, includes things such as man's struggle for survival, the way he propagates himself and so on and it will be easy to find stray similarities between man and other animals in these respects. But man's linguistic capacity endows upon even his most basic "animal" activities, a dimension which cannot be there in the case of lower animals. And this is the dimension of meaning. Take even an activity like cultivating the land for food and the



use of implements in such activities. Consider only the implements as possible carriers of meaning. The meaning for instance of an axe or a spade or a rake in a particular culture may go far beyond the strict function of these implements in agricultural activity. There may even be a correct or an incorrect way of making an axe for instance, which may have nothing to do with its function. Or take the activities connected with the propagation of the species, and imagine the fantastic and complex dimension of meaning which goes far beyond the mere sexual act or the activity of rearing the young. And as we, as it were, go up the ladder of man's cultural activity man's world of meaning acquires a complexity and diversity which is unimaginable in the case of any other terrestrial creature. Some of these activities are directly linked with language, activities such as story-telling (which includes invention of myths, legends etc.), singing songs or saying poems, incantation and so on. But there are others which may not be directly linked with language, but are nontheless possible only on the foundation of man's linguistic capacity. Consider music for instance, I mean pure instrumental music or music without any words e.g. just humming or chanting. Music in this sense is certainly not like ordinary language in which one

does things such as make statements, ask questions, issue orders etc, and also mention any of these things. Yet it is undeniable that music has meaning and this meaning has to be explained, as in the case of ordinary language in terms of its signifying relation to things other than itself or, also as in ordinary language, in terms of the relationship between the various units of music itself.

We may now return briefly to the distinction between an activity that is rule-governed and an activity which is merely regular. The regularity of an activity may be either of a causal variety or of a statistical variety. Any breaches in the regularity of such activity have to be explained in terms of changes in the causal or statistical conditions of its occurrence. Concepts such as "improper", "incorrect", "invalid", "wrong" etc., are not applicable to such breaches of regularity. If the monsoons have been late this year it would be absurd to use words such as improper, incorrect, wrong etc., to refer to the break in the regularity of the behaviour of monsoons. On the other hand, what makes an activity rule-governed is precisely the applicability to it of words or pair of words such as proper-improper, correct-incorrect, right-wrong. And also

an activity acquires a dimension of meaning precisely because it is rule-governed in this sense and not merely regular.

Language, for instance, falls under rules relating what is said in it to the facts about its subject-matter. If the only kind of subject-matter with which we can be concerned is the empirical world, then the rules in question must relate what is uttered in the language to the empirical circumstances of the utterer. There is no need for such rules to be formulated, or even that they must be capable of precise formulation, in the language. Language, thus, must consist of expressions which are about something, and "that 'aboutness' involves some sort of relationship, which may be extremely complex but which is in, principle, capable of expression in rules, between what is said in the language and what is true of that which the expressions in the language are about."[72] However, if a person understands another it must be the case that there is a pattern of relationship - perhaps a complex one, but

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72. Bennett's Rationality, p.12.

still a pattern and thus in principle expressible in rules or generalisations - relating utterances in the language to the subsequent behaviour or action of the persons spoken to. Of course, following Bennett, we have to have in principle a variety of ways how to speak, make statements or sentences. "Such a capacity is necessary if we are to have a language and not just scraps of linguistic behaviour."[73] On the idea that an act is symbolic or meaningful, we have to make a note of caution that we cannot properly describe any kind of behaviour "as 'symbolic in character', while remaining agnostic as to the behaver's intentions or reasons."[74] We do not reject the idea that bees' behaviour is rule-guided on the idea that it is entirely explicable interms of physiological laws and the physical structure of the bees, but because they somehow do not manifest any awareness of the "rules" guiding their dances as rules. Not only that but also that it is difficult to understand how bees manifest an "awareness of breeches of the rules as breeches of the rules."[75] This, however, is different from any other

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73. ibid., p.13.

74. ibid., p.14.

75. ibid., p.18.

argument instances of which are arguments that since men are free to behave as they choose, they are always capable of nullifying any generalization about their conduct to which they are alleged to be subject. This is obscure because we have not answered the question of "How far and in what sense man's behaviour is subjected to laws." This is because in a sense the idea that man is capable of culture is something which grounds all forms of communicative understanding and thus is capable not of nullifying any generalisation about man's conduct to which man is alleged to be subject but of breaking the rules which may be guiding the conduct.

Similarly the rule-governed character of man's non-linguistic cultural activity is also clear enough. As in the case of language it is not necessary for such rules to be either totally explicit or precise. And there are, in every culture, rules which as it were define the possibilities of meaning in that culture. What makes sense in that culture and what does not may have to be decided ultimately by relating it to these ground-level rules.

It is possible to divide man's cultural activities

in different ways. One common way of making such division is to put activities under two broad heads, namely, material pursuits and pursuits which are not material. The relationship between these two can also be viewed in different ways. In Marxism, for instance, the relationship is thought of as that of the structure (material) to its super-structure (non-material). In India man's activity on earth has been thought of as belonging to three kinds of pursuits: Artha (economic), Kama (activity concerning propagation of the species) and Moksa (liberation from the bondage of this world). One can even venture to make the point that these kinds of pursuits are somehow essentially connected with the idea of man as a language-wielding and cultural being. But the point that I wish to make here is that whatever might be the system of classification under which we bring cultural activity as long as it is recognisably as irreducibly cultural, what lends it this aspect is its rule-governed character. Take, for instance, Artha and Kama. In the animal world there are activities which are certainly recognisable as the pursuit of these two goals. But what makes the crucial difference in the case of man is the transformation of the pursuit from the merely regular in the case of animals to the elaborately rule-governed in the case of human beings.

So man as an object of culture is one who has given meaning to certain elements of nature, as well as to things made by him by forcing an order of a different kind from the mere regularity of nature and this order is the order of his world of meanings. This process is also part of the individuation process as we have pointed out earlier in Chapter I and part of the pursuits (material or otherwise) of people.

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