

# CHAPTER 4

## THE CULTURAL APPROACH TO PHILOSOPHY

### GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The cultural approach does not repudiate metaphysics as such, though it rejects metaphysics as a super-science or transcendental ontology. The cultural approach transforms Metaphysics from an *Ontology* into a *Weltanschauung* or world view. It advances a meta-philosophical conception of the nature, function and methodology of philosophical theories. It holds that traditional philosophy had misconceived the nature and function of metaphysics and confused philosophical interpretation with scientific explanation. Metaphysics was not concerned with trans empirical facts, as distinguished from empirical facts, studied by Physics or other natural sciences.

It was concerned with modes or patterns of organizing the totality of human experience into a meaningful whole. It functioned in a different dimension altogether as art does from technology. But just as art cannot function without techniques, metaphysics cannot function in isolation from factual knowledge. Neither is it just like poetry or religion. It is *sui generis*. The nature and function of metaphysical statements must be carefully explored. Traditional metaphysicians assimilated them to factual statements about *Ultimate Reality*. The *Logical Positivists* took these pretensions literally and seriously, and prescribed tests of meaningfulness and truth, that were imported from

the sphere of factual discourse. It is not surprising that metaphysical statements fared badly and were branded as nonsense. The cultural approach tries to understand the nature of metaphysics, not at its face value, but through a study of its function in human life, and through viewing metaphysics as organically related to the concrete social and cultural matrix of man. The cultural approach crystallized in Germany in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the blooming of the social and cultural sciences. Two basic concepts were crucial in suggesting this approach. One was the concept of society or a social group as an organic developing totality with a life history. This may be called the concept of *social organism* or *societal personality*. The other was the concept of cultural *gestalt* or configuration; Hegel's was the most important single influence in the formation of these concepts.

The first concept, if literally understood, is obviously misleading. But, understood in the functional sense, it is highly illuminating, since it draws our attention to important observable social facts, and the tremendous dependence of the individual upon the social group in which he is born and brought up. He may not be a cell of an organism. He may even be said to have an independent existence, in a sense in which the group does not exist independently of, and over and above, the individuals. Yet, as far as the concrete and distinctively human content of his life is concerned—namely the manifold of thinking, feeling and willing—this is fashioned and molded by his situational matrix. In this sense the individual is dependent upon his group, and is a cell in the organism.

Now the concept of the societal organism, once it was sufficiently crystallized, inevitably led to the systematic study of different societal units in their structural and functional aspects. Thus, Sociology and later on Sociography and cultural anthropology were born.

Secondly, the concept of cultural *gestalt* directed the social scientist to discover and identify the underlying structure or *gestalt* of the concrete cultural responses of a societal unit. The assumption was that the various responses in the fields of morality, religion, art, philosophy,

science, politics, etcetera were not disconnected with each other, but that they exhibited a *determinate pattern* or *gestalt*. This was termed the *spirit* of the culture of a group, it should, however, not be confused with the *Absolute Spirit* of Hegel.

The concept of cultural *gestalt* implied that the philosophy of a group was interlinked with the rest of its cultural content, and that it could not be understood in isolation. It molded and influenced and was in turn, itself influenced, by the concrete cultural and situational matrix of the individual. Hegel, thus, initiated the approach that developed into the historical or sociological materialism of Karl Marx and the *Lebensphilosophie* of Dilthey, Troeltsch, Eucken and others. The movement of *Historicism* is only a version of *Lebensphilosophie* in the wider sense.

Marx's thought acquired a distinct shade obviously because of his practical concern with the problem of changing *Reality* instead of merely understanding it. The cognate concepts of (a) ideology as a super-structure built or evolved by the thinkers of a group to protect and stabilize its existing power and economic structure, and (b) the situational determination of thought dominate the philosophical content and approach of Marx to a much more pronounced degree than in the case of Dewey or Dilthey. They make him eloquently polemical instead of calmly analytical. He does not concern himself with a detailed delineation of the different worldviews or value systems in the manner of Dilthey and Scheler. Moreover, he does not adopt a spectators attitude towards these worldviews, but the attitude of a participant. Dilthey posited a recurring tendency of the main worldviews, *Materialism* or *Naturalism*, *Idealism* or *Theism*, and *Positivism* to recur in human history. But Marx posited a single track that led towards the withering away of rival philosophies together with class conflict and the nation states.

The approach of *Lebensphilosophie* finds a distinct echo in the thought of John Dewey, who repeatedly stressed the need to understand that the problems of philosophers were theoretical and abstract,

and hence, misleading versions of the problems of men at a particular stage of human history. Instead of solving the problems of philosophers in an isolated and abstract speculative or intellectual manner, they should first be correlated with the historical situation of men. This alone would lead to their proper formulation, and to a grasp of their genuine nature, and the social significance or the concrete consequences of the alternative answers. The answers, Dewey further held, were to be tested and accepted on the basis of their usefulness to human values. By raising the question of the criterion of validity, Dewey went further than Dilthey, who was content to analyze and classify the various worldviews as integral elements of a cultural gestalt, and to correlate them with different situational matrices.

The conceptual field of a philosopher is constituted by his foundational assumptions. These assumptions are given a *push* in a direction, which is determined partly by the nature of the assumptions themselves, and partly by the *leitmotif* of the philosopher. This *leitmotif* is largely a cultural phenomenon, that is, the product of cultural conditioning. But it is not entirely uniform among the philosophers of a group. It has its own subtle nuances in different individual philosophers. It is these nuances that are the part causes of the concrete differences that arise within the context of an overall agreement or a common worldview.

The conceptual field or foundational assumptions of the cultural approach to philosophy are as follows: (a) Man's dependence upon society in the form of cultural conditioning, (b) Cultural responses form a gestalt, (c) Philosophy as an abstract conceptual response is organically related to other responses like art, morality, religion etcetera. (d) Philosophical world views are neither true nor false, but valid or invalid, (e) Philosophical world views must, therefore, be grasped and enjoyed like art forms rather than proved or disproved like logico-mathematical statements and hypotheses.

Within this broad conceptual field, the following questions and tasks arise: What are the concrete features of the various patterns of

worldviews? What are their basic types? What is the exact role of the various features of the situational matrix in the molding of worldviews? What is the value system implicit in different worldviews? How do worldviews change? In what sense are worldviews true or false and what are the criteria of their truth? What are the concrete similarities and differences between worldviews on the one hand, and science, poetry, religion, etcetera on the other? Some of these questions will be considered in this chapter.

## DELINEATION OF THE CULTURAL APPROACH

Culture may be defined as an evaluatively guided modification of a pre-existing natural state of affairs. Thus, leveling, ploughing the earth and growing crops are culture of the earth or agriculture. Exercising the body to develop it is culture of the body or physical culture. Training a child not to cry when he cannot spot his mother working in the kitchen is culture of the feelings or emotions. Exhorting a child that it is wrong to tell lies, or grab his little sisters toys, is the culture of evaluation and attitudes, or moral culture. Similarly, there is the culture of reasoning or inference (logical training), the culture of taste (aesthetic training), etcetera. Cultural training in the widest sense begins at the birth of an individual in a group. The learning process modifies the natural states of affairs, that is, the attitudes the child would have developed if left in a state of nature. The learning process covers the language, gestures, customs, habits, attitudes towards the in-group and out-group, aesthetic taste, the value scale and religious beliefs etcetera. But what is of crucial importance from the viewpoint of philosophy is the assimilation by the growing youth of the conceptual field current in the group. The concept of a conceptual field or frame supplies the key to the cultural approach to philosophy. A pre-critical worldview is primarily a more or less systematic and developed form of the conceptual field current in the group.

It is illuminating to say that philosophy is the culture of conceptual fields or world views, natural science is the culture of perceptual fields

and judgments, morality is the culture of evaluations and volitions, art is the culture of taste, while religion, in the traditional sense, is the commitment to a particular world view, inspired by faith.

Man is never satisfied with bare description. He always tries to fit his perceptual experience of particulars into unifying conceptual frames or systems. An accurate description of, say an egg, is only a part of the knowledge about the egg. Unless the observer knows the relation of an egg to a living organism etcetera, the bare physical description, however accurate and complete, of the egg, neither exhausts the knowledge about the egg, nor satisfies the human urge towards order and system in the elements of his experience. Perception starts, as it were, a circuit that is closed only by *conceptual unification*.

This conceptual unification is of two distinct kinds, and within each kind, there is a further distinction of levels or of range. It is of crucial importance not to mix up these two kinds of unification. The first type is descriptive, while the second is interpretative. A scientific unification is essentially descriptive and predictive. Prediction, however, is nothing but fore-description. Hence, it is verifiable. The second type is interpretative.

Interpretation, as understood here, is not pseudo-description or pseudo-explanation. It is a distinct activity, just as the activity of evaluation is distinct from that of description. Philosophical interpretation is an activity that may be called *existential unification* or *existential analogizing*. The individual attempts to unify the foundational features of human experience of the world, not in order to predict (as is the purpose of science), nor in order to give aesthetic joy to him self or others (as is the purpose of fine arts or poetry), but in order to relate himself in a total manner to the universe. This no doubt provides the individual with aesthetic satisfaction. But the *leitmotif* or spirit behind this attempt is radically different. Such an *existential unification* both leads to and is demanded by a deep yearning in man to commit himself to a total world view, inclusive of a value system. This *existential unification* provides something far deeper and much more significant

than the aesthetic joy provided by poetry. It leads to basic ethical choices. The route from a worldview to a value system is as significant as the route from a value system to a worldview.

This basic kind of unification has been termed existential, to show its central significance and importance in the economy of the individual's existence. The term *existential unification* was suggested by the existential choice referred to by contemporary Existentialists. This *existential unification* is achieved through analogical thinking that is, viewing the universe as a whole in terms of an analogy with a key or basic feature of human experience. Different philosophers are liable to be gripped or struck by different features.

Features of human experience may be correlated with the time honored and reputable division of experience into knowing, feeling and willing. Thus, regular sequence in the perceptual experience of man is a feature of the knowing process, on the one hand, and of the world on the other. The feature of unity in variety and variety in unity, in the sense of the existence of numerous particulars or individuals of a common species or type, is another such feature. The contrast between appearance and reality, form and matter, and the reversible transformation of one state or condition of matter into another, are other striking examples. Other features of human experience, for example, purpose, striving, sense of power as well as of helplessness, aesthetic and ethical evaluation, optimism and despair etcetera. are correlated with feeling or willing.

Different philosophers gravitate towards some favored feature of human experience and make it the foundation for the activity of *existential unification*. Since such unification is analogical, it would perhaps be illuminating to call it existential analogizing. This brings out its metaphysical component and affinity with poetry, and yet keeps it distinct. An *existential unification* is neither a pseudo-hypothesis or pre-scientific explanation, nor a poetic analogy. It is *sui generis*. Its assimilation to either one type of discourse or the other is a grave methodological error, which has been perpetrated in the past by a lack

of a critical meta-philosophy. An *existential unification* both resembles and differs from the scientific and poetic types of discourse.

The confusion of *existential unifications* or, in plain terms, philosophical worldviews with hypotheses, naturally leads to a crucial objection against metaphysical statements, namely, their un-verifiability. They are, then liable to be dismissed as non-sense, or as pseudo-hypotheses of the pre-scientific age. The confusion of philosophical worldviews with poetry, on the other hand, does not lead to their unceremonious dismissal. But it excessively demotes the status of philosophical worldviews. They are stripped of their truth claims or ontological pretensions and given the same status and privileges as poetry. It is believed that this status is high enough and ought to keep philosophy satisfied. But this state of affairs certainly discourages the quest for the analysis and construction of worldviews. The deeper significance of an *existential unification* is missed by this view.

To conclude this section, the urge for *conceptual unification* of an existential type, that is, the urge for philosophical interpretation of the basic features of human experience is an identifiable and distinct urge. It has been and probably will remain operative in all men, explicitly or implicitly.

Consider some examples from the theistic conceptual field or worldview. The sight of human suffering prompts the theist to interpret it, or locate it in a conceptual field, whether as a penalty for sins, or a test of faith, or a means of inner development etcetera. Similarly, a particular judgment, or action, for example, '*God punished Tom*', or '*Tom gave charity to please God*', becomes meaningful only when Tom antecedently accepts the corresponding frame of reference; the theological. This field is the fixed frame of reference into which all sets of experiences are located, even as iron filings fall into a pattern around a magnet. The mass of data which otherwise would have been inchoate spatiotemporal slices are cultured, or patterned. Consider two persons watching the same game of cricket. One is an expert, while the other knows next to nothing about it. The spatiotemporal slices constituting

the game are common to both observers. But for the expert, there is a frame of reference - the rules of the game, the arrangement of the field, etcetera, into which those slices are fitted. For the other lacking in a frame of reference, the slices are like a foreign language that is a series of sounds, but without sense.

Consider: *'Poverty is a Divine Scheme for developing the latent powers in man'*. This is a theological conceptual field for locating the fact that sometimes poverty does develop the latent power of individuals. The fact is the empirical manifold, intertwined with the interpretive manifold.

The full conceptual field may be described as follows: *'God has created the universe and rules and governs it to the last detail. All states of affairs fulfill the Plan. Poverty fulfils His purpose of developing the latent powers of men, and qualifying them for the kingdom of Heaven. God is cruel to be kind to His creation'*.

An alternative conceptual field for locating the fact of poverty, which exists in the world, is in the psychological field. *'Poverty acts as a challenge and stimulus to work hard. It has not been produced by God to test men or improve their character. It exists due to specifiable causes. Analogically, cold does not exist so that men may put on overcoats and light fires. Rather cold acts as a challenge to man who responds in this way. Events occur according to descriptive laws and not according to prescriptive commands of a Divine Being'*.

The acceptance or rejection of a particular conceptual field for one set of facts leads to corresponding or cognate fields for other sets of facts or experiences. The individual accepting the scientific-psychological field to locate social facts like poverty etcetera would tend to accept the scientific physico-chemical frame to locate natural facts like an earthquake etcetera. The individual accepting the theological field would tend to locate in it both social and natural facts. To refute an explanation or interpretation without examining the field is methodologically wrong.

One may accept a basic conceptual field, but differ within that field. This suggests the concept of conceptual figure within a field. It may be a statement, a hypothesis or an interpretation. For example, the interpretation that pain and evil are Divine means for the production of good, and the interpretation that pain and evil are Divine tests of human character, are two different conceptual figures within the same field. Similarly, *Ontological Materialism* or *Idealism* are two contradictory conceptual figures in the field of metaphysics as a super-science describing *Reality*.

Metaphysical systems are prima facie cognitive, descriptive of *Ultimate Reality* and logically deduced, having nothing to do with the attitudes and values of the individual. But the cultural approach, in agreement with the current ordinary language approach, and the once powerful logical positivist approach, rejects these prima facie claims. This, however, does not mean that its meta-philosophical foundation is the same as theirs. It rejects these claims for different reasons.

A philosophical worldview emerges from the pre-philosophical group conceptual field, which predisposes the philosopher towards a particular conceptual direction. But all philosophers do not start in a uniform relationship with their inherited conceptual field. Some philosophers merely articulate, systematize and clarify the groups implicit worldview, removing contradictions that may be latent in its crude popular expression. Other philosophers reconstruct the pattern to a greater or less extent. They not only represent the culture of which they are a product, but are also its constructive critics. They thus help the process of conceptual evolution in the matrix of historical change.

The functions of representation and criticism are present in varying proportions in all philosophers. When the representative function preponderates, we have a traditional conservative philosopher. When it is the other way round; we have a radical philosopher who is a critic of his age. As an extreme case, we have a conceptual rebel.

Worldviews are both the products of the age as well as periodi-

cally recurring types. But every age and society fills the frame with its own distinctive details. The general or generic conceptual frame may also undergo considerable structural change without, however, losing its identity or the core of its approach. Every age has its style of conceptual architecture. One must, therefore, not take others or even him self too seriously as the abiding model. Possibly those philosophers who had anticipated their becoming out of date and outmoded, will be remembered with greater respect than will be others.

## THE CHANGING PATTERNS OF WORLD VIEWS

Why do conceptual fields change and why do they differ in the first instance. Only an indication of the general approach can be given here. Thinking always takes place in a conceptual frame. Philosophy comes much later. It is born from the womb of current cultural frames, or conceptual fields after a great deal of refinement of language and of the conceptual apparatus has taken place.

Due to the wide variety of the natural environment of human societies as well as the subtle differences in the concrete personality structure of human beings (no matter due to what factors), a variety of conceptual fields emerge in different societies. When they are elaborated conceptually in the form of philosophical worldviews or systems, the diversity persists and is further crystallized. These systems then serve to reinforce and perpetuate the original conceptual frames by giving them the aura of certainty, objective truth and finality. Members of the group tend to become all the more ethnocentric and fixed in these worldviews. The quarrels and the disputes of the philosophers of the groups become family quarrels that lie within the frame, and are not about the frame. However, there may be a few notable exceptions.

Different cultural patterns arise in different societies and ages due to the interaction of a number of factors; physical, climatic, psychological etcetera. The process of cultural differentiation from a parent pattern, as in the case of language, may partly account for those differences.

But this explanation leaves out the original differences that might have and probably did exist between the diverse cultural patterns.

To a certain extent these differences can be correlated with external factors. To the extent that this is possible, this correlation should be attempted. For example, the custom of meat eating can be correlated with cold regions where agriculture or horticulture is not easily possible. The attitudes of people in an isolated island or mountainous corner would differ from the desert Bedouin or the sea-faring Phoenicians, etcetera. But beyond these limits, we are forced to say that the original differences, if any, in the cultural patterns are the ultimate data of sociological science.

A comparison with biological or organic evolution would be useful in this context. According to Darwin, the various organisms have evolved due to the operation of natural selection upon minute variations in the cells of organisms over very long periods. These variations are accepted as an ultimate brute fact. The law '*like produces like but not just like*', is not an explanation, but rather an admission of ultimacy. Similarly, we may say that the differences in human responses are due partly to identifiable factors, and partly to their being uniquely individual, even though similar.

Conceptual fields, however, change in a changing universe. The advance of factual knowledge demands fresh, more complex and comprehensive conceptual fields to locate fields. Moreover, inter group contacts taking place due to conquests, trade, and travel etcetera, result in the confrontation of diverse conceptual frames, or judgments arising there from, in the mind of individuals. This contact is extremely fertile for change. But the personality traits of the individual as well as his concrete life situation partly determine the extent and depth of change in the conceptual field. There are several patterns of individual adaptation.

The epistemo-dynamics of conceptual fields enables us to see how the various conceptual fields and interpretations arise naturally in the total situational or life field. For example, the anthropomorphic

theological field comes naturally to man in the pre-technological situation. This field takes a long time to develop from a crude animism, via Polytheism etcetera. The situational changes like the invention of agriculture, the mingling of various cultures in war and peace, the changing patterns of social relationships and power distribution etcetera are all contributory factors in the formation or evocation of conceptual fields. Had we moderns been placed in past situations, we too would have responded in a similar conceptual fashion, just as centuries ago we would have lived in mud houses, and not skyscrapers. However, the creative thinkers of the group go beyond the current conceptual structures, and gradually carry others with them. This constitutes conceptual evolution.

## WORLD VIEWS AND TRUTH

If philosophical theories and systems are conceptual patterns, then how and in what sense can they be true or false? A landscape or a musical composition may be good or bad. But there is no sense in judging them to be true or false. If, however, philosophy claims to be a conceptual picture of the universe, as a portrait is of an individual, say, Napoleon, then the terms true or false are applicable to philosophy. But in the case of a portrait, we have the original subject as well as the painting, and the two can be compared. Now where is the original subject in the case of the universe? Surely, the observed features of the universe are there. But a philosophical theory is not descriptive.

Consider the case of a number of architects, each pressing his design for acceptance by the town planners. There is no standard or Platonic design, with reference to which the claims of the architects could be tested and settled. Even if there were such design, but was in principle inaccessible, there would be no point in claiming truth for a particular design. All that legitimately could be claimed by an architect was that his particular design had such and such advantages under specified conditions, apart from aesthetic value.

Philosophers who construct conceptual systems claiming them to

he true, are not like these architects. There is no standard conceptual model to serve as a criterion of the truth or falsity of the conceptual schemes offered. To give another illustration, the crude stone implements or tools and huts of our ancestor were not *false* even as our electronic hands and needles and multi-storied buildings are not *true*. All we can say is that a primitive hut is far less useful (though not useless) and hence unacceptable to modern man.

It might be objected that some scientific theories too cannot be thus compared with an original model, and are yet judged as true or false. But in such cases the deductive consequences of those scientific hypotheses are always verifiable (in theory, if not in practice due to some practical impediment which is in principle removable). Unfortunately metaphysical theories like Plato's *Theory of Ideas* or Spinoza's *Theory of Substance* have no verifiable consequences.

To ask whether worldviews are objectively true or not is, thus, to raise an improper question. The question of the truth of worldviews arises because the word *true* is used in many different senses and contexts. We are liable to raise questions concerning truth, which though quite proper in one context, are quite improper in others. To ask whether the truth of an attitude, a philosophy, religion or art is objective or subjective is to assimilate the use of *true* in these contexts to the use of *true* in descriptive contexts. And just as descriptive statements cannot be both true and false, but must be either true or false, similarly (it is thought) some one particular worldview must be true and all others false. Again, just as the *true descriptive statement is objectively true*, describes the nature of the real object, similarly (it is thought) the true worldview describes the nature of the real universe as a whole. The true worldview is objective and mirrors the intrinsic nature of Reality without any distortion or refraction. All other views are distorted, hence subjective

The entire problem of objectivity/subjectivity of worldviews arises because of the assimilation of the truth of worldviews to the *truth* of descriptive and logico-mathematical statements due to the prior assimilation of worldviews or conceptual fields to descriptive statements

and scientific hypotheses. Ethical statements, or worldviews can be true, or false, objective or subjective no less than descriptive statements. But the sense of *true* or *false*, or the use of these words differs in each case. The failure to identify the different uses in different contexts of the same word *true* or *false* generates the problem. Before analyzing, the exact sense of *true* in the, context of world views together with the criteria, of their *truth*, it is important to consider the relationship, if any, between worldviews and value systems.

A close examination of worldviews suggests that their pattern and structure correspond with value systems tacitly or implicitly held. If, for example, inner freedom is held as a higher value than group solidarity or discipline, then, it appears to me that Pantheism, or immanent theism, rather than the transcendental version of theism would appeal to the religious thinker.

The realization that philosophical systems are ultimately rooted in a covert value system prevents the meta-philosopher from attacking or defending those philosophical systems on the linguistic or logical plane in isolation from their corresponding value systems. It is important to focus attention upon the source and function of philosophical theories.

The full import of a philosophical system will elude us unless we can identify the value system from which it has sprung and evolved with the help of logical systematization. Once this is done, we grasp the *raison detere* of the philosophical system. This approach is analogous to the discovery of the linguistic sources of the inclination to make statement S<sub>1</sub> or S<sub>2</sub> or S<sub>3</sub>. The importance of the discovery of the sources of philosophical perplexity has been convincingly shown by Wittgenstein, Wisdom, Ryle, and many other contemporary philosophers of the ordinary language school. But the sources are not merely linguistic.

The mere identification by a person of the value system behind a philosophical theory he accepts, may lead to some significant modification in the theory. Just as self-analysis, or Psychoanalysis may lead

to the weakening or even disappearance of an attitude, without any moral exhortation, similarly philosophical theories may be out-grown or transcended without intellectual refutation, that is, without going into the question of their truth or falsity as such. When the hidden value system is brought to the surface, congealed conceptual patterns or theories may, and, at times, do dissolve as does wax before fire. The reason is that the individual grasps more or less clearly the source of the inclination towards a particular formulation or view. This, however, does not render conceptual or linguistic analysis of those views methodologically superfluous.

## THE CRITERIA OF VALIDITY OF WORLD VIEWS

If the use of the concepts *true* or *false*, *objectively true* or *subjectively true* in the context of philosophical systems and theories differs from their use in the context of verifiable descriptive statements, does this land us in the night where all cats are black? Do we step into the bog of arbitrariness with no solid ground of rational conviction? No. All that is required is the substitution of the concept of methodological validity in the place of truth. The criteria of validity of world views can only be recommendatory norms for regulating their acceptance or rejection. The criteria can only be postulated, but not proved. In this respect they are similar to the requirements of scientific method. Empirical statements or hypotheses are proved or established on the basis of the scientific method. But the scientific method itself cannot be proved or established as true, apart from being shown as actually fruitful or useful. The validity of the scientific method cannot be demonstrated to a person who rejects it. But he can rightly be asked to put forward his alternative method. There must be some criteria of truth and some method or agreed procedure for the acceptance or rejection of truth claims. Otherwise there would be complete confusion and despair. This would tend to extinguish the human search for truth and mutual agreement. A minimum measure of agreement is the foundation of joint living.

I do not propose to give here a detailed exposition of the criteria

of validity, or the requirements of the interpretative method, as it may aptly be called. Broadly speaking, they are the same as in the case of the scientific method, namely, simplicity, comprehensiveness, consistency, and pragmatic fruitfulness, but without the important requirement of verifiability.

Verifiability in the scientific sense cannot have any applicability to worldviews, if we antecedently exclude them from the domain of true or false as used in descriptive contexts. If world views are admittedly not descriptive of a trans-empirical *Ultimate Reality*, that is, if world views are not the statements belonging to a super-science, but are modes of *conceptual unification* of the foundational features of human experience, then the pertinent question is not of their verification, but rather of the identification of the key category or *categorical analogy* used for the purpose of unification.

A worldview as a *conceptual unification* grows out of the inclination to assimilate the foundational features of human experience to some one favored model or feature of experience. This assimilation is effected through a kind of analogical thinking, which bears a resemblance to both poetry and factual discourse, without being reducible to either. The clarification of the detailed logic of the language of worldviews is a most vital philosophical task. But it cannot be attempted in this essay. I can only throw a hint that just as many ethical statements are neither purely evaluative, nor purely descriptive, similarly statements expressing worldviews are neither purely analogical or poetic, nor purely factual. They have both components. Hence, though they are not verifiable, they may be more or less applicable to human experience. It is very difficult to clarify this suggested term. But the nearest example I can think of is the aptness of a metaphor or simile. What makes a metaphor *apt* is different to pinpoint. Yet aptness is not arbitrary.

The *applicability* of a worldview can be established rationally, albeit to a limited point, as in the case of concrete ethical reasoning. In so far as the consequences of actions are at least partly verifiable, empirical considerations are relevant to ethical reasoning. Similarly, up to a point, empirical considerations, or the observed features of the universe, like

law and order, utility etcetera, prima facie may support or lead to a worldview. But beyond that point, empirical considerations cease to be relevant. The facts may be agreed upon and yet may be interpreted quite differently. No worldview logically or deductively implies facts that could be verified and thereby constitute a proof of its truth. If this were the case, philosophical controversy would have ceased. Thus there is no conclusive test of the *applicability* of a worldview.

## CONCLUSION

An uncritically accepted worldview is a simple function of cultural conditioning. Even the deliberate choice of the key model is partly a function of the personality structure and value system of the individual. The concrete dynamics of the impact of the value system upon the worldview is a very important field of enquiry.

Although the formulation and application of the criteria of validity of worldviews is essential, and also partly fruitful for forging agreement, no recommended criteria can totally eliminate disagreement and the conflict of worldviews. If value systems can never be inductively or deductively established, then worldviews, which are rooted in those value systems, also cannot be so established. A deep and ineradicable sense of logical uncertainty, if not of philosophical perplexity, appears to be the inevitable destiny of man.