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Abbreviations

ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts,* ed. J. B. Pritchard (3d ed.; Princeton, 1969)
CR	Corpus Reformatorum
DS	H. Denzinger, ed., *Enchiridion symbolorum,* 32d ed. by A. Schönmetzer (Freiburg, 1963)
HWP	J. Ritter, ed., *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*
HZ	*Historische Zeitschrift*
KuD	*Kerygma und Dogma*
NZST	*Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*
PG	Patrologia Graeca
PhB	Philosophische Bücherei
PhilJb	*Philosophisches Jahrbuch*
PL	Patrologia Latina
rde	Rowohlts deutsche Enzyklopädie
RGG	*Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart.* 3d ed.
TDNT	*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*
TLZ	*Theologische Literaturzeitung*
TRE	*Theologische Realenzyklopädie*
WA	Weimarer Ausgabe (standard edition of Luther's works)
ZEE	*Zeitschrift für evangelische Ethik*
ZST	*Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie*

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Introduction: Theology and Anthropology

The understanding of the human being has increasingly played a foundational role in the history of modern theology.

In Protestant theology this development can be traced through various stages, from the early bias toward a "praxis" springing from the human need of redemption, through Deism and the moral rationalism of the later Enlightenment, into the classical period of German evangelical theology that began with Schleiermacher's redefinition of religion. The line continued through revivalist theology and its successors into liberal theology and the debates occasioned by dialectical theology in our own century. In the recently concluded phase of this long history, the debates culminated in the victory of an existentialist interpretation of the Christian message as a result of Rudolf Bultmann's opposition to Karl Barth.

After the holding action of the neo-Scholastic revival, Catholic theology has finally run the same course. The theology of Karl Rahner may serve as an example.

This concentration on anthropology in dealing with the problems of fundamental theology reflects the modern development of the philosophical idea of God. Insofar as modern philosophy did not turn in the direction of atheism or persist in keeping an agnostic distance, it showed increasing determination in conceiving God as a presupposition of human subjectivity and to that extent it thought of him in terms of humanity and no longer of the world. Not the natural world as such but human experience of the world and of the individual's existence in it repeatedly supplied the point of departure for discussing the reality of God. Human beings seemed able to understand themselves in relation to the world only if they presupposed God as the common author of both themselves and the world.

This frame of mind can be seen as early as the fifteenth century in Nicholas of Cusa. In the history of modern thought the same outlook was adopted, with varying emphases, by Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel.[1] The same pattern is observable throughout the

[1]W. Schulz has described and summarized this process in his lectures "Der Gott der neuzeitlichen Metaphysik" (1957). On the anthropological concentration that has taken

entire modern history of philosophical theology. Thinkers no longer took the cosmos as their starting point in order to demonstrate in a quasi-experimental way that God is the first cause of the natural order. Instead, they argued from the existence and experience of human beings in order to show that God is inevitably presupposed in every act of human existence.

In patristic and medieval philosophy and theology this approach had provided only a secondary line of argument. It did not have to bear the whole burden of proof for the idea of God. Thinkers in that age had also found it possible to argue directly from the order of being. Modern thought, however, had to renounce the claim that there is a physical necessity of accepting the existence of God as first cause of the natural process. The reason was that once the principle of inertia was introduced or, at the latest, once the mechanistic theory of the origin of the planets was accepted, modern physics seemed no longer to need "the God hypothesis."

The concentration on understanding of the human in modern fundamental theology thus reflected both the general intellectual outlook of the modern age and the development of this outlook as it found its characteristic expression in the course of modern philosophy. The development of modern philosophy was itself one of the stimuli for the growing anthropocentrism of modern theology. The philosophical concentration on the human person as subject of all experience and of philosophical reflection itself could not but have an impact on theology. By comparison, the theological physics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which looked to the teleology of the cosmos for evidence of a wise Architect of the World, represented a byway that was gradually abandoned.

The growing anthropocentrism that has marked the development of Christian theology has not, however, been due solely to the influence of philosophy. It has also had another and genuinely theological cause: the fact that Christian theology is a response to the human question of salvation. The foundation for a theological concentration on the human person was already laid in the early Christian faith in the incarnation of God.

In the Augustinian tradition, which set its mark on Western theology, the focus was on the problem of individual salvation. The penitential piety of the Middle Ages only strengthened this emphasis, which reached its most intense form in the Lutheran Reformation and was continued in Pietism. In this thinking, the theme of sin and grace was narrowly con-

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place in philosophical theology in the course of this process, see my essay "Anthropology and the Question of God," in my *The Idea of God and Human Freedom*, trans. R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia, 1973), 80–99.

ceived as *the* vital religious question for the individual person. By comparison, God's rule over the world in creation and in his future eschatological kingdom became secondary. This tendency found its purest expression in the Lutheran tradition. In the Calvinist tradition, on the other hand, the social context of human life and a corresponding conception of God's reign continued to exercise a greater influence.

While, then, the individualistic approach to the religious question of salvation represented only one line of development among others in Protestantism, it was nonetheless especially characteristic of the development as a whole. The correspondingly narrow anthropocentric focusing of theology found its classical expression in the revivalist theology of conscience. By contrast, Schleiermacher's theology of conscience once again linked the individual with the religious community. Yet this theology was not spared in the indictment subsequently leveled at the entire nineteenth-century theological development, namely, that it had succumbed to an anthropological egoism in the matter of salvation and thus to religious individualism. This accusation was set forth at the beginning of the twentieth century in Erich Schaeder's *Theozentrische Theologie* (vol. I, 1909). Hegel's similar criticism of the revivalist theology of his day had not exerted any notable long-term influence on theology. Schaeder's theocentrist emphasis, on the other hand, was continued in early dialectical theology; as a result, it left an ineradicable impress on the theological consciousness of our century.

The anthropological concentration in the history of modern theology is therefore not traceable solely to philosophical influences; it has also, and indeed principally, been stimulated by properly theological motifs, although it is only in the recent period that these have exerted their full influence. This makes it clear that this development in theology can be understood only as an expression of the overall intellectual situation in the modern era. The same conclusion follows from the fact that the anthropological concentration in theology has been strongly influenced by the social history of the modern period.

I am referring here to the privatization or at least segmentation of religion in modern society. After the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Christian confessions to a greater or lesser extent lost their position as state religions. The state became religiously neutral, and the choice of a religious confession became the private concern of the individual or of free associations of individuals. Even where the privatization of the religious confessions was not carried out as radically as it was in, for example, the United States, states did sooner or later accept the principle of religious neutrality. In these cases too, the result was a segmentation of the religious thematic, a restriction of religion to the private sphere and to the institutions dealing with this, while the

political and economic order of society was relieved of any connection with religious views.

This tendency is observable throughout the modern period despite divergences peculiar to some countries. It is also independent of the question whether the life of society as a whole can thus be indifferent to the religious thematic or whether on the contrary the process is accompanied by an element of self-deception. The trend to the segmentation and privatization of religion is one of the dominant currents in modern history.

The privatization of religion also explains why pietism has acquired such an important place in the modern history of religious devotion. For the pietistic devotion of the heart took possession precisely of the sphere of private interiority which the modern state still allowed religion to occupy. Pietism turned the problem created by the privatization of religion into a virtue by making of human interiority a preserve, so to speak, for the themes of the religious life. Of course, pietistic devotion could hold its own in the religious debates of the modern age only if it could successfully show the *universal human validity* of religious interiority.[2]

It managed to do this initially in the theological moralism of the Enlightenment, especially in the form of the theology of conscience. This last, instead of reducing religion to morality, derived theological profit from the moralistic justification of religion which Rousseau and, following him, Kant had provided. But the independence of religion as based on private devotion achieved its classical expression only in Schleiermacher, beginning with his *Addresses on Religion* (1799).

Here Schleiermacher showed the universal human validity of religion by claiming for it "a special province in the soul" which is not reducible to morality or metaphysics and in which nonetheless the unity of the individual has its basis. As seen from the standpoint of a sociology of knowledge, religion, which had been reduced to the private sphere, was here asserting itself by claiming a universal human validity precisely for this private sphere. The question of the universally human had, after all, become what Christian revelation had been for the Middle Ages: the basis on which the legitimacy of all opposing views was decided.

[2]With reference to J. S. Semler's distinction between public religion and private religion, T. Rendtorff has justly observed, in his *Church and Theology: The Systematic Function of the Church Concept in Modern Theology*, trans. R. H. Fuller (Philadelphia, 1971), 35ff., that the relation between private and public has been reversed in comparison with the earlier development: The official confessional churches, which at that time still enjoyed great public authority, were demoted to the rank of private institutions, while the private religious consciousness became the general form of theological perception and in the modern age is universally acknowledged as valid. This point has recently been emphasized by F. Wagner, who refers to T. Luckmann, *Das Problem der Religion in der modernen Gesellschaft* (1963), 59 and 63.

This explains how anthropology, or in any case the discussion of anthropological themes, became so fundamentally important to the public life of the modern age. For, just as the Christian religion had been the basis for the spiritual unity of society in the days before the internal division of Christianity and the horrors of the confessional wars, so from the seventeenth century on, a shared conception of the human person, human values, and human rights became the basis for social coexistence.

It is understandable that not only Christians but also modern atheists who deny any and all religious faith should seek an anthropological basis for the universal validity of their claims. This was the path taken by Ludwig Feuerbach and the Marxists, as well as by Nietzsche, Freud, and the followers of both. If it can be shown that religion is simply a product of the human imagination and an expression of a human self-alienation, the roots of which are analyzed in a critical approach to religion, then religious faith and especially Christianity with its tradition and message will lose any claim to universal credibility in the life of the modern age. The Christian faith must then accept being lumped together with any and every form of superstition.

Without a sound claim to universal validity Christians cannot maintain a conviction of the truth of their faith and message. For a "truth" that would be simply my truth and would not at least claim to be universal and valid for every human being could not remain true even for me. This consideration explains why Christians cannot but try to defend the claim of their faith to be true. It also explains why in the modern age they must conduct this defense on the terrain of the interpretation of human existence and in a debate over whether religion is an indispensable component of humanness or, on the contrary, contributes to alienate human beings from themselves.[3]

For these reasons, Christian theology in the modern age must provide itself with a foundation in general anthropological studies. We are not dealing here with a position that one may or may not decide to accept. Individuals are not free to choose the problematic situation in which they prefer to play a part and make a contribution, whatever form this may take. Given the state of the discussion as it has developed in modern times, the general principle just enunciated holds true even for Christian theology today.

In this situation there is admittedly the danger of an anthropological bracketing of theology. Schaeder and especially Karl Barth saw the danger and saw it correctly. It is the danger that human beings doing theology

[3]For a more detailed discussion, see my essay "Speaking of God in the Face of Atheist Criticism," in my *The Idea of God and Human Freedom*, 99–116. See also P. Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (Garden City, N.Y., 1969).

may be concerned only with themselves instead of with God and thus let the true subject matter of theology go by the board. Nonetheless, if theologians are not to succumb to self-deception regarding their proper activity, they must begin their reflection with a recognition of the fundamental importance of anthropology for all modern thought and for any present-day claim of universal validity for religious statements. Otherwise they will, even if unintentionally, play into the hands of their atheistic critics, who reduce religion and theology to anthropology, that is, to human assumptions and illusions. By narrowly focusing on the question of human salvation (especially under the influence of pietism), theologians have undoubtedly forgotten in great measure that the Godness of God, and not human religious experience, must have first place in theology. This is true at least for any theology that is mindful of the First Commandment and takes as its norm the message of Jesus: "Seek first the kingdom of God."

Theologians will be able to defend the truth precisely of their talk about God only if they first respond to the atheistic critique of religion on the terrain of anthropology. Otherwise all their assertions, however impressive, about the primacy of the Godness of God will remain purely subjective assurances without any serious claim to universal validity.

Such has been the sad fate of dialectical theology and in particular the theology of Barth. It disdained to take a position on the terrain of anthropology and argue there that the religious thematic is unavoidable. As a result, it was defenseless against the suspicion that its faith was something arbitrarily legislated by human beings. As a result, its very *rejection* of anthropology was a form of *dependence* on anthropological suppositions. That is, when Barth, instead of justifying his position, simply decided to begin with God himself, he unwittingly adopted the most extreme form of theological subjectivism. Nothing could show more clearly how indispensable a rational justification of theology is and in particular, given the modern situation, an anthropological justification of the mode of theological argumentation. Only on this basis is it possible to show that the theological assertion of God's sovereignty is more than an arbitrary assumption of the part of a pious heart or even a theologian.

The considerations thus far offered show that in the modern age anthropology has become not only in fact but also with objective necessity the terrain on which theologians must base their claim of universal validity for what they say.

But what is the nature of this terrain? Are we dealing with a kind of neutral foundation, or rather one that already predetermines—and predetermines prejudicially—the special character and stability of the theological structure to be erected on it? The latter is precisely what Barth suspected. The results reached by philosopher O. Marquard in studying the

history of the concept "anthropology" point in the same direction,[4] even though Marquard's interest in the question was the opposite of Barth's.

According to Marquard, the term "anthropology" first entered into common use in the sixteenth century as the name for a subordinate discipline within metaphysical psychology. This metaphysical psychology for its part took for its object not only the human person but God and the angels as well, and even the souls of animals. Then "anthropology" came to refer specifically to human psychology. This made it possible for the doctrine on the nature of the human being *(doctrina humanae naturae)* to be removed from its earlier metaphysical setting and made independent. And in fact (according to Marquard) under the title "anthropology" the philosophy of the schools did cut itself free from the metaphysical tradition with its theological ties and ask itself the question: "How is the human being to be defined, if not (any longer) by metaphysics and not (yet) by the mathematico-experimental sciences?" (363). The French and English moralists, he says, laid the groundwork for a metaphysically neutral and uninhibitedly secular conception of the human being. The latter was no longer defined in primarily theological or metaphysical terms but was viewed empirically as part of the natural world and in a context provided by the resuscitated Stoic philosophy of late antiquity.[5]

The "new anthropology" became the basis for the secular culture that arose after the end of the confessional wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This culture developed in detachment from the Christian churches that were still battling each other. Marquard's description of the development is accurate insofar as the very concept of anthropology represented an answer to the question of the human being that was independent of Christian dogma and any metaphysics determined by that dogma. In opposition to Marquard, however, I must stress the point that the development was not automatically accompanied by any opposition to Christian-

[4]O. Marquard, "Zur Geschichte des philosophischen Begriffs 'Anthropologie' seit dem Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Collegium Philosophicum* (1965), 209–39; idem, "Anthropologie," *HWP* 1 (1971), 362–74. The page reference that follows in the text is to the latter article.

[5]W. Dilthey emphasized this point in his landmark study (1891), "Auffassung und Analyse des Menschen im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert" (*Gesammelte Schriften* II, 1–89), and especially in the essay (1904) "Über die Funktion der Anthropologie in der Kultur des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts" (ibid., 416–92, esp. 442ff.). According to Dilthey, the discovery of the soul's interiority and its development in medieval mysticism (420f.) were connected with "the doctrines of the Stoa regarding a teleological coherence of nature, self-preservation, the dispositions of our being in which nature is at work teleologically, the human fall into the turbulence of the emotions and into a resultant enslavement by these, and finally liberation through the knowledge of 'vital values' " (450). Dilthey says that this new vision of humanity then became the "basis for the works that a natural system of law, state, and religion undertook to set in place and make effective in practice" (ibid.).

ity. In fact, motifs derived from the Christian faith played a part, implicitly and explicitly, in the new anthropology. This will subsequently be shown in detail.

It is correct, nonetheless, to say that the new anthropology with its empirical orientation did detach itself from confessional dogmas and from traditional Aristotelian metaphysics. As anthropology became thus detached and independent, the constitutive importance of the religious dimension of humanness receded more and more into the background as time went on, if indeed it was recognized at all. Modern anthropology reflects this independence of modern men and women from the confessionally divergent doctrinal systems of Christian theology and thus from any explicit religious thematic.

From this it is clear how ambivalent a procedure it would in fact be to try to base a Christian dogmatics on conceptions of the human person that arose in the course of a turning away from Christian dogma. As Barth correctly observed in his critique of the anthropocentrism of nineteenth-century theology, the theologians of that time showed an excessive naïveté and lack of discrimination when they adopted philosophical positions that were in turn based on a detachment of the human being from theology and its subject matter. This is true, for example, of Kant's moral philosophy, but it is true as well of his doctrine that timeless structures within the rational subject are the basis of all experience.[6]

A disregard of the theological question concerning the human person is, then, implicitly, even if more or less unreflectively, at work in most contributions to modern anthropology. But let us not be tempted to conclude rashly that theologians should not involve themselves at all in that kind of anthropology but should instead go unperturbed about what they like to call their own proper business. It is indeed true that despite all the differences in its various disciplines and in the individual contributions made to it, modern anthropology has been historically characterized by a certain tendency and will not allow theologians to claim it as a neutral basis for theological reflections making use of its results. But the only conclusion theologians should draw from this situation is that they may not undiscriminatingly accept the data provided by a nontheological anthropology and make these the basis for their own work, but rather must appropriate them in a critical way.

This kind of critical appropriation is necessary in dealing with a nontheological anthropology because, for the reasons already given, the relations between anthropological findings and the subject matter of theology

[6]F. Delekat has shown this in detail in his *Immanuel Kant. Historisch-kritische Interpretation der Hauptschriften* (1963). See my review, "Theologische Motive im Denken Immanuel Kants," *TLZ* 89 (1964), 897–906.

have in large measure been lost from sight. Theologians, moreover, must expect that a critical appropriation of these findings for theological use is also possible, if the God of the Bible is indeed the creator of all reality. It is not possible, on the other hand, to decree a priori that the expectation will actually be fulfilled. This must wait upon the anthropological phenomenon itself, but the question is both meaningful and necessary even if it should turn out that no simple and definitive answer is possible. In fact, the lack of a definitive answer is really to be antecedently expected, given the special character of the idea of God in its relation to the still incomplete totality of the world and our experience of it, a totality that transcends every finite experiential standpoint we can adopt.

A critical appropriation of nontheological anthropological research by theologians is not to be confused with the theological search for a "point of contact" in the self-understanding of the human person, as called for since the end of the twenties by Emil Brunner[7] and in a limited way by Rudolf Bultmann as well,[8] in opposition to Barth. The idea of a point of contact presupposes, especially for Brunner, that the subject matter of theology is fixed in itself but must still be somehow brought home to human beings. In the light of this conception a concern for missionary effectiveness requires that theology establish contact with the situation of the human beings to whom the proclamation is directed, just as God himself has done in his revelation.

When "contact" is conceived in this fashion the nontheological anthropology being used is not critically transformed and in this way appropriated by the theologian. It stands over against theology as something different from the latter, and theology, which in turn stands over against the anthropology as something different from it, is supposed to establish contact with this very different thing. The demand that anthropology be critically appropriated means something quite different. The aim is to lay theological claim to the human phenomena described in the anthropological disciplines. To this end, the secular description is accepted as simply

[7]E. Brunner, *Natur und Gnade* (1934; 1935[2]).

[8]R. Bultmann, "Points of Contact and Conflict", in *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, trans. J. C. G. Greig (New York, 1955), 133–50. For Bultmann, unlike Brunner, the subject matter of theology can only be elaborated *existentially* in the form of anthropology. Since Bultmann sees the point of contact as resolving the opposition of revelation to the human being as sinner, he adopted a position midway between Barth and Brunner in this question. But because he understood revelation to be unqualifiedly a judgment on and negation of the human, he did not achieve a critical appropriation of an anthropology based on existential philosophy, though he regarded this anthropology as normative, but accepted as valid the pretheological interpretation of the person already given in Heidegger's analysis of Dasein and this without any critical discussion of the individual claims made in that analysis. He simply offered a *global* negative evaluation of it as a description of the sinner's understanding of Dasein and used it in this form as a negative foil for theology.

a provisional version of the objective reality, a version that needs to be expanded and deepened by showing that the anthropological datum itself contains a further and theologically revelant dimension.

The assumption that such aspects can be shown to exist in the facts studied by the other disciplines is the general hypothesis that determines the procedure followed in my own study; the hypothesis must, of course, prove its validity in the discussion of the particular themes discussed. These aspects have not already been developed in the nontheological disciplines making up anthropology or are mentioned only peripherally and usually not made central. This situation is to be explained by the motives that have directed the development of modern anthropology in its various disciplines. These disciplines have developed in separation from the dogmatics of the contending confessions and from any theologically influenced metaphysics. Their aim, moreover, has been to place even the peripheral statements they do make about human religious behavior on a new and empirical foundation, in the establishment of which the religious themes of human existence seemingly play no part as yet.

What is the relation between this task of appropriating nontheological anthropological research and theory and the traditional dogmatic anthropology that was developed in the framework of the theological doctrine of creation and took the form of a doctrine regarding the original state and the fall of Adam?

Dogmatic anthropology has had two central themes: the image of God in human beings, and human sin. Also discussed have been the relation of soul and body, as well as a series of other questions for the most part connected with the soul-body question, but these have not been the specifically dogmatic themes in the theological doctrine of the human person. The two main anthropological themes of theology—the image of God and sin—will also prove to be central in the attempted theological interpretation of the implications of nontheological anthropological study.

We must be careful, however, not to think of these two themes as having no validity outside the framework of the old doctrine of the original state and the fall, a doctrine reflecting a now outdated worldview. If we avoid this prejudice, we will see that the doctrines of the image of God and sin thematize the two basic aspects found in the most varied connections between anthropological phenomena and the reality of God. To speak of the image of God in human beings is to speak of their closeness to the divine reality, a closeness that also determines their position in the world of nature. To speak of sin, on the other hand, is to speak of the factual separation from God of human beings whose true destiny nonetheless is union with God; sin is therefore to be thematized as a contradiction of human beings with themselves, an interior conflict in the human person.

The opposition between closeness to God and distance from God leaves its impress on the whole of religious life. It finds expression in the fundamental polarity of holy and unholy, clean and unclean, as well as in the opposition between holy and profane. The concepts of image of God and sin describe the anthropological manifestation of this basic opposition that marks all of religious life. At the same time, however, they give the basic opposition a specific nuance that is characteristic of the Judeo-Christian tradition.

In reminding the reader that an opposition and tension far more universal in application manifests itself here in a particular setting, I am for the moment simply making one point: that we ought not to be surprised if an investigation of the religious and therefore theologically relevant implications of anthropological data leads us to the concepts of image of God and sin. But there is a further possibility which we may not exclude in advance: that the specifically Christian stress, as conveyed in these two concepts, on the opposition and tension between closeness to God and distance from God may shed a special light on the empirically derived anthropological phenomena. As we shall see, even historically the two concepts pointed the way to the discovery of these phenomena.

Nonetheless it is not my intention here to offer a *dogmatic* anthropology. Traditional dogmatic anthropology presupposes the existence of God when it speaks of the image of God in human beings. Furthermore, it develops this concept on the basis not of anthropological findings but of what the Bible says. Since it supposes the reality of God as it sets about speaking of human beings, it surrenders the possibility of joining in the discussion at the level of anthropological findings, for at this level a divine reality can be introduced, if at all, only as a problematic point of reference for human behavior, not as the object of apodictic dogmatic assertion. In addition, an anthropology that would suppose the reality of God could not help to ground theology as a whole, since the theme of theology is precisely the reality of God.

In contrast to traditional dogmatic anthropology, the studies undertaken here may be summarily described as a *fundamental-theological* anthropology. This anthropology does not argue from dogmatic data and presuppositions. Rather, it turns its attention directly to the phenomena of human existence as investigated in human biology, psychology, cultural anthropology, or sociology and examines the findings of these disciplines with an eye to implications that may be relevant to religion and theology.

What method is best suited to such studies as these? Can one of the disciplines dealing with the human person claim a primacy in the sense that it provides a groundwork to which the contributions of all the other disciplines must then be related? Does any single discipline thematize the reality of the human in a way at once comprehensive and diversified, so

that the contributions of the other disciplines can find a place in the framework it supplies?

Human biology certainly cannot suitably play such a role. The question it asks about the human being is undoubtedly fundamental, but it is not comprehensive in a rounded way. Biology studies human beings only as a species and must prescind from individual features. Even the social relations of the human entity enter, if at all, only in a very general way into the perspective adopted in human biology. Sociology, for its part, devotes its attention especially to these relations, but it too prescinds from the individual and therefore from the concrete form which human reality takes. Something similar must be said of psychology.

The closest approach to concrete human reality is to be found in historical science, since this deals with the concrete lives of individuals and the way in which they interact in the process that is their history. Yet even the reconstructions produced by historical science must prescind from many details that belong to the concrete reality of the events being investigated. Even a biography, which represents the closest approach of history to the individual life, must focus on the events and occurrences regarded as important in the life that is being presented.

In history too, therefore, abstraction still plays a fundamental part. This does not alter the fact that historical science approaches more closely to the concrete reality of human life than does any other of the anthropologi cal disciplines. In comparison with history, these other disciplines thematize only partial aspects of the human reality: biology, the special character of human beings as compared to the animals; sociology, the basic forms of social relations among human beings; psychology, the general structures of human behavior.

On the other hand, historical science presupposes in principle all these partial aspects when it undertakes to describe human existence in its individual concrete forms. Consequently, history cannot be the basis for the other anthropological disciplines; rather, it absorbs them all into itself as partial aspects. The history of humankind thus comes at the end of anthropological reflection, precisely because it alone thematizes the concrete reality of the human being. Knowledge must always begin with the universal and abstract and only at the end reach the concrete as the object to which all the previous, abstract approaches were ultimately directed.

From this point of view, the fundamental anthropological discipline is the one that deals with humans beings at the highest level of generality and thus first delimits the concept of human being, even if at the cost of remaining very abstract. That discipline is human biology. My investigation will therefore begin with what biological research tells us about the special character of human beings as opposed to the animals most closely related to them and to the animal world generally. Since such a definition

of the human being looks less to the doctrine of evolution than to behavioral research, we find ourselves in very close proximity to psychology. Psychology in turn proves to have close ties with the anthropological perspectives of sociology, while conversely sociology presupposes biological anthropology and psychology.

These studies will lead finally to human history as the history of human existence itself. In the process it will become clear that the question of the anthropological significance of history is linked with the central anthropological problem in pedagogy: How to form human beings.[9]

[9]I presented the substance of these methodological considerations in 1962 in the concluding chapter of my book *What Is Man? Contemporary Anthropology in Theological Perspective*, trans. D. A. Priebe (Philadelphia, 1970). But at that time I did not so consistently correlate the findings of the discipline of anthropology from the standpoint of the question of the *concept* of the human being.

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Part One
THE PERSON IN NATURE

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1
The Uniqueness of Humanity

Modern anthropology no longer follows Christian tradition in defining the uniqueness of humanity explicitly in terms of God; rather, it defines this uniqueness through reflection on the place of humanity in nature and specifically through a comparison of human existence with that of the higher animals. To some extent this represents a revival of the ancient and in particular the Stoic approach which understood humanity in the framework of the cosmic order as a microcosm that reflects the macrocosm of the physical universe. Democritus was the first to describe the human being as "a world in miniature," a microcosm (Diels, Frag. 34). A human being is an image of the macrocosm by virtue of containing all the strata of reality (body, soul, and spirit).

An integration of humanity into nature along these lines still played an important part in the anthropology of the Renaissance, and echoes of it could still be heard at the beginning of the modern age. Here, nonetheless, as was true of the Christian tradition, the question of the special place of humanity in nature had become independent of the idea of the human being as microcosm. The question of humanity's special place in nature still dominates modern anthropology even when human beings are understood in terms of their relation to the animals; for in the study of this relationship the aim is precisely to determine what is distinctively human. In asserting this special place, the Christian and metaphysical tradition had appealed to the concept of an immortal spiritual soul with which only human beings are endowed. This individual, immortal soul was conceived, not as simply a participation in a world soul that permeates the cosmos, but, in biblical and Christian terms, as a supraterrestrial distinguishing mark and dignity that elevates humanity above the entire cosmos and sets it at God's side over against the cosmos.

In the course of the nineteenth century the interpretation of humanity's special place as owing to a soul that is united to an animal body became increasingly dubious. An attempt was made—here again in continuity with earlier insights—to overcome the body-soul dualism and to understand human uniqueness in terms of corporeality. A foundation was thus laid for

a comparison between animal and human. We know the animals, however, only from outside, via their bodily form and bodily behavior. The decision to adopt the same approach to human uniqueness represents the decisive turn in the direction of present-day anthropology, for, like Darwin in his theory of the origin of the species, the method of contemporary anthropology postulates a continuity between human and animal and then endeavors to determine the special place of humanity within this continuity, instead of allowing the uniqueness to depend on the introduction of an alien principle into the world of nature.

This approach had its predecessors in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Among the philosophers who adopted it, J. G. Herder and Friedrich Nietzsche deserve special mention. But the decisive breakthrough came when psychologists no longer sought access to the psyche through introspection but through observation of *external behavior.* This trend started at the beginning of the present century in American behaviorism, on the one hand, and, on the other, in the biological (animal-psychological) investigation of behavior that became the starting point of German "philosophical anthropology." Max Scheler is regarded as the originator of this discipline, which was developed by Helmuth Plessner along with Scheler himself and, later on, especially by Arnold Gehlen.

I. The Behaviorist Approach and Its Critics

After preliminary work by William McDougall (1912), behaviorism was launched in 1913 by John B. Watson, whose aim was to renew psychology on the basis of the natural sciences.[1]

> Watson, a student of animal behavior, wished to pursue the study of psychology with the objective methods proper to the natural sciences. In his view, this meant the limitation of psychological investigation to an analysis of behavior in terms of stimulus and response and the variations in these. The object of psychological research was no longer to be the life of the psyche or the data of consciousness but the adaptation of the organism.[2]

In 1953 the American behaviorist B. F. Skinner wrote an essay, "Behaviorism at Fifty," in which he looked back to the beginnings of the new

[1]J. B. Watson, *Behaviorism* (New York, 1930; Norton Library, 1970); see especially ch. 2, "How to Study Human Behavior," which dates from 1913. See also his article "Behaviorismus," *HWP* 1 (1971), 817f.

[2]Thus F. Graumann in his Introduction to the German translation of J. B. Watson, *Behaviorismus* (1968).

psychology inaugurated by Watson.[3] According to Skinner, the point of departure for this psychology was Darwin's theory of evolution. In substantiation of that theory it had to be shown that humanity is not fundamentally different from the lower animals and that on the contrary all human characteristics are simply variants of animal forms of life and modes of behavior. Even intelligence is not something completely new in human beings, but is found in rudimentary form in our closest relatives in the animal world, as can be seen from the occasionally discerning behavior of animals. But if it is possible to conclude from the behavior of animals that they possess intellectual powers, why should not the same procedure be applied to human beings and the same methodology thus be used in studying both human and animal behavior? Watson wrote in 1913: "Everyone admits that the behavior of animals can be studied without any appeal to a consciousness.... What I am proposing here is that the behavior of man and animal alike must be placed on the same level."[4] Watson believed it possible to abandon the concept of consciousness in the psychological sense; this renunciation would, he thought, "do away with the separation between psychology and the other sciences." In his description of behavior as an adaptation to environmental conditions Watson made use of the correlation of stimulus and response, especially as discovered by the Russian scientist I. P. Pavlov in his famous experiments with dogs and formulated in his theory of "the conditioned reflex." Watson hoped to explain the whole range of human behavior in a similar way, especially with the aid of the assumption that behavioral habits arise from this kind of reflex.

It is now clear that behaviorism was a primarily negative response to the modern question of humanity's special place in nature inasmuch as it sought to avoid and replace the concept of consciousness. As a result, the very limitations of behaviorism became, conversely, arguments for the special place of humanity in nature. Today, however, the concern to maintain this special place can no longer be defended with the arguments used in the old metaphysics of the soul, but, like behaviorism itself, must appeal to the bodily conditions and peculiar characteristics of human behavior. Here we see the abiding significance of behaviorism: its attempt to reduce human activity to observable behavior that is stimulated from without has dictated the terrain and mode of argumentation for all efforts to deal with humanity, even if these efforts have a different orientation from that of behaviorism. For if human behavior could be satisfactorily

[3]B. F. Skinner, "Behaviorism at Fifty," in T. W. Wann, ed., *Behaviorism and Phenomenology: Contrasting Bases for Modern Psychology* (Chicago, 1964), 79ff., esp. 80f.

[4]Watson, *Behaviorism.* [I have not been able to find these sentences in the English original and have translated them from the German version, 27f.—Tr.]

and fully explained by a behaviorist analysis, all other assumptions regarding human uniqueness would be rendered superfluous.

As early as 1935, F. J. J. Buytendijk and Helmuth Plessner criticized the application of Pavlov's conditioned reflex as a principle for explaining all behavior without exception.[5] Following the American psychologist Edward C. Tolman, Buytendijk raised the objection against behaviorism that the stimulus-response scheme does not display an unambiguous causal relationship, since the same constellations of stimuli can elicit a variety of movements in response, while, conversely, different constellations of stimuli can elicit the same response. In his later studies of human behavior and activity Buytendijk wrote that a concrete activity such as running or jumping does not come into existence as a chain of reflexes but is to be understood as an integrated feat that is "determined by the state or condition being sought as a goal."[6] Because of this objective orientation to a goal, which Tolman had demonstrated in detail, even the behavior of animals is never a causal sequence in the sense of a chain of reflexes, but is "always a conducting-*oneself.*"[7] This finding is of wide-ranging significance, for it means that even simple animal movements such as running, grasping, and jumping cannot be described in purely external terms as a sequence of changes of state caused by stimuli but only as the activity of a "subject": animal behavior is always a conducting-*oneself.*

G. H. Mead, the founder of social psychology, developed the same point of view, although with a somewhat different emphasis.[8] Externally observable behavior, said Mead in opposition to Watson, is simply the expression of something internal, namely, a subjective act. Mead made the point that in the special case of human behavior the subjective acts that are at the basis of this behavior make themselves known especially through the connection between human behavior and speech.[9] Charles W. Morris in his neobehaviorism attempted to meet this difficulty by describing the connections between speech and behavior with the aid of concepts based on externally stimulatable behavior and without appealing, as Mead did,

[5]"Die physiologische Erklärung des Verhaltens. Eine Kritik an der Theorie Pawlows," *Acta Biotheor.* (Leiden), Series A 1 (1935), 151–72.

[6]F. J. J. Buytendijk, *Allgemeine Theorie der menschlichen Haltung und Bewegung* (1948; German tr., 1956), 12. M. Merleau-Ponty had undertaken (1942) a similar critique of the reduction of behavior to a stimulus-reflex mechanism in his *The Structure of Behavior,* trans. A. L. Fisher (Boston, 1963). In a manner similar to Buytendijk's later arguments, Merleau-Ponty's introduction of the concepts of gestalt (33ff.) and structure (145ff.) showed the irreducibility of the whole to a mere sum of its parts (e.g., 69), without thereby succumbing to the kind of mystification found in vitalism (cf. 151, etc.).

[7]Buytendijk, 14.

[8]G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago, 1934), 2ff.

[9]Ibid., 6.

to an acting subject.[10] In response, Jürgen Habermas raised the same objection that Buytendijk had raised in a more generalized form: it is impossible in principle to assert that the stimulus-response link is an unambiguous one, that is, that a specific response is always given to a specific stimulus. Habermas emphasized the *uncertainty* of the stimulus-response connection, especially in human behavior as mediated through speech: "Identical stimuli can elicit divergent responses when diversely interpreted by the one responding."[11] The response to a stimulus is univocally determined only (if at all) by constant factors at work in the subjective attitude. This consideration leads away from an extremely empiricist toward an aprioristic interpretation of behavior that makes the peculiar features of a response to stimuli depend on the individuality of the living entity in question, that is, on its innate behavioral schemata which prior to any experience determine its responses to possible stimuli and thus its behavior as well.

II. Is the Structure of Behavior Peculiar to the Species?

Whereas American behaviorism stands in the tradition of British empiricist philosophy and its tendency to reduce all knowledge to sense perceptions and sense observations, a decisive part of the behavioral study done by German-speaking scientists has been influenced by the philosophy of Kant and its thesis that all experience depends on the experience of the pregiven forms by which our spirit apprehends. When Konrad Lorenz, the leading contemporary German student of behavior, wrote a summary (Königsberg, 1942) of his conception of behavioral research he entitled it "The Innate Forms of Possible Experience."[12] In this essay Lorenz expressly adopts Kant's view, but at the same time he both modifies and generalizes the latter's transcendental approach. According to Lorenz, Kant had "discovered both that our forms of intuition and categories are independent of any prior experience and that we are in a position to 'read as experiences' only what can be written on the keyboard of the categories and forms of intuition" (237). But, he says, Kant did not see that these forms of intuition and categories depend on the peculiar character of our bodily organs. Moreover, since the latter are the product of the evolution of life, it seems probable that the experience of all living things is in like manner preformed by the form of their organs. The transcendental philosophy of Kant is here transferred to the empiricobio-

[10]C. W. Morris, *Signs, Language and Behavior* (New York, 1955).
[11]J. Habermas, *Zur Logik der Sozialwissenschaften* (1967), 107.
[12]*Zeitschrift für Tierpsychologie* 5 (1943), 235–409.

logical order: every animal has its *innate behavioral pattern* (241).

In adopting these theses, Lorenz contradicts behaviorism, but not to the extent that he must completely reject behaviorist analyses. Rather, the acceptance of innate behavioral patterns serves merely to supplement the behaviorist presentation of behavior as fitting the stimulus-response schema.

> Whenever a living being, without prior experience, seemingly "understands" a situation and responds to it in a meaningful way, this response is dependent only on very specific stimuli that operate like a key. . . . To such obviously mechanistic and physiological correlations with specific stimuli situations, such innate "predispositions" to react with regularity to certain key stimuli, we may give the name *innate schemata* (240).

These innate schemata "at one and the same time *characterize* and *simplify*" situations of vital importance to the organism. The acceptance of innate schemata serves here to solve the problem that behaviorism had been unable to solve: the ability of the same stimulus to elicit divergent responses. According to Lorenz, the response depends not only on the stimulus but also on the behavioral schema of the particular organism. It is this behavioral schema that unequivocally determines the stimuli to which an animal will respond under a given set of conditions and what its specific reactions will be.

A similar acceptance, inspired by transcendental philosophy, of a priori behavioral schemata is found in a modified form in Lorenz' disciple, I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt.[13] An analogous perspective characterizes Jean Piaget's studies for a genetic theory of knowledge that is based especially on research into the psychology of children.[14] The generative grammar of Noam Chomsky[15] and certain trends in structuralism show a concurrence with these views inasmuch as they accept the idea that human behavior is determined by peculiarly human structures which precede all experience and are therefore to be regarded as a priori or transcendental.[16] Here too is to be located the doctrine of Habermas and K. O. Apel on interests as governing knowledge.[17] The multiplicity of these important concepts which differ among themselves yet are in agreement on this fundamental

[13]Compare I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt's essay on "Stammesgeschichtliche Anpassungen im Verhalten des Menschen," in *Biologische Anthropologie* II (1972) (series Neue Anthropologie 1, ed. H. G. Gadamer and P. Vogler).

[14]See the comprehensive presentation by H. G. Furth, *Piaget and Knowledge: Theoretical Foundations* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969).

[15]N. Chomsky, *Language and Mind* (New York, 1968; enlarged ed., 1972).

[16]C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*, trans. C. Jacobson and B. G. Schoepf (New York, 1963).

[17]J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. J. J. Shapiro (Boston, 1971); K. O. Apel, *Transformation der Philosophie* II (1973), 155ff.

point of view shows how broad is the spectrum of contemporary efforts to interpret human behavior in transcendental terms as directed by a priori behavioral schemata that precede any and all experience. Despite their diversity, all these approaches have in common an inflection of Kant's transcendental-philosophical statement of the problem, comparable to that seen in Konrad Lorenz' biological study of behavior. The question of the structures that determine behavior is broadened so as to move beyond the Kantian problematic of subjectivity as the ground of all experience and thus become a radical acceptance of empirical theory formation, so that the Kantian opposition between the empirical and the transcendental is now abandoned.

Biologist Jacob von Uexküll had developed views materially similar to those of Lorenz.[18] According to Von Uexküll, every animal experiences its surroundings in a specific way, that is, with its attention focused on the presence of features that are positively or negatively important for its own survival and the life of the species. In the case of the lower animals, these features comprise a very small part of the multiplicity that is to be found in the actual surroundings. A tick, for example, experiences its surroundings in an extremely simple form. With the aid of its skin's sensitivity to light it finds its way to a tree branch. Its sense of smell and temperature tell it when a warm-blooded animal is under the branch. At this signal the tick drops onto the animal in order to suck its blood. These features, then, form the "feature world" or "environment" of the tick. Thus the concept of environment *(Umwelt)* does not refer in Von Uexküll and subsequent writers to the actual "surroundings" *(Umgebung),* with all the multiformity we know them to have, in which the animal in question lives. Rather, the environment of an animal is the subjective perspective, the subjective sector of the world, that is defined by the set of features to which the animal reacts according to its species, that is, according to the innate behavioral schema of that species.

According to Von Uexküll, human beings, like the animals, are limited in their behavior to an environment and therefore to a sector out of the total reality of the world, a sector that is determined by the vital interests of the species and corresponds to an innate behavioral schema. In his book *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Menschen und Tieren* (Expeditions through the environments of man and the animals; 1958), Von Uexküll speaks of environments proper to specific occupations. Now, the forest is certainly a different place for the hunter than it is for the woodcutter or the Sunday excursionist. There is, however, no question here of a limited perspective that is innate and peculiar to a species, but rather an effect of culture, that is, of occupational specialization. This shows that the concept of environ-

[18]J. von Uexküll, *Umwelt und Innenwelt der Tiere* (1921).

ment in the special sense it has in behavioral research can be applied only metaphorically to humankind.

The concept of environment cannot be transferred without further ado from animal to human behavior. If there are innate behavioral schemata in the human being, then they exist only in a singularly rudimentary and attenuated form. They influence the free play of human behavior in only a small degree. Konrad Lorenz, who observed a similar reduction of instinctual mechanisms in domesticated animals as a consequence of their domestication, sought to interpret the analogous situation in human behavior as the result of a "self-domestication." But the objection was raised to this interpretation that "the plasticity of the instinctual life and its readiness to deteriorate are obviously primary and not secondary in the case of man."[19] As evidence for this claim, Gehlen pointed to the fact that cannibalism is documented among early hominids, whereas among animals restraints proper to the species keep them from eating other members of the species. It is clear that even in the early phases of human evolution, the behavior of the human being was characterized by the "*natural* instability" of the human being's instinctual life (59) and that this gives the human being a special place in the animal world. To describe this special place Gehlen and others before him have used the concept of "openness to the world," in distinction from the dependence of the animals on their environment. The concept of "openness to the world" is central to what is known as "philosophical anthropology," a phrase that is understood in this context not simply in a broad sense that includes all philosophical efforts to define the nature of the human being but in a narrow sense as the name of a particular philosophical trend of our century in which the focus of attention has been the philosophical interpretation of empirical anthropological research.

III. Philosophical Anthropology

The concept of philosophical anthropology in the narrow sense of the phrase describes the type of anthropological reflection that originated in Max Scheler's groundbreaking book *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos* (1928).[20] Independently of Scheler, Helmuth Plessner developed a similar conception.[21] The positions taken by Scheler were then further developed by Arnold Gehlen in particular.[22] Some biologists too have associated themselves with this philosophical anthropology, especially the

[19]A. Gehlen, *Anthropologische Forschung* (rde 138, 1961), 59.

[20]ET: *Man's Place in Nature,* trans. H. Meyerhoff (Boston, 1961). The quotations from Scheler farther on in the text are from the ET.

[21]H. Plessner, *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch* (1928; 1965[2]).

[22]A. Gehlen, *Der Mensch* (1950).

zoologist Adolf Portmann[23] and the Dutch behavioral scientist F. J. J. Buytendijk.[24]

Philosophical anthropology shares with behaviorism and German behavioral research the principle that human beings must be interpreted in terms of their corporeality and in particular of their bodily and therefore observable behavior. It also agrees with German behavioral research and the social psychology of G. H. Mead (in contrast to classical behaviorism) that even the behavior of animals and certainly that of human beings must be understood as a conducting-*oneself,* that is, as the expression of a subjective center. On the other hand, philosophical anthropology differs from behaviorism and from the science of behavior as represented by Jacob von Uexküll and Konrad Lorenz, inasmuch as it recognizes humanity's special place in the domain of animal life. In Scheler and Gehlen this place is described by the concept of "openness to the world." Plessner, for his part, prefers the expression "exocentricity"; he intends to express the same content, however, and the new term points only to a critical limitation of that content and represents an effort to define it more precisely.

Scheler's anthropological thought was strongly influenced by Henri Bergson and especially by his *Matière et mémoire* (1896; ET: *Matter and Memory,* 1911). As a vitalist philosopher, Bergson had devoted special attention to the intimate connection of body and spirit. Scheler developed the same line of thought by linking the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl with the behavioral research of Von Uexküll. In so doing, he still took as a starting point the principle that human beings as persons are spiritual beings whose spirituality cannot be derived from the biological factors that condition their being. But at the same time Scheler looked for a bodily correlate of this human spirituality, that is, for a datum in which the special character of humankind finds a corporeal expression. Scheler found it in human openness to the world. In this phrase he was describing the fact that "the spiritual being is . . . no longer subject to its drives and its environment" but is "free from the environment" (37). Human beings are no longer limited by a set of drives and instincts to a determinate feature world so that their senses would perceive only those features of the environment which are important for their own life and that of the species, while all the other qualities of the objective world would be already filtered out. Human perception does not function primarily as releaser of reactions that are preimprinted in an innate behavioral schema. What is characteristic of

[23]A. Portmann, *Zoologie und das neue Bild des Menschen* (rde 20, 1956). Originally published as *Biologische Fragmente zu einer Lehre vom Menschen* (1944).

[24]F. J. J. Buytendijk, *Mensch und Tier. Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Psychologie* (rde 74, 1958).

human beings is, rather, that they can dwell on the contents of intuitions and ideas *as such,* in their "objective nature" (37) and not simply insofar as they are the objects of instincts. Human instinctual impulses can therefore be inhibited by the person, and this "voluntary inhibition" (39) points, according to Scheler, to the person or spirit as its origin; that is, it points to an origin which, according to Scheler, "transcends what we call 'life' in the most general sense" (36). This voluntary inhibition of instincts—which at every point is presupposed in all freedom from inhibition and indeed makes the latter possible to begin with—points precisely, according to Scheler, to that "which gives man his unique characteristics," that is, to a "principle opposed to life as such, even to life in man" (36). This is the spirit, and the appearance of the spirit in humanity cannot, in Scheler's view, be accounted for by the natural evolution of life but must be attributed, "if reducible to anything, . . . to the ultimate Ground of Being of which 'life' is a particular manifestation" (36). The center from which human beings are in a position to oppose their own life and drives and thus objectify themselves "can only be located in the highest Ground of Being itself" (47).

When Scheler asserts that humanity's special place in nature is due to its openness to the world, he understands this openness as requiring for its intelligibility the presence of spirit as a principle that is opposed to life and intervenes from outside as it were in the process of evolution, so that it can be traced directly to God.[25] Scheler found the idea of God an indispensable one if he was to answer the question of the origin of spirit and thus the question of humanity's special place. The situation changed in subsequent work in "philosophical anthropology."

Helmuth Plessner, in his *Die Stufen des Organischen und der Mensch,* which likewise appeared in 1928, was showing himself much more reserved than Scheler. It has justly been said "that Plessner supplies conceptual help at a point at which Max Scheler's discourse turns particularly metaphysi-

[25]In the dualism of spirit and life, K. Lenk sees the early Scheler's theistic metaphysics of the person continuing to influence his later work in anthropology; cf. K. Lenk, *Von der Ohnmacht des Geistes. Kritische Darstellung der Spätphilosophie Schelers* (1959). The increasing emphasis on the dynamism of the vital drives, against which the life-transcending spirit is "helpless" (ibid., 6), has been connected by F. Hammer, *Theonome Anthropologie? Max Schelers Menschenbild und seine Grenzen* (The Hague, 1972), with Scheler's express appeal to Freud's doctrine of the instincts (137). Compare Scheler's *Man's Place in Nature,* 57, 59f. W. Schulz, in his comprehensive presentation of "philosophical anthropology," *Philosophie in der veränderten Welt* (1972), 419–67, gives the reasons why Scheler retained the traditional view: the inevitability of the question of meaning and the capacity for repressing instinct (431). The judgment that this second function in particular contradicts Scheler's thesis of the "helplessness of the spirit" would be valid only if Scheler had denied all motivational power to the spirit.

cal."[26] Instead of using the concept of spirit, Plessner speaks of humanity's *exocentric position.* The meaning is that whereas the higher animals, unlike the plants, have the center of their vital manifestations in themselves (a center that became more clearly defined as such as the course of evolution brought the progressive development of a central nervous system), human beings are at the same time exocentric as well. They have their center not only within themselves but at the same time outside themselves. In this somewhat obscure description Plessner is pointing to the ability of human beings to adopt an attitude toward themselves, a capacity for self-reflection, which at the same time is the basis for the human ability to stand back from things and treat them as objects, *as* things. The relation of priority between human objectivity, unencumbered by instinctual drives, toward the world of things, on the one hand, and human self-objectification, on the other, is the converse in Plessner of what it is in Scheler. Plessner sees the capacity for self-reflection (exocentricity) as the original condition from which the capacity for objective, dispassionate dealing with environing reality is derived. On the other hand, Scheler's concept of spirit is by no means completely absent from Plessner's thought. In the final analysis, exocentricity is simply another name for self-consciousness and therefore for spirit. Plessner, however, is not thereby introducing a separate and independent principle opposed to all life, as Scheler does in his concept of spirit, in keeping with the entire tradition from which he takes the concept. In Plessner, exocentricity is, rather, a structural modification of life itself at the stage of development that life has reached in humanity. Plessner does not make clear, however, what the "outside" is in which human beings properly have their exocentric center, especially since they obviously have the most highly developed central nervous system of all. The relationship and interconnection of centrality and exocentricity remain singularly vague. It is not surprising, then, that Plessner's replacement of the idea of openness to the world with the idea of exocentricity has found little favor. On this point, Arnold Gehlen in particular has followed Scheler's terminology and not Plessner's.

Gehlen too intends first of all to avoid "the theme of 'spirit,' which calls for the adoption of a metaphysical position," by "bracketing" it.[27] At the same time, however, he also intends to face the question of humanity's special place in nature, but without using the concept of spirit in his answer. He avoids "either assuming that human beings are distinct only in degree from the animals or defining them by 'spirit' alone . . . in the

[26]D. Claessens, *Instinkt, Psyche. Geltung. Bestimmungsfaktoren menschlichen Verhaltens. Eine soziologische Anthropologie* (Cologne, 1968), 23.

[27]Gehlen, *Der Mensch,* 11. The page references that follow in the text are to this book.

sense of an essential attribute that is opposed to nature" (29). But when Gehlen insists, against Scheler, that the difference between human beings and the beasts cannot be located solely in the spirit and that on the contrary the difference is "just as evident in the physical forms of movement" (24), the supposed disagreement with Scheler probably rests on a misunderstanding. According to Scheler, spirit not only manifests itself in human consciousness but also finds expression first of all in human bodily behavior. Consequently Gehlen is proceeding fully in accord with Scheler's intentions when he endeavors to discover humanity's special place by the peculiar characteristics of human bodily behavior. Otherwise he could not have accepted Scheler's concept of openness to the world and made it the central concept in his own thinking. Gehlen found a way of doing this, however, which rendered superfluous a recourse to Scheler's concept of spirit.

In order to achieve this goal, Gehlen needed, above all, to find another explanation for the singular "inhibition" of human impulses and instincts, which Scheler accounted for by introducing the spirit. But does this inhibition really need to be explained by assuming some force that does the inhibiting? Gehlen found a way out of the difficulty by explaining the inhibition as a central structural feature of the human form of life, a feature that is connected with a good many other peculiarities of human organization and behavior. We are no longer dealing, then, with a special effect produced by some force, but rather with the specific structure of the human mode of existence itself.

Gehlen broadens Scheler's idea of an inhibition of instinct in human beings into the thesis that the human species as a whole shows the characteristics of "an inhibition of evolution" (109). This is Gehlen's well-known thesis of the human beings as "deficient beings." The idea was suggested to him by the work of Amsterdam anatomist Ludwig Bolk, who had described the primitive state of human organs (108) as "fetal states or conditions that have become permanent" (109). Gehlen sees this state of affairs as the expression of "an inhibition of evolution" that is characteristic of the human species. Gehlen subsequently appealed as well to the demonstration by Basel zoologist Adolf Portmann[28] that in comparison with the other higher mammals human beings are born a year too soon and in a still unfinished state. As one who is "physiologically premature," a human being is already exposed in the final stage of development as an embryo to the influences of a social environment. From the latter the human being receives decisive impressions during the "extrauterine springtime." In Gehlen's mind, these results of Portmann's research fitted

[28]Portmann, *Biologische Fragmente zu einer Lehre vom Menschen* (1944), 46ff.

in with the information received from Bolk regarding the primitive state of human organs. Now he had the explanation of why human beings are born prematurely as "deficient beings" and, if not supported by the world of social culture, are exposed without protection to the multiplicity of impressions that pour in upon them ("an inundation of stimuli"). In this way, and without having recourse to the spirit, Gehlen deduces the basic human situation that Scheler had described as the inhibition of vital impulses by the spirit. Instead of the term "inhibition," which suggests the question of an inhibiting force, Gehlen prefers the neutral term "hiatus." He speaks of a hiatus, a gap, between perceptions and impulses. What this means becomes clear from a comparison with the dependence of animals on their environment, for in animals perceptions serve to release innate behavioral mechanisms, the instincts. In this process the sense organs serve as filters which by their nature allow only those impressions to pass through to the animal which are important, positively or negatively, for its life. The life of perception and instinct thus forms a closed functional circle in the behavior of animals.[29]

It is precisely here that the situation is different in human beings. Our instincts are for the most part deficient in development and at the same time blended with one another; for both reasons they operate in an uncertain way as compared with those of our animal relatives. Our perceptions do not release precise instinctual reactions. For this very reason our perceptions can develop a life of their own and turn to things without being limited by instinctual interests that guide our behavior. As a result, the "inundation" of stimuli and perceptions that do not have a direct instinctual importance is intensified. Such is the "hiatus" between stimulus and reaction which Gehlen observes and which is analogous to Scheler's "inhibition" of animal instincts in human beings. Gehlen need no longer trace this hiatus back to an inhibiting cause, namely, Scheler's spirit, because he understands it in purely biological terms as a result of the human bodily constitution, the primitive condition of human helplessness as "a deficient being."

Gehlen therefore sees it as humanity's basic task to compensate for the deficiencies of the species. In Gehlen's view, it is language and culture, above all, that make this compensation possible. They are the result of human action. Now at last we have come to the key concept in Gehlen's anthropology: in his view, the human being is the "acting being." Through action and specifically through the development of language, culture, and technical skills human beings convert the disadvantages of their initial biological condition into advantages. Through their action

[29]On this, see V. von Weizsäcker, *Der Gestaltkreis* (Leipzig, 1943).

they ease the burden of the complex multiplicity of stimuli that pour in on them by creating in language a symbolic universe that enables them to render manageable the profusion of impressions. In Gehlen's view, language is the fundamental instance of human creative cultural activity. The concept of action includes, for Gehlen, all cognitive processes and cultural achievements. Action has replaced Scheler's spirit. This means that for Gehlen human beings are beings who create themselves by gaining control of their world. While for Scheler human beings as spirits owe their existence to "the highest Ground of Being," for Gehlen they are self-creative in the strict sense of the term, and religion and God can become thematic only as human creations, as by-products of the human conquest of the world. Corresponding to this contrast between creation and self-creation there is also a reversal of the relation of priority which led Scheler from spirit to the inhibition of animal instincts. For Gehlen, the direction is from the hiatus between perception and impulse, via the actions of human beings themselves to spirit and the formation of a cultural world, the contents of which are the foremost help human beings have in directing their impulses.[30]

Gehlen's conception of humanity has often been criticized, but it has nonetheless established itself as the classical form of modern philosophical anthropology. Criticism has been directed first of all at Gehlen's concept of human beings as deficient beings. Thus Portmann, implicitly dissociating himself from Gehlen's view, has pointed out that "the relative weakness in the organization of the instincts" in human beings is accompanied by "an immense increase in the mass of the cerebral cortex and its synapses." Nor should the slow pace of human development be seen only as something negative; rather, it is correlative with the peculiar psychic nature of human beings as beings with a social culture.[31] Portmann has once again been able to use the concept of spirit as a way of describing this human peculiarity. Buytendijk too continues to interpret the human being as "incarnated spirit."[32]

Criticism has been directed not only at Gehlen's one-sidedly negative interpretation of the initial human biological condition but also at the concept of openness to the world, which he shares not only with Scheler but also with Portmann, Buytendijk, and others. Thus Plessner, in his

[30]The understanding of the human person as the being who acts is explicable in the light of Gehlen's idealistic beginnings in his *Theorie der Willensfreiheit* (1933). For a transposition of this idea into a "biological metaphysics," see Schulz (n. 25, above), 442ff.

[31]Portmann, *Zoologie und das neue Bild des Menschen*, 62f. and 92f. See also idem, "Der Mensch—ein Mängelwesen?" in his *Entlässt die Natur den Menschen? Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Biologie und Anthropologie* (Munich, 1970), 200–209.

[32]Buytendijk, *Mensch und Tier*, 45.

Introduction (written in 1961) to the Propyläen history of the world, says of human beings:

> An unlimited openness to the world cannot be ascribed to human beings. Such an openness would be possible only for a subject which, like the angels of medieval theology, would be incorporeal or possess a spiritualized body; in this case, "world" would be the embodiment of the truly divine in its revealedness. As a matter of fact, however, our world is given to us only in phenomena in which reality manifests itself in a fragmentary manner through the medium of our modes of perception and courses of action.[33]

The assumption of an unqualified openness of human beings to the world fails to take into account the "indirect and fragmentary character of our relation to the world," a character made clear to us in the process of knowledge with its detours and uncertainties.

Plessner's thesis that our openness to reality is a halting openness because of the limited and partial ways in which we grasp the real (ways resulting from our corporeality and from the perspectival nature of our experience) is confirmed by the present state of behavioral research as summarized by I. Eibl-Eibesfeldt in his contribution to the series Neue Anthropologie.[34] According to contemporary research, and contrary to the thesis of an unlimited human openness to the world, human beings do in fact have innate behavioral dispositions, as can be seen especially in the behavior of infants, whose weeping, smiling, clutching, sucking, and babbling are based on innate behavioral schemata. Then, too, the universal occurrence in all cultures of certain modes of behavior, such as the so-called eye contact, can be traced back to similar behavioral schemata proper to the species. But Eibl-Eibesfeldt also confirms the thesis that "human beings can impose a new cultural form on almost everything" (48) and can even "suppress such basic instinctual movements as those of sex and hunger." Therefore Eibl-Eibesfeldt is able to accept Gehlen's statement that human beings are by nature cultural beings (54). The presence of innate behavioral dispositions does not mean, therefore, that these surround human behavior with insurmountable barriers and thus determine it. These dispositions set no definitive limits on "freedom" and on the human capacity in principle to alter and transcend the antecedent conditions of the human situation. Innate behavioral dispositions, rather, designate, as it were, the place that is the abiding point of departure for the human adventure of self-transcendence and historicity. It is an open question how successful human beings are in imposing a new form on

[33]H. Plessner, *Conditio Humana* (1964), 47.

[34]*Biologische Anthropologie* II, 3–59, esp. 11ff., 19ff. The page references that follow in the text are to this book.

these initial conditions proper to the species, not only by individual efforts but also and especially by dint of cultural tradition. Human "openness to the world" thus loses the character of a given state which it has in many remarks of Scheler and even of Gehlen; instead, it is seen as describing a direction in the process of human "self-realization," a process through which alone a human being takes form as a self and which therefore may not, with Gehlen, be one-sidedly reduced to human action.[35] The special place of humanity in the animal world is not achieved abruptly, as though by a single bound, but is, rather, the result of a history in the course of which alone human beings attain to selfhood and their specific nature. At this point we are close to a view of things developed by Herder.

[35]On this point, see B. Liebrucks' discussion of Gehlen's theory of action in *Sprache und Bewusstsein* I (1964).

2

Openness to the World and Image of God

I. Herder as the Point of Departure for Modern Philosophical Anthropology

Arnold Gehlen has called attention to the fact that Herder, in his prize essay, *Abhandlung über den Ursprung der Sprache* (1772), sketched the main outlines of the view of humanity that Gehlen himself has developed in his work. Thus Herder notes: "It seems assured that man is by far inferior to the animals in the intensity and reliability of his instincts and indeed that he does not have at all what in many animal species we regard as innate artifactive skills and drives."[1] The life of animals is confined to an ever narrowing "sphere," the more specialized its sense organs become. According to Gehlen, this observation shows that Herder had seen the dependence of the animals on their environment. Of human beings, on the other hand, Herder says that the "distinctive trait of the human species" is "gaps and wants." In comparison with the animals, the newborn human infant is "the most orphaned child of nature. Naked and bare, weak and in need, shy and unarmed" (89; Herder, 108, 107). Such observations remind us of Portmann's description of the "extrauterine springtime" of a human infant.[2] No wonder, then, that Gehlen can sum up by saying, "Philosophical anthropology has not advanced at all beyond Herder, and his is, in outline, the conception I shall be developing with the tools of modern science." And he adds, "And in fact philosophical

[1]Cited in A. Gehlen, *Der Mensch* (1950), 88. German text of Herder in *Joh. Gottf. Herders Sprachphilosophie. Ausgewählte Schriften,* ed. E. Heintel (1960), 15ff. The English translation is from J. G. Herder, *Essay on the Origin of Language,* in J. J. Rousseau and J. G. Herder, *On the Origin of Language,* trans. J. H. Moran and A. Gode (New York, 1967), 103. The page references that follow in this paragraph in the text are to Gehlen's book and, where indicated, to the ET of Herder.

[2]References to Herder are provided by S. H. Sunnus in his dissertation, *Die Wurzeln des modernen Menschenbildes bei J. G. Herder* (Nürnberg, 1971). Herder was already emphasizing the point that the human body and soul are not divided from each other by "iron bars" and that the person is to be understood as a unified being.

anthropology need not advance further, since its present position is the true one" (90).

But Herder's assessment of the phenomena he observes is notably different from Gehlen's. The difference was quickly noted. Herder does not proceed as one-sidedly as Gehlen does in taking as the starting point of his interpretation the "wants" that typify the human life form as compared with that of the animals. Herder regards these "wants" as simply the necessary counterpart of the highly developed human brain, or reason. The lack of keenness of our senses is counterbalanced by the advantage of being able to use them in a free manner. Herder too, seemingly like Gehlen, can say, "We are not yet men, but are daily *becoming* so."[3] He is here close to the Enlightenment idea of human self-perfectibility, an idea to be found not only in Rousseau but also in Leibniz and his school.[4] In fact, this view of a human self-improvement had already been contrasted with the behavior of animals, especially in Hermann Samuel Reimarus' *Allgemeine Betrachtungen über die Triebe der Tiere* (1760), in which the author anticipates many of Herder's observations.[5] Yet Herder's version of the idea of human self-improvement is not identical with Gehlen's one-sided recourse to action as the source of human self-realization. Like Gehlen, Herder can indeed write of the human being that nature "drives him out, to construct his own nest."[6] But according to Herder, human beings never owe their development first and foremost to their own action. Herder presupposes reason and freedom as germ or source and disposition for the process of human self-improvement, whereas Gehlen has reason and freedom making their appearance as a product of human activity, for otherwise the concept of action could not replace Scheler's concept of spirit. If in understanding the process of human self-improvement we were to join Herder in presupposing reason and freedom as at least a disposition, then it would not be possible to reject so absolutely the need felt by Scheler of tracing this novelty in the evolution of life back to an origin located beyond the whole development of life up to this point, to an origin which therefore, according to Scheler, can be sought and found only in the highest Ground of all things.

[3]J. G. Herder, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man*, trans. T. Churchill (London, 1800; New York, 1966), 229.

[4]Sunnus, 82 and 28ff.

[5]G. Buck, in his essay "Selbsterhaltung und Historizität," in R. Koselleck and W. D. Stempel, eds., *Geschichte—Ereignis und Erzählung*, in Poetik und Hermeneutik 5 (Munich, 1973), 29–94, esp. 32, refers to these dependences and especially to the judgment of Herder's contemporaries (e.g., J. N. Tetens) who denied the originality of his theses. On this point, see also Sunnus, 15ff.

[6]Herder, *Outlines* VIII, 4, 3 (210).

Herder's ideas on this point are closer to Scheler's than to Gehlen's. In Herder's view, the animal instincts are replaced by a divinely supplied direction for human life. God did not abandon human beings, whose instinctual life had retrogressed, to an absence of all direction from which they must now rescue themselves with no support from outside; rather, according to Herder, God put in the human heart a direction to be followed in the course of self-improvement, and this direction takes the form of God's image in human beings, as understood by Herder:

> No, benevolent God, thou didst not leave thy creature to murderous chance. To the brute thou gavest instinct; and on the mind of man thou didst impress thy image, religion and humanity: the outline of the statue lies there, deep in the block; but it cannot hew out, it cannot fashion itself. Tradition and learning, reason and experience, must do this; and thou hast supplied sufficient means.[7]

It will be worth our while to break down this very substantial formulation into its elements:

1. As instinct guides the behavior of the animals, so the image of God guides human beings: instinct and image of God alike have as their function to give a direction to the life of the creature, instead of leaving it a prey to the "murderous chance" of random impressions.

2. The image of God, which is impressed "on the mind" of human beings, functions as a teleological concept and standard for their behavior. It can exercise this function because the image of God represents the goal of human existence as such, in keeping with Herder's conviction that "we are not yet men, but are daily *becoming* so."[8] Thus the image of God and the selfness or humanness of human beings belong together: "religion and humanity" are intimately connected for Herder.

3. What human beings possess initially is only "the disposition to reason, humanity, and religion,"[9] the outline of the statue. How, then, are they to become the fully formed statue and realize their humanity? Herder does not answer this question by appealing to the idea of action; in fact, he says explicitly that human beings are *unable* to "hew out" or "fashion" themselves. Herder's answer to the question of how they are to reach the self that is their goal is to be found rather in the line of the great Enlightenment idea of the education of the human race. It is the "specific character" of the human race "that born almost without instinct, we are formed to manhood only by the practice of a whole life, and both the perfectibility and corruptibility of our species depend on it." What is involved here is

[7]Ibid., IX, 5 (256). According to Sunnus, it was in the *Outlines* that Herder first introduced the idea of the image of God (Sunnus, 40).

[8]Ibid., IX, 1, 2 (229).

[9]Ibid., IX, 5 (151).

"an education . of the human species; since every one becomes a man only by means of education, and the whole species lives solely in this chain of individuals."[10]

4. In this process whereby the human species is educated, three factors play a part.

a. "Tradition and learning": these terms sum up the influence we experience others as exercising on us, for "no one of us became man of himself: the whole structure of his humanity is connected by a spiritual birth, education, with his parents, teachers, friends; with all the circumstances of his life, and consequently with his countrymen and their forefathers; and lastly with the whole chain of the human race."[11]

b. In addition, "reason and experience" play a part. These are the "organic powers"[12] in human beings themselves that contribute to their education, for they are not just passively exposed to external influences but are stimulated by these to a process of self-formation. To that extent the formation of the human being "is left to himself and his fellows."[13] Thus human beings play a part in the process; it does not take place without their cooperation. These first two factors are brought into unity by divine providence.

c. Divine providence: it is faith in the rule of providence that justifies for Herder the idea of an education of the human race toward a goal set before it. Herder considers that "God's purpose with regard to the human species on earth remains evident even in the most perplexing parts of its history."[14] The purpose perdures in the "divine character of its [each of God's works] destination."[15] Learning and tradition, on the one hand, and reason and experience, on the other, contribute to the achievement of this destiny only because in the collaboration of these factors divine providence is also at work and, through the mediation of other human beings, forming individuals for the goal to which they are destined, educating them, that is, to be the images of God.

Only in the context of faith in providence does Herder's conception of the image of God in human beings become fully intelligible. On the one hand, this image is the human goal and destination, although in its definitive form, "a form truly that of the godlike man,"[16] it will be reached only in another existence. On the other hand, the image of God is already present in outline form and thereby gives human life a direction, just as

[10]Ibid., IX, 1 (226).
[11]Ibid., 227.
[12]Ibid.
[13]Ibid., 229.
[14]Ibid.
[15]Ibid.
[16]Ibid., V, 5 (125).

the instinctual apparatus gives an animal's life its direction. But the connection between this present anticipation and the future fulfillment of human destiny has its basis in the plan of divine providence, which coordinates the influences coming from other human beings with the impulses of the person's own reason and experience and thereby turns these into means contributing to a single result, the formation of human beings.

II. Herder's Relation to the Traditional Conception of the Image of God in Humanity

Before discussing the current relevance of Herder's linking of instinctual reduction and image of God, I must consider how this view is related to the traditional theology of the image of God in human beings. It is in fact his characteristic departure from this tradition that makes fully clear the function which the idea of God's image has for Herder in understanding the original human situation as already described by other writers before him. And only when this function of the idea in Herder has been understood will it be possible to consider his potential significance in contemporary anthropological discussion.

It is clear at first glance that Herder does not speak of an original state of human perfection. In this he departs from traditional Christian dogmatics. According to the teaching of the theologians on the creation, original state, and fall of humanity, human beings had originally been created in the perfect image of God but had then lost this original perfection through the fall. According to a more precisely dogmatic definition, this original perfection consisted in an original justice, an actual communion with God *(iustitia originalis).* But the relation between this justice and the image of God had been defined in divergent ways in the dogmatic tradition and has today once again become a subject of confessional differences. Latin Scholasticism distinguished between original justice, that is, the actual union of the first human being with God, and the image of God. In the original human state, to the *imago Dei* as the distinctive *condition* of human nature there was added original justice, that is, actual union with God, as the grace proper to the original state. In the view of the medieval Scholastics, this additional grace of original justice was lost through original sin, whereas the image, being a property of human nature as such, continued to exist. The image belongs to humanity as such, and human beings did not cease to be human even as a result of the fall.

The distinction made here between the destination to God as a condition and distinctive trait of human nature and an actual communion with God goes back to Irenaeus of Lyons toward the end of the second century. As Irenaeus read the words of the Old Testament story of creation in Gen. 1:26 he saw a distinction being made between the image of God and the

likeness of God. The text tells us that God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." Even today it is not exegetically clear whether the Hebrew terms used here, *ṣelem* and *dᵉmūt,* are intended to call attention to different aspects or whether they are simply two synonyms for the same idea.[17] If there is a difference in accent and if the use of two terms is not simply a way of being emphatic,[18] then "likeness" *(dᵉmūt)* would signify, rather, a limitation on the human role as God's representative to the rest of creation as expressed in the concept of image. Irenaeus, however, interprets *dᵉmūt* as an enhancement of the concept of image, since he translates the two words with the Platonic terms *eikōn* and *homoiōsis.* Accordingly, the *eikōn* is the image or copy, but as such it is distinct from the exemplar and falls short of it. *Homoiōsis,* on the other hand, describes an *actual* communion with the exemplar.[19] According to Plato, the greatest possible assimilation to God *(homoiōsis Theō kata to dynaton)* is the life's task and longing of human beings, and the subject matter of ethics.[20] In this Platonic perspective it is but a step to ascribe the image of God, in the sense of a copy of the divine, to human nature and to connect this image with the rational nature that sets human beings apart from the brute animals, while identifying the *homoiōsis* with justice or the moral perfection for which they are to strive. But since in the Christian vision of things human beings are justified only by grace, Christian theology conceived the *homoiōsis* as a gift of grace that was given to the first human being, was lost through sin, and has been restored by Christ in the justification of the sinner. Medieval Latin Scholasticism was thus continuing Irenaeus' exegesis of Genesis in its distinction and correlation of *imago* and *similitudo*.[21]

The Reformation view of the image of God in humanity departs from this hitherto prevailing interpretation. It regards the image of God not as

[17]See H. W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament,* trans. M. Kohl (Philadelphia, 1974), 159–61.

[18]According to G. von Rad, *Genesis, A Commentary,* trans. J. H. Marks (Philadelphia, 1972²), by the addition of the idea of likeness the basic word "image" is "more closely explained and made precise . . . with the simple meaning that this image is to correspond to the original image, that is, to resemble it" (58). According to W. H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift* (Neukirchen, 1964), 133f., there is no difference of content between the two words; on the concept of image, see ibid., 136ff.

[19]Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* IV, 38, 12, and esp. V, 6, 1. On this second passage, see W. D. Hauschild, *Gottes Geist und der Mensch. Studien zur frühchristlichen Anthropologie* (Munich, 1972), 208f. On the preparation in Tatian for the idea of a formation of the human being by the Spirit of God (but without as yet any distinction between "image" and "likeness"), see ibid., 199f.

[20]Plato, *Republic* 613a4ff.; *Theaetetus* 176a5.

[21]Thus, for example, the distinction is taken over by Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I, q. 93, a. 9, in the form it has in John Damascene. On the Scholastic teaching, see also B. Cairns, *The Image of God in Man* (Louvain, 1953), and A. Burghart, *Gottes Ebenbild und Gleichnis* (Freiburg, 1962).

the foundation of a distinct, actual communion with God, namely, the divinely given justice of the first human being *(iustitia originalis),* but as identical with this actual relation to God.[22] Consequently, the fall was regarded as bringing the loss not only of the *similitudo* but of the *imago* itself. The difference between the Reformed and the medieval Catholic views in the question of whether human nature itself was corrupted by the fall is therefore to be explained by different views on the relation between *iustitia originalis* and *imago Dei.* The latter difference also explains the dispute in our own century between Karl Barth and Emil Brunner on the question of whether the image of God was completely lost in the fall or whether (as Brunner claimed) a "remnant" was left which consists in human rationality and the capacity for being addressed by God, for in these Brunner sees summed up the distinctive formal human characteristic that perdures even after the fall, although affected by some degree of material corruption.[23] In the theological discussion of that period this disputed question was directly connected with another: whether there is "a point of contact" for revelation.

According to Brunner, a point of contact does exist and consists precisely in that formal "remnant" of the image of God; it consists, that is, in the fact that despite sin human beings remain human, so that God's revelatory action in its turning to them can establish contact with the original destination of their being and remind them of this. This would be impossible if sinners were wholly immersed in hostility to God. Barth, for his part, could not allow that any anthropological conditions which would be distinct from and prior to God's gracious action could be under-

[22]M. Luther, WA 42:46: "The likeness and image of God consists in the true and perfect knowledge of God, supreme delight in God, eternal life, eternal righteousness, eternal freedom from care." Melanchthon, *Apol.* II, 18ff. In the Formula of Concord the original justice, that is, the actual relation to God, is identified with the image of God; see *The Book of Concord.* trans. and ed. T. G. Tappert (Philadelphia, 1959), 510. Analogous statements of Calvin are collected in W. Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin.* trans. H. Knight (London and Philadelphia, 1956), 67ff.

[23]See Luther's statements in R. Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* I (New York, 1941), 160f. The idea of remnants of the *imago* in the sinner is clearer in the writings of Calvin; see J. Verburg, *Adam. Een onderzoek naar de betekenis van de figur van een eerste mens in het christelijk geloof* (Wageningen, 1973), 96f. Inasmuch as the image of God was recognized as being specific to human beings and constitutive of their humanity, its complete loss could not be too readily asserted. Attention to the presence of this realization in early Lutheran dogmatics led P. Althaus to revise his concept of the image of God and to understand it as the human destiny rather than the original human state: *Die christliche Wahrheit* (1947; Gütersloh, 1952[3]), 338ff., esp. 342. The question of the remnants of the created image of God in humanity had given rise to theological disagreement once again, this time between Barth and Brunner: E. Brunner, *Natur und Gnade* (1934; 1935[2]), 10ff.; K. Barth, *Nein! Antwort an E. Brunner* (1934), esp. 16f., 24ff.; E. Brunner, *Man in Revolt* (1937), trans. O. Wyon (New York, 1939), 172ff.

stood as a point of contact which the divine action must respect. God's action is not dependent on anything outside himself; such a dependence would be an infringement on his sovereignty. Even Barth of course had taught that God was faithful to his own intention as originally connected with the creation of humanity. But he was unwilling to think of the divine action as dependent on circumstances that are previously regarded in themselves and thus rendered independent in relation to that action. In the background of this dispute is thus the question whether a theologically neutral description of human reality can be accepted as objectively valid by Christian thought or whether, on the contrary, the actual relation to the divine reality must be judged to be constitutive for the special character of human beings and for their fulfillment.

The medieval Catholic and the Reformed conceptions of the image of God differ, therefore, in that for the Reformers the image of God consists in the *actual relation* to God, while for medieval Latin Scholasticism it is, rather, a presupposition for this actual relation to God and is a formal structural property of human nature, somewhat as the "remnant of the image" is for Brunner. The two confessional interpretations of the image of God are, however, in agreement that this likeness to God was present at the beginning of human history, namely, in the perfection of the original state of the first human being before the fall. Herder's idea of an image of God in human beings that "becomes" or develops is thus clearly different from what is maintained in the two confessional doctrinal traditions. Herder departs from them because he does not share the teaching on the original state that is common to them and is so difficult to reconcile with a modern evolutionary view of the human species and its appearance in the history of life.

But the idea of an "evolving image of God," which in many respects anticipates the evolutionary perspective of modern biology, was not first conceived by Herder. Marsilio Ficino, founder of Florentine Platonism, in his book *De religione Christiana* (1476) explained the incarnation as the fulfillment of the human religious destiny.[24] In Ficino's disciple Pico della Mirandola the dynamism of this process of the fulfillment of human destiny, a process culminating in the incarnation, is even more strongly associated with the voluntaristic emphasis found in Renaissance humanism. Pico spoke indeed of a destruction of God's image in humans through the fall and of its restoration by Christ. He continued, therefore, to maintain the doctrine of the original state, but the dynamism inherent in his conception of humanity reaches its goal, nonetheless, only in Christ; only in

[24]C. E. Trinkaus, *In Our Image and Likeness: Humanity and Divinity in Italian Humanist Thought* II (London, 1970), 734ff., esp. 740.

Christ does the creation of humanity reach its completion.[25] It is characteristic of this view of the creation of humanity that Pico no longer distinguishes between *imago* and *similitudo* but uses the two words as synonyms. Also connected with this is the voluntaristic emphasis proper to his view: the dynamic process of assimilation to God, of becoming like God *(similitudo),* which is the ethical content of a human life properly lived, becomes in Pico the theme of the humanization of the human being, which finds its perfect form only in the ethical life-style of Jesus Christ.

In the same way the Reformers too identified *imago* and *similitudo.* In Melanchthon, however, this point is discussed only in the context of the original state and of the creation and fall of the first human being. The broader conception of a hominization or creation of the human being that is completed only in Christ is not to be found in Melanchthon, although it is found in Calvin and, earlier, in Luther.[26] This dynamic concept provides a point of contact for the modern idea of a process of hominization, in the sense of a self-perfecting, that extends to the entire race, although this idea has not always been linked to the concept of the image of God. In the eighteenth century the idea of a process of human improvement was taken over by Leibniz in the form of the concept of perfectibility, in the sense of a capacity for a moral self-improvement that is the ethical task of a properly human way of life, and was connected with a moral interpretation of the kingdom of God as the goal of moral action.[27] In this

[25]Ibid., II, 505ff., 516ff. Also important is Pico's idea that human dignity, which is based on the image of God in humanity and achieves its fullest form in the incarnation, elevates the human person even above the angels (512). On the eschatological orientation of the idea, see also II, 517, on Pico's *Heptaplus* (1488–89), IV, 6–7.

[26]J. Calvin, *Inst. rel. christ.* (1559), I, 15, 4 (CR 30:138f.). Further references in T. F. Torrance, *Calvin's Doctrine of Man* (Grand Rapids, 1967[2]), and W. Krusche, *Das Wirken des Heiligen Geistes nach Calvin* (Berlin, 1957), 281. For Luther, cf. the statements in his disputation *De homine* (1556) on the eschatological destiny of the human person (WA 39/1, 175ff.); on this point, see W. Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (1967), 348ff., 192f. Nevertheless the historico-salvational and eschatological approach of the Reformers to the image of God remained linked to Augustinian views on the perfection of the original state and its restoration in Christ; see A. Peters, *Der Mensch* (1979), 194f.; also 47f., 82f.

[27]Leibniz, in his *Principles of Nature and Grace* (1714), in *Philosophical Papers and Letters,* ed. and trans. L. E. Loemker (2 vols.; Chicago, 1956), II, 1033–43, wrote that all things receive their limited perfection (no. 9: "some perfection") from God as the supremely perfect being, and that the perfection of God elicits within each thing the highest measure of perfection it can attain (no. 12; cf. no. 10). It is not surprising, therefore, that the human soul, which, being the image of God, imitates him in its activity (no. 14), finds its happiness in a perpetual progress "to new pleasures and new perfections" (no. 18). Leibniz had given a very carefully nuanced version of this relationship in his *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1685) (in *Philosophical Papers and Letters* I, 464–506). There it is said that through their activity things immediately pass to a higher degree of perfection (no. 15; see *Monadology,* no. 49; *Theodicy,* nos. 32, 66, 386); spirits, however, are the substances capable of perfection in the

thesis of the harmony between nature and grace the objective fact of the perfecting of humanity becomes the human moral task of self-improvement. In the eighteenth century even Rousseau, despite his pessimism about culture, was unwilling to deny the human capacity for this task,[28] and it was precisely against this background that the question of human perfectibility became the object of widespread discussion.

Herder, however, looked with increasing skepticism on the idea of a human moral perfectibility through "self-enhancement."[29] During the period when he was writing his *Outlines* he realized indeed that "both the perfectibility and corruptibility of our species" have their basis in the flexibility or plasticity of the human being, who is "born almost without instinct."[30] But according to Herder, who differs in this from Rousseau, the positive surmounting of this ambivalence is not simply a matter of moral action. Herder disputes the idea that "the mere actuation of a capacity is able to change something merely possible into something real."[31] Here Herder is objecting to the whole idea of a self-improvement to be accomplished by human beings themselves, the idea of a "self-perfecting" in this sense. The human lack of instinct does not mean for Herder, as it does for Kant, that the individual should "bring everything

highest degree (no. 36: "the most perfectible of substances"). Now since in spiritual beings or persons happiness corresponds to what perfection is for mere things (no. 36: "since happiness is to persons what perfection is to things"), God's primary intention "in the moral world, or the city of God," is the happiness of persons (no. 36), and it was in this sense that Christ revealed to us the kingdom of God "or that perfect republic of spirits which deserves the title of the city of God" (no. 37). The interpretation of the city of God as the moral world is also found elsewhere in Leibniz (*Monadology*, nos. 85ff.). Hobbes had prepared the way for the moral interpretation of the kingdom of God with his distinction between a natural kingdom of God based on the dictates of reason and a supernatural or prophetical kingdom of God (*De Cive* XV, 4f.). Spinoza, however, had disputed the distinction on the grounds that the content of the reign of God—whether this was made known naturally or supernaturally—can in any case consist only in justice and love (*Theologico-Political Treatise*, ch. 19); Spinoza thereby reduced the supernatural reign of God to the natural reign. The same fusion resulted from Leibniz' theory of harmonization: "Nature leads to grace, and grace perfects nature by using it" (*Principles of Nature and Grace*, no. 15).

[28]Rousseau, *Diskurs über den Ursprung der Ungleichheit unter den Menschen* (1755), French text with German tr. by K. Weigand (Hamburg, 1955), 107ff.

[29]On this concept, see Buck (n. 5, above), 37f.

[30]Herder, *Outlines* 226. Analogous statements of Rousseau in Buck, 31, n. 17. On this point Herder did not need instruction from Schlözer, who called attention to it in a response (1785) to a review of his universal history (Buck, 31).

[31]Herder, *Werke* (ed. Suphan), V, 33, cited in Buck, 32; but the latter unjustly parallels this argument with Reimarus' observation that the capacity for perfectibility is simply a *potentia remota* and not an "active, efficacious power of the soul." Herder was not concerned with whether human beings needed such an active power in order to improve, but *whether they could achieve this improvement at all by themselves.*

forth out of his own resources";[32] it means, rather, that human beings depend on external forces for their formation, whether on impressions received and experiences that stimulate their reason or on the influence of other human beings, and especially on their bringing them "tradition and learning." But that such influences from outside should activate an innate destination to humanness and not, rather, allow this to atrophy seemed to Herder something ensured only by faith in the operation of a divine providence that brings the manifold factors involved in such influences into harmony with the interior human disposition. It may even be that Herder's recourse in the *Outlines* to the idea of the image of God in the human being is motivated by the indispensable role of divine providence in the formation of human beings. The image of God idea here gives expression to the fact that human beings are by their natural disposition interiorly ordered to such an operation of providence.

Herder's recourse to the idea of the divine image seems thus to be an expression of his opposition to the idea of a human self-fulfillment through active self-enhancement. In order to realize their human destiny, their humanity, human beings remain dependent on the most varied influences from outside and on the harmonious contribution of these to the advancement of their humanity. Their disposition to be like God is therefore fulfilled only by God himself, through the operation of his providence. This is an important development of the humanistic idea of an evolving image of God in humanity. On the one hand, Herder "secularized" the idea by linking it with the human relation to the world and with the shape taken by human destiny as realized in this manner. In this way he set aside the restriction of the problems of human life to a moral task. But in so doing he was not content to reduce the supernatural elevation of human nature by grace to the natural strivings of nature, as the Enlightenment thinkers before him had been. Rather, he succeeded in removing the restrictions imposed by a purely moral description of the thematic of human life. Precisely in this way he was able to express in a new manner the dependence of human beings on God's gracious action. For, according to Herder, in the process of fulfilling their destiny, human beings remain dependent on the action of divine providence. Therefore, in Herder's view, the special nature and destiny of human beings continue to be linked to the religious content of their life. The concept of the image of God is here not replaceable by anything else, contrary to the Promethean emphasis in the Enlightenment idea of a human self-realization and self-fulfillment. Yet Herder need not for that reason neglect the active participation

[32] I. Kant, *Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View*, trans. L. W. Beck, in I. Kant, *On History*, ed. L. W. Beck (Indianapolis, 1963), 14.

of human beings in the process of their own formation; rather, this participation remains an essential factor in the complex of causes through which divine providence works.

Herder's ideas thus have surprising relevance to the contemporary discussion of theological anthropology. Once the saga character of the Yahwist story of the creation and fall of Adam had been discovered (a discovery due in part to Herder), nineteenth-century Evangelical theology no longer regarded the image of God as a *perfection of the original state* that was lost by the fall, but regarded it rather as the *destiny* that human beings have still to attain. Kant had said of the human person: "When it is said, Man is created good, this can mean nothing more than: He is created *for good* and the original *predisposition* in man is good."[33] H. Ph. K. Henke had made the point with terse brevity: A human being is not born like God but becomes like him *(Homo similis Deo haud nascitur, sed fit).*[34] In this context K. G. Bretschneider was already introducing the concept of human "destiny,"[35] and it was to prevail, although Schleiermacher, for example, did not yet use it. Thus I. A. Dorner wrote that the human being "is destined to a communion of life with God or to religion. The likeness of God is thereby realized in the personal creature, so that the latter becomes an *image of God.* This image is to be thought of partly as an original gift, partly as a destiny." But the dispositions for this image

[33]I. Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone,* trans. T. M. Greene and H. H. Hudson (Chicago, 1934), 40.

[34]H. Ph. K. Henke, *Lineamenta institutionum fidei christianae historico-criticarum* (1793; 1795[2]), 86.

[35]K. G. Bretschneider, *Handbuch der Dogmatik der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche* (1814; 1829[3]), I, 756f. "The end for which God created human beings tells us what their *destiny* is. As in the case of every being, this is determined by the God-given powers and dispositions and is achieved through the full development of these. . . . And the destiny of human beings is to form themselves to knowledge and love of the true, the good, and the beautiful and to make of this knowledge the unalterable rule of their entire activity." For the concept of human "destiny" Bretschneider appeals to J. J. Spalding, *Bestimmung des Menschen* (1748). There we are told that in the presence of the immensity of nature and the still greater immensity of the divinity the human individual says: "To such sublimity I am destined, and I am determined to seek to approach it ever more nearly" (ed. H. Stephan [Diessen, 1908], 25). In an appendix to the 3d ed. of 1789, Spalding added that this conception of the human person did not in any way make the Christian religion superfluous: "The higher the concept and the more lively the impression human beings have of their great destiny and of virtue, law, and eternal order, the more affecting and valuable will they find the divine instructions to be which afford them so much help to this goal" (ibid., 34). But neither in Spalding nor in J. G. Fichte's *Bestimmung des Menschen* (1800), to which Bretschneider likewise refers (ibid., n. 517), is any connection made between the concept of human "destiny" and the dogmatic concept of the image of God in human beings. On the concept of human destiny and its prehistory in antiquity, see also the article on this term by C. Grave in *HWP* 1 (1971), 856–59.

"are not yet the true image of God, but only a potentiality for it. The higher meaning of the word 'image' points to the future."[36]

In opposition to this dissolution of the doctrine of the original state into a doctrine of human destiny, a destiny for which the person is interiorly disposed, the dialectical theology of the present century harked back to the Reformation thesis of a loss of the image of God through sin; thereby it also renewed the doctrine of the original state as having preceded the loss. In 1937, Emil Brunner objected that Schleiermacher "actually gives up the fundamental Christian view of the origin of man, and substitutes for it an idealistic, evolutionary theory with a strongly naturalistic bent; for the idea of the origin in Creation he substitutes that of a goal of evolution of a universal spiritual process."[37] Brunner was using "origin" (or "origin in Creation") in terminological contrast to "empirical beginning."[38] For Brunner regarded the picture of a historical initial state in which humanity lived in paradisal perfection and communion with God as "absolutely destroyed." To be distinguished from that state is a human "origin" in the divine creative will, and this origin is a necessary presupposition for an understanding of the present human state: "Even as a sinner man can only be understood in the light of the original Image of God, namely, as one who is living in opposition to it."[39] Only thus is it possible to understand human reality as "*a life in conflict* between his origin and the contradiction."[40]

The destiny of human beings is here thought of as one that is presently lost to them and therefore, once again, as a kind of original state, even if in the sense not of an initial historical state but rather of a suprahistorical and to some extent mythical point of departure which is presupposed,

[36]I. A. Dorner, *System der christlichen Glaubenslehre* I (1879–80; 1886[2]), 515 (sec. 41). Dorner goes on to say that human destiny is to be distinguished as "the *idea* of likeness to God" from its realization (517). In the tradition of speculative theology Hegel, in his *Vorlesgungen über die Philosophie der Religion* (ed. G. Lasson; vol. IV [PhB 63], 130f.), had used the idea of human destiny in this sense (but see ibid., 99, where, using a different set of concepts, he speaks of "two destinies"). A. E. Biedermann, *Christliche Dogmatik* (1869; 1885[2]), says pithily: "The element of the divine destination of human beings to spirit becomes in the teaching of the church a real and perfect original state" (sec. 665).

[37]Brunner, *Man in Revolt,* 87. Schleiermacher, in *The Christian Faith,* § 60, to which Brunner refers, speaks of a "predisposition to God-consciousness" that is given to human beings. This predisposition includes "the consciousness of the faculty of attaining, by means of the human organism, to those states of self-consciousness in which the God-consciousness can realize itself" (Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith,* ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart [Edinburgh, 1928; Philadelphia, 1976]).

[38]Brunner, 89.

[39]Ibid., 85 and 105.

[40]Ibid., 83. This sentence of Brunner provides the key for understanding the title *Man in Revolt.*