

THE FALL AND RISE OF MAN

UB:ZA2828-5

JEROME ECKSTEIN

Department of Philosophy, Adelphi Suffolk College, Adelphi University
Oakdale, New York

THE prospect of man's travelling far into outer space, exploring the universe and increasing his technical mastery over it has caused serious concern among several sensitive and intelligent people. Thus, Abraham Heschel, one of Judaism's leading theologians, says:

We have been given the right to master the forces of the earth. We were not given the right to master the forces of other planets. To judge from the way men have used their power over the earth, one doubts whether this generation has even proved worthy of possessing the right to exploit the earth!¹

This recalls the saying of the Psalmist: "The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth hath He given to the children of men."² Another Old Testament scholar, Samuel Terrien, warns that in a sense the leap into space is a "manifestation of man's craving for unlimited power, for self-sufficiency in the universe, to be like God."³

Of course, such sentiments are not a new phenomenon. Cries of warning and trespassing were heard at the start of every major quest into the unknown and its mysterious powers. The epithet "ungodly!" has been hurled at anesthesia, atomic-physics, and the airplane. Yet while a degree of fear before the unknown is proper, the exaggerated guilt and anxiety in some of the charges indicate an

apprehension of using the new knowledge selfishly, aggressively, and to the detriment of others. Psychology has discovered a frequent connection and coexistence in the same person of feelings of guilt and anxiety, on the one hand, and aggressive and destructive impulses on the other. It seems to me, however, that the prudent course would be to delve into the secrets of the universe while striving to curb or channel the hostile, impulses into socially acceptable patterns rather than merely attempt to squelch man's curiosity; for aggression if blocked and unguided, will find devious means of expression, and man's inquisitiveness cannot be permanently crushed.

Undoubtedly, another epoch-making event in the history of man, at least as crucial as our atomic-space activities, was the transformation in man from stooped four-leggedness into an upright-gaited, two-legged being. What a widened perspective, what an increased sense of power, and what strange knowledge and temptations must man have experienced when at first he stood erect! The metamorphosis of legs into hands furthered immeasurably man's ability to manipulate and master his environment. As Aristotle long ago noted: "For the hand is talon, hoof, and horn, at will. So too it is spear, and sword, and whatsoever other weapon or instrument you please; for all these can it be from its power of grasping and holding them all."⁴

¹ *New York Post*, May 8, 1958, p. 2.

² *Psalm* 115: 16.

³ *New York Post*, May 8, 1958, p. 2.

⁴ Aristotle, "De Partibus Animalium" in *The Works of Aristotle*, J. A. Smith and W. D.

Anaxagoras, Aristotle says, went farther: he believed that "the possession of these hands is the cause of man's being of all animals the most intelligent."⁵ But man's assuming an upright gait was revolutionary not only because through it he emerged with hands, as Freud points out in a significant passage. He writes:

Once primitive man had made the discovery that it lay in his own hands—speaking literally—to improve his lot on earth by working, it cannot have been a matter of indifference to him whether another man worked with him or against him. The other acquired the value of a fellow-worker, and it was advantageous to live with him. Even earlier, in his ape-like prehistory, man had adopted the habit of forming families: his first helpers were probably the members of his family. One may suppose that the founding of families was in some way connected with the period when the need for genital satisfaction, no longer appearing like an occasional guest who turns up suddenly and then vanishes without letting hear anything of him for long intervals, had settled down with each man like a permanent lodger. When this happened, the male acquired a motive for keeping the female, or rather, his sexual objects, near him; while the female, who wanted not to be separated from her helpless young, in their interests too, had to saty by the stronger male. . . .⁶

Freud continues in a footnote:

The organic periodicity of the sexual process has persisted, it is true, but its effects on mental sexual excitement has been almost reversed. This change is connected primarily with the diminishing importance of the olfactory stimuli by means of which the menstrual process produced sexual excite-

ment in the mind of the male. Their function was taken over by visual stimuli, which could operate permanently, instead of intermittently like the olfactory ones. The "taboo of menstruation" has its origin in this "organic repression", which acted as a barrier against a phase of development that had been surpassed; all its other motivations are probably of a secondary nature. The diminution in importance of olfactory stimuli seems itself, however, to be a consequence of man's erecting himself from the earth, of his adoption of an upright gait, which made his genitals, that before had been covered, visible and in need of protection and so evoked feelings of shame. MAN'S ERECT POSTURE, THEREFORE WOULD REPRESENT THE BEGINNING OF A MOMENTOUS PROCESS OF CULTURAL EVOLUTION. THE CHAIN OF DEVELOPMENT WOULD RUN FROM THIS ONWARD, THROUGH THE DIMINUTION IN IMPORTANCE OF OLFACTORY STIMULI AND THE ISOLATION OF WOMEN AT THEIR PERIODS TO A TIME WHEN VISUAL STIMULI BECAME PARAMOUNT, THE GENITALS BECAME VISIBLE, FURTHER TILL SEXUAL EXCITATION BECAME CONSTANT AND THE FAMILY WAS FOUNDED, AND SO TO THE THRESHOLD OF HUMAN CULTURE.⁷

Therefore, it can be said that man became human when he became upright. It would be most surprising, consequently, if this epochal event in the history of man did not leave traces in his mythologies and value-judgments. It would also be very surprising if man's reaction to his new stature and its immense powers did not include the pattern of fear, selfish-aggressiveness, anxiety, and guilt. Hence, it would be especially fitting if the unconscious meaning of the myth of "original sin," of the "fall of man," contained in *Genesis* as part of the legend of the creation of man and the universe, referred to the guilt man had about his "origin," his "rise" in stature. Indeed, this is precisely the interpretation to be offered and analyzed in what follows: the inner meaning

Ross, eds., Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1912, Vol. V, Book IV, ch. 10, 687b.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 687a.

⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, London: The Hogarth Press, Ltd. 1953, pp. 65-66.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.



of the story in *Genesis* concerns man's reactions and the consequences to his becoming two-legged.

Of course, here, as in nearly all psychological explanations of myths, it is believed most unlikely that their fashioners were fully aware of the myth's underlying meaning, of those powerful experiences which have persisted from the distant past and which are expressed in it. Nor is it probable that the mythmakers, throughout the centuries of revision, were completely cognizant of the personal and cultural forces which influenced their creations. Consequently, the myth, if taken literally in its traditional form, cannot be expected to yield the mystery of its origin. Thus, Theodor Reik writes:

What the religion and the art of antiquity have preserved for us of ancient myths is assuredly not their original context. The myth has been modified, by many psychical processes, through many successive generations. It has adapted itself to contemporary cultures; its primary content has been confused and distorted; and its form has been altered. We cannot hope that in its traditional shape it will surrender the secret of its essential character, and with it that of the mythmakers.⁸

Psychoanalysis, in its attempt to probe the depths of myths, discovered that an understanding of the psychic causes of dreams, of their construction and interpretation, was vital for the explanation of the process of myth formation. Psychoanalytically interpreted, the myth reveals a basis of wish-impulses similar to those which create the dream. Although the myth is as prone to confusion, condensation, and distortion in its manifest content as is the dream, psychoanalytic technique can uncover its core of objective reality, even unto knowledge

about prehistoric man. Reik, again, puts this point strongly:

It would, of course, be a mistake to assume that the myth represents nothing more than a specimen of the free activity of the imagination. As a piece of amber allows us to see the insect within it, so the myth reveals allusions to a prehistoric objective reality. Not everything in the myth is mythical. The fighting against wild beasts, the invention of a new weapon, the human struggle against the powers of events, which revealed prehistoric man at the highest points of his existence, and accompanied him on his progress, have formed a kind of precipitate in the myth.

But it seems to us that the myth can tell us a great deal more; not only does it reveal the most vehement wishes cherished by our forbears, by which we are all unconsciously moved, BUT IT MAY EVEN CONTRIBUTE TO THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE HUMAN RACE.⁹

Now, even after a superficial reading of our myth, it is apparent that the central issue is that of man's challenging the authority and power of God: God commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and yet Adam ate of it. Reik also recognizes that Adam's sin, or guilt, was in trying to become like God and gain God's powers: he labels this sin with the Greek term of HUBRIS—that is, excessive and unbounded pride.¹⁰ Indeed, Reik correctly notes that also in other narratives in the *Book of Genesis*, such as in the stories of the murder of Abel, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel, the essential transgression was aggression.¹¹ The point of difference between Reik's interpretation and mine concerns the form of aggression taken in the prehistor-

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 287-288. The emphasis is mine.

¹⁰ Theodor Reik, *Myth and Guilt*, New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1957, pp. 399-405.

¹¹ Theodor Reik, *Dogma and Compulsion*, p. 286.

ic events which are revealed in the myth's core: Reik believes that the aggression consisted of a "revolution against the generation of the fathers,"¹² and that its specific form was the primeval crime of sons murdering their father and eating of his flesh in order to gain his great strength, whereas I believe that the myth alludes to the prehistoric selfish and destructive uses which man had made of his newly developed hands.¹³

Simply put, the eating of the forbidden fruit, the sin, in our myth, represents the using of the "fruit" or consequences of man's emergent hands in a "consuming" or destructive manner. As has been emphasized before, man's standing erect was revolutionary in the new perspective (literally and figuratively) and power it afforded him. *Genesis* states this dramatically when it remarks that after Adam and Eve had sinned, "the eyes of them both were opened."¹⁴ Man, in his exuberance, could now dream of challenging Nature,¹⁵ his fellow-man,¹⁶ and God.¹⁷ Thus, the serpent, in encouraging Eve to sin and not to fear God, says: "For God doth know that in the day, ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, AND YE SHALL BE AS GODS, knowing good and evil."¹⁸ Indeed, God con-

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Of course, the two interpretations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Both kinds of events may have occurred; and the myth, on different levels, may refer to both.

¹⁴ *Genesis* III, 7.

¹⁵ *Genesis* III, 23: "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."

¹⁶ Consider the murder of Abel and the universal corruption prior to the flood. With the acquisition of hands, the differences in potentiality among men became much sharper.

¹⁷ Consider, in addition to our myth, the construction of the Tower of Babel to reach up (the higher, the more power) to the heavens in order to battle God.

¹⁸ *Genesis* III, 5. The emphasis is mine.

firms that the issue is one of domination, by saying, after the sin is done: "Behold, THE MAN IS BECOME AS ONE OF US, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his HAND, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken."¹⁹

The punishments meted out to the serpent, Eve, and Adam are especially significant to this interpretation. Thus: "And the Lord said unto the serpent: 'Because thou hast done this, cursed art thou from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.'"²⁰ The implication is clear, some commentaries notwithstanding, that the serpent had been walking (flying?), had a "higher stature," but was now "reduced" to crawling. Since—to speak on different levels simultaneously, as the unconscious is wont to do—the serpent had sinned by persuading man to stand "high" and "upright," against God's command, then as a corollary of the ancient principle of TALION, what more fitting punishment could be found than to "reduce" the serpent to the "lowest" posture? (An explanation will be offered later for the moral connotations attached to the words quoted in the two previous sentences.)

This interpretation of the "punishments" dealt to Eve and Adam will appear increasingly as natural consequences of their becoming two-legged rather than instances of angry retaliation, and it will echo Freud's account of this momentous event. With regard to Eve, however, who is presented as guiltier than Adam for having persuaded him to sin—just as the serpent appears guiltiest of all for having prevailed upon Eve—there is yet a strong punitive el-

¹⁹ *Genesis* III, 22-23. The emphasis is mine.

²⁰ *Genesis* III, 14.

ement in the following decree of God: "Unto the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.'"²¹ Surely, the sharp intensification of woman's pain at childbirth does appear as a chastisement, and it also seems arbitrary because it is unrelated to the nature of her crime. Yet, this matter can also be viewed naturalistically: the increased pain at childbirth can be understood as a direct and normal effect of woman's assuming an erect posture. Medical science supports the above contention, and would even add that the human skeleton is not yet fully adapted to its upright position. Another punitive factor (in God's edict), which is a direct application of the TALION principle, is that since woman had wrongfully dominated man, he would now rule over her. But this, too, can be understood naturalistically. It will be recalled that Freud had explained that the founding of families was connected with the period when man began to stand erect and when the need for genital satisfaction became more constant; because then, ". . . . the male acquired a motive for keeping the female, or rather, his sexual objects, near him; while the female, who wanted not to be separated from her helpless young, in their interests, too, had to stay by the stronger male." Because now she would and could depend on the stronger male to protect her children, woman's desire would henceforth be unto her husband and thus man would rule over woman.

There is an even slighter trace of chastisement in the following judgment of God upon Adam: "And unto Adam He said: 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying: Thou shalt not eat of it,

²¹ Genesis III, 16.

cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life'"²² As a punishment, as a derivative of the TALION principle, the meaning seems to be that, since man had the audacity to attempt to become like God, to get what he wanted without struggling, he would now be obliged to apply himself diligently in order to satisfy his desires. Yet, this hardly seems like a curse; from Aristotle through Erich Fromm it has been recognized that work, properly understood, is a necessary condition of human happiness, that it is a blessing to man. However, this part of the myth can also be viewed as pointing to the natural consequences of man's adopting an erect posture. With the new world of opportunities, challenges, and desires which emerged before man, there must have also developed the realization that these new vistas could be conquered only by dint of hard work and the help of fellow-workers. Here was another vital reason for the more permanent grouping of the family; its members would cooperate in meeting life's immense and radically novel changes. Once more, Freud's account is pertinent: "Once primitive man had made the discovery that it lay in his own hands—speaking literally—to improve his lot on earth by working, it cannot have been a matter of indifference to him whether another man worked with him or against him." Hereafter, living stooped and close to the ground would seem narrow, confining, and cursed; "cursed is the ground for thy sake,"—that is, for man's widened purposes and horizons.

There are other similarities between Freud's account and my interpretation of the myth in *Genesis*. It will be recalled that Freud held that it was ". . . a consequence of man's erecting himself from the earth, of his adoption of an upright gait, which made his

²² Genesis III, 17.

genitals, that before had been covered, visible and in need of protection AND SO EVOKED FEELINGS OF SHAME."²³ Now, in *Genesis*, before Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit—that is, before they assumed an upright gait—it is written: "and they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."²⁴ It was only after they had sinned that Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness, and clothed themselves²⁵ because of their shame and fear: Thus, Adam says, ". . . I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself."²⁶

It has already been noted that, both in Freud's account and in my naturalistic interpretation of the punishments dealt to Adam and Eve, the founding of families is seen as a consequence of man's standing erect. Another substantiation of this view is the indication in *Genesis*, some commentators notwithstanding, that children were born to Adam and Eve only after they had sinned.²⁷

Despite the apparent emphasis on sin and punishment, one can detect in the creators of our myth a hidden and vicarious pleasure in the imagined realization of forbidden wishes and a belief that the crime is really a socially valuable act. In the following, Reik observes that the above pattern is essential to all myths:

The myth-forming man originally imagined the realization of forbidden wishes. Oedipus

²³ The emphasis is mine.

²⁴ *Genesis* II, 25.

²⁵ Clothing, too, may have expressed man's independence. Otto Rank writes in his *Art and Artist* (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1932) p. 356, n. 1: "clothing, which replaces tattooing in harsher climates, has obviously the aim of making men independent of nature." Perhaps, also, this explains the biblical prohibition against tattooing.

²⁶ *Genesis* III, 10.

²⁷ Of course, prior to the founding of families, men had lived near and in association with one another in communities.

slew his father and married his beloved mother. The defeat of the father and the breaking down of the incest barrier were actual events. The myth is created by the generation of sons, which has to submit itself to authority and can attain the goal of its wishes only in the compensatory substitute satisfaction of fantasy. Here an act of the wildest rebellion, a violation of the unwritten laws of primitive society, assumed a definite form in the myth. The modification of the original myth by religion is betrayed by the fact that the wish fulfillment is followed by punishment and atonement for the crime—as in the Oedipus myth, or the story of the Fall of man. A later reshaping of the myth often endeavors to reinterpret the asocial, destructive deed of the hero as a socially valuable action; Hercules, Oedipus, etc. are social heroes who delivered humanity from destructive wild beasts.²⁸

In our myth, too, one can feel the pride and pleasure of the myth-maker in man's challenge to God and in God's necessity to eject man from the Garden of Eden lest he become immortal and too powerful. Thus, the myth-maker can enjoy at a distance the satisfaction of his aggressive and destructive urges. Yet it is also clearly revealed that the sinful act in our myth directly brought with it the socially indispensable ethical knowledge of good and evil. In Freudian terms, one might take this as referring to the development of the super-ego which was essential to the growth of human culture. In any case, according to my interpretation, here would be the definite recognition that man—as human—and his culture originated with the climactic event of man's rise in stature, with his "original sin," and that this was good. Fromm, although interpreting the act of "original sin" differently, nevertheless also detects in it something of great worth to mankind; he sees "original sin" as "the first HUMAN act," "the beginning of reason," and "the first act of free-

²⁸ Reik, *Dogma and Compulsion*, p. 285.



dom."²⁹ Indeed, if man can sin, then he ought to prize this unique capacity; for God, animals, and inanimate objects cannot sin.

Thus, in my interpretation, "the fall of man" refers to the rise of man. The paradoxicalness of the preceding sentence brings into high relief the question of why the word "fall" is used to indicate something morally derogatory. And, in general, why is there often attached a pejorative connotation to such words and phrases as "low," "inferior," "descend," "base," "being looked down upon," and "bowing down," which primarily denote only a relatively lower position in space? Inversely, why have such words and phrases as "high," "superior," "ascend," "upright," "rise," and "being looked up to" accrued an honorific connotation, when they primarily denote merely a relatively higher position in space? In short, how did position in space become involved in ethical values?

In order to answer these questions as explicitly as I can, I must mention that it will be taken as axiomatic that ethical values fundamentally arose—and arise now—when man found particular courses of action satisfying in relation to himself, his fellow-man, and his world. Of course, the most important satisfactions to man, as an animal, concerned his survival; that which led to self-survival was deemed good, was to be repeated in similar circumstances, and was often urged upon others, and that which was a means to self-destruction was considered bad and to be avoided. With experience, man increasingly learned in what situations, in what degree, and in what way self-interest, brotherhood, aggression, submission, and cooperation were effective means to survival. Then, from this pervasive occupation with the means of survival, there evolved the wonderful revelation that man can at

times prize one of the means to self-survival much more than self-survival itself. Man discovered that not only did he fervently prefer some ways of living, but that he would choose to die if the quality of his life were such that it compelled him to violate his integrity. Man realized that he would risk his survival for his ideals, and that he could be a martyr for his causes. It is from the satisfaction and frustration of all these kinds of desire that ethics arose.

Therefore, position in space was touched with ethical values when it first became clear to man that stature made a tremendous difference in his capacity for survival and in the quality of his life. Once man had seen the radically new potentialities and the enormous advantages which the "upright" stature gave in manipulating the environment in accordance with his desires, in contrast to his four-legged posture, then height became a touchstone in his values; what was "high" was powerful and prized, and what was "low" was weak and worthless. These value-judgments were, of course, often expressed in language. For, through constant association of the "high" with the prized and the "low" with the worthless, and by nature of the people's logic, whatever was prized was called "high" and whatever was held to be worthless was categorized as "low." Thus, even when a "transvaluation of values" had occurred, even when meekness was extolled and the use of force in the service of worldly interest was disesteemed, then, too, that which was glorified was appraised as "high" and that which was despised was labelled as "low"; hence here is a partial explanation of why an act which expressed man's strength and independence was viewed as the "fall" of man.

It must be emphasized, however, that ethical judgments not only issue verdicts on the past, but also serve to stimulate or prevent future activities. When, for instance, a man is tempted to deceive

²⁹ Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*, New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1941; p. 34.

his conscience may attempt to dissuade him from it. To call an act "morally low" involves the attempt to avoid its occurrence in the future. In fact, the very existence of moral or political laws is usually a good clue that there are strong counter-tendencies. Thus, in his *Totem and Taboo* Freud cites the following quotation of J. G. Frazer with approval:

... Instead of assuming, therefore, from the legal prohibition of incest that there is a natural aversion to incest, we ought rather to assume that there is a natural instinct in favor of it, and that if the law represses it, as it represses other natural instincts, it does so because civilized men have come to the conclusion that the satisfaction of these natural instincts is detrimental to the general interest of society.³⁰

Similarly, Freud noted before that, as a result of man's assuming an upright position, there was a diminishing value and importance in the olfactory stimuli through which the menstrual process produced sexual excitement in the male; therefore, he concluded: "The 'taboo of menstruation' has its origin in this 'organic repression,' which acted as a barrier against a phase of development that had been surpassed..." In other words, although man had evolved into his erect stature, there were yet urges to revert to some of the ways of his former stooped posture. How often, then, when early man was bewildered by the complexities of his human stature, must he have turned back to the simple life of four-leggedness—as the infant regresses to crawling, upon frustration—and how often must such activity have elicited the comment, partly descriptive and partly contemptuous, "you are low!" Here too, the purpose of the contempt was the

prevention of regressive behavior in the future. Hence, with the strong urge to yield to four-legged simplicity and inertia and the conflicting necessity of the erect posture for the radical development of man's powers, it should be no great wonder that "high" and "low," and their variants, are tinged with moral flavor. Furthermore, by virtue of the pervasive, basic, and peculiar category of space in the structure of Indo-European languages through which all of the various kinds of contents in man's experience are sifted and molded, the general possibility of spatializing ethical values—and later, of ethically categorizing position in space—becomes more understandable.³¹

It was stressed earlier, that, in a deeper sense, the sin in the "fall of man" concerned man's guilt over the destructively aggressive usage of his newly developed two-legged stature. Similarly, it was also noted that some people were very anxious about recent space exploration and thought it sinful because they feared that the new knowledge gained thereby would be used selfishly and destructively. This fear is, unquestionably, warranted. We are in a race to the moon with the Russians, primarily, to "beat" (the colloquial usage of this word neatly illustrates the frequent destructiveness of achievement) them to it for our private advantages, and not because the knowledge gained can be used for the benefit of mankind. (Of course, the same holds true for the Russians, and whether this justifies our approach is a separate question). One can understand Terrien's fear that the leap into space is a "manifestation of man's craving for unlimited power, for self-sufficiency in the universe, to be like God," when one reads the

³¹ cf. Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, New York: Philosophical Library, Inc. 1946, and Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*. New York: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1956.

³⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo in The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), Vol. XIII, p. 123.



following statement by Krafft Ehrlicke, space engineer for Convair: "nobody and nothing under the natural laws of this universe impose any limitations on man except man himself."³² Undoubtedly, even in our times, power is commonly used selfishly. Mainly, it is the fear of reprisal which prevents the expression of yet more hostility than at present manifests itself. This point was classically put by Plato when, in their discussion on the nature of justice, Glaucon reminded Socrates of the tradition that the shepherd Gyges seduced the queen, slew the king, and took over the kingdom after he discovered a ring which could make him invisible; Glaucon then issued the following challenge to Socrates:

... Suppose now that there were two such magic rings, and the just put on one of them and the unjust the other; no man can be imagined to be of such an iron nature that he would stand fast in justice. No man would keep his hands off what was not his own when he could safely take what he liked out of market, or go into houses and lie with anyone at his pleasure, or kill or release from prison whom he would, and in all respects be like a God among men. Then the actions of the just would be as the actions of the unjust; they would both come at last to the same point. And this we may truly affirm to be a great proof that a man is just, not willingly or because he thinks that justice is any good to him individually, but of necessity for wherever any one thinks that he can safely be unjust, there he is unjust.³³

How many of us would act differently from Gyges? Each term, when I put Glaucon's challenge to my students, the overwhelming majority of them admit that they think they would act in

the manner described by Glaucon; some believe that they would destroy the ring in order to avoid the temptation of using it destructively; and a very few of them say that they would employ the ring for the benefit of mankind. It is not to be expected that the behavior of nations, in this respect, would be much different from the majority of individuals who compose them. Certainly, therefore, the mighty new powers of man's upright stature were to be feared.

But the pessimistic situation just described is not inevitable. Selfishness and destructiveness are not more "natural" to man than charity and brotherly-love. Whether one thinks that altruism is merely the result of satisfaction derived from channeling the aggressive "instinct" under the pressure of society, or that it is the direct effect of an "instinct" to love, there can be no doubt that such behavior is "natural." Those who fail to grasp this point seem to believe that if the other fellow achieves new powers, then their own strength is necessarily weakened; just as some people's behavior expresses their judgment that when one gives to others, one must lose. Such a view is analogous to our experience in the domain of physics, where a body loses as much momentum as it imparts to another, or where in the transformation of matter or energy one gains only what another has lost. This law, however, does not always apply in the human realm. A person is capable of giving lovingly; and in such a case, he must gain. Of course, when the giving is not done graciously and willingly, then it is on a level with other "givings" in inanimate nature, where the "giver" is deprived; yet, in this case, it is not a matter of "giving," but rather of something being "taken" from the man. Thus, giving, imparting willingly, is unique to man, and is radically different from other impartings in nature. Man's hope lies in his capacity to give, and the mightiest of efforts should be made, through social

institutions and personal encounters, to develop this unique capacity of his.

Whether knowledge and power are judged ethically good or bad depends on the way they are to be used in man's situation. The important fact for society is that if the quest for new powers is pursued in the spirit of mutual benefit and cooperation, then excessive guilt and anxiety will not ensue. Scientific inquiry is to be welcomed; the thing to fear is the selfish and destructive way in which it may be used. Let us not throw out the baby with the bath; truth is pure, even if the intentions of her suitors are not always honorable. We must become well-intentioned suitors, ourselves, and exhibit through our lives the satisfactions of this experience.

Up to now, my argument has been that the excessive guilt and anxiety expressed at the inception of a new era in knowledge and power was the result of the urge to use these new potentialities in a destructive fashion, and that the prudent course of action would be to stress the curtailment of the destructive impulse rather than the blocking of the new potentialities. But if one accepts the analysis of anxiety and guilt which is proposed by the existential psychotherapists and analysts rather than the traditional analysis offered above, then the course of action which was advised becomes not merely prudent but absolutely ESSENTIAL. Rollo May gives a very clear account of the existential analytic view:

... Anxiety is not an affect among other affects such as pleasure or sadness. It is rather an ontological characteristic of man, rooted in his very existence as such. It is not a peripheral threat which I can take or leave, for example, or a reaction which may be classified beside other reactions; it is always a threat to the foundation, the center of my existence. Anxiety is THE EXPERIENCE OF THE THREAT OF IMMINENT NON-BEING.
... Anxiety is the subjective state of the individual's becoming aware that his existence

can become destroyed, that he can lose himself and his world, that he can become "nothing."

This understanding of anxiety as ontological illuminates the difference between anxiety and fear. The distinction is not one of degree nor of the intensity of the experience. The anxiety a person feels when someone he respects passes him on the street without speaking, for example, is not as intense as the fear he experiences when the dentist seizes the drill to attack a sensitive tooth. But the gnawing threat of the slight on the street may hound him all day long and torment his dreams at night, whereas the feeling of fear, though it was quantitatively greater, is gone forever as soon as he steps out of the dentist's chair. The difference is that the anxiety strikes at the center core of his self-esteem and his sense of value as a self, which is one important aspect of his experience of himself as a being. Fear, in contrast, is a threat to the periphery of his existence; it can be objectivated, and the person can stand outside and look at it. In greater or lesser degree, anxiety overwhelms the person's awareness of existence, blots out the sense of time, dulls the memory of the past, and erases the future—which is perhaps the most compelling proof of the fact that it attacks the center of one's being. . . . Anxiety is ontological, fear is not. Fear can be studied as an affect among other affects, a reaction among other reactions. But anxiety can be understood only as a threat to DASEIN.³⁴

Another significant aspect of anxiety may now also be seen more clearly, namely, the fact that anxiety always involves inner conflict. Is not this conflict precisely between what we have called being and non-being? Anxiety occurs at the point where some emerging potentiality or possibility faces the individual, some possibility of fulfilling his existence; but this very pos-

³⁴ Rollo May, Ernest Angel, Henri F. Ellenberger (eds.), *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1958), pp. 50-51.

³² *Life*, January 6, 1958.

³³ Plato, *The Republic* in *The Works of Plato*, (Trans., B. Jowett) New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1937, Vol. 2, Book II, p. 48.



sibility involves the destroying of present security, which thereupon gives rise to the tendency to deny the new potentiality. . .

We have stated that the condition of the individual when confronted with the issue of fulfilling his potentialities is anxiety. We now move on to state that when the person denies these potentialities, fails to fulfill them, his condition is GUILT. That is to say, guilt is also an ontological characteristic of human existence.³⁵

We have cited only one form of ontological guilt; namely, that arising from forfeiting one's own potentialities. There are other forms as well. Another, for example, is ontological guilt against one's fellows, arising from the fact that since each of us is an individual, he necessarily perceives his fellow man through his own limited and biased eyes. This means that he always to some extent does violence to the true picture of his fellow man and always to some extent fails fully to understand and meet the other's needs. . . . This guilt, rooted in our existential structure, is one of the most potent sources of a sound humility and an unsentimental attitude of forgiveness toward one's fellow man.³⁶

Ontological guilt has, among others, these characteristics. FIRST, everyone participates in it. No one of us fails to some extent to distort the reality of his fellow man, and no one fully fulfills his own potentialities. . . SECOND, ontological guilt does not come from cultural prohibitions, or from introjection of cultural mores; it is rooted in the fact of self-awareness. . . . Every developed human being would have this ontological guilt, though its CONTENT would vary from culture to culture and would largely be given by the culture.

THIRD, ontological guilt is not to be confused with morbid or neurotic guilt. If it is unaccepted and repressed, it may turn into neurotic guilt. Just as neurotic anxiety is the end-product of unaccepted normal ontological anxiety, so neurotic guilt is the result of

unconfronted ontological guilt. If the person can become aware of it and accept it . . . , it is not morbid or neurotic. . . .³⁷

It is thus, in May's judgment, absolutely essential to our happiness and for our yearning for fullness of being to face up to our potentialities and attempt to fulfill them. Otherwise, guilt must follow anxiety; and if this condition be widespread, it certainly would not augur well for the future peace of the world.

It seems to me, however, that the existential view of anxiety and guilt is not fundamentally opposed to the traditional Freudian position. For, all those who advocate the general and unqualified expansion and fulfillment of man's potentialities ought to—but seldom do—face up to the problem of what should be done about man's potentialities for evil. They might admit that they had intended to plead only for man's good potentialities and then define "good." Or, they might argue, since no one can fulfill all of his potentialities, for the development of some, entails the "metaphysical evil" of making it impossible to fulfill others, a choice must be made in favor of those powers which are conducive to the greatest amount of expansion of other powers—and this, they might maintain, is best accomplished through the development of good potentialities (again defining "good" through other criteria than that which is conducive to greatest amount of expansion of other powers). Or they could contend that powers and potentialities, in the abstract, are in themselves morally neutral—their goodness and badness being dependent on the manner of their usage in specific situations—and that their plea was for the general unfolding of man's powers (of course, with the hope that they would be used well); in other words, there are no good or bad potentialities, but only potentialities that are used well or badly. Certainly, the existential psychologists also would not

encourage the furtherance of destructive and selfish tendencies. Since, if this matter be considered from that perspective which they call "Eigenwelt," the "own-world," the mode of relationships to one's self, then surely self-destructive behavior would be condemned for its leading to "non-being," to the destruction of potentiality. And, if the action is destructive to others, then it will tend to be reciprocated, and thus, again, lead to the aggressor's "non-being." In general, it can be argued, a climate of destructiveness and selfishness is not as congenial to the fertile development of man's richly varied potentialities as is an atmosphere of mutual concern and co-operation. With regard to the "Eigenwelt," therefore, the existential psychologist would probably agree that destructiveness brings on guilt. With regard to the "Mitwelt," the world of interrelationships with human beings, he would have the same conviction. It will be recalled, ontological guilt against one's fellows, says May, arises from the fact that "since each of us is an individual, he necessarily perceives his fellow man through his own limited and biased eyes," and "always to some extent does violence to the true picture of his fellow man and always to some extent fails fully to understand and meet the other's needs." Surely, when the other fellow is treated destructively, when, in Kantian terminology (yes, even before Buber), he is dealt with as a thing and not as a person, when he is used only as a means to our ends, it cannot be claimed that he is fully understood and his needs are being met adequately. Hence, in accord with Freudian observation, both in the "Eigenwelt" and "Mitwelt," destructiveness is followed by guilt (furthermore, I believe that it can be demonstrated, although I will not attempt this here, that the different explanations offered by the Freudian and existential psychologists for the destructiveness-guilt sequence are not mutually exclusive).

It is clear, now, that whenever man is on the verge of radically extending his powers and knowledge, whether it be upon his rise to an erect stature or on his rise in space travel, the guilt and anxiety with which he is likely to be confronted stem both from the threat and fact of using the new powers destructively and from the possibility and actuality of failing to develop the new potentialities. There is, however, another cause for anxiety; for, whenever a major change in culture occurs, there arise new categories through which experience is shaped, new ways of perceiving reality, and some of these new forms of experience, undoubtedly, conflict with some previous categories. If man's frame of orientation toward his world is disturbed, then one of his most basic needs is violated and severe anxiety follows, as the writings of Erich Fromm testify.

Therefore, aside from the threat of aggression and the challenge to man's potentiality, man's journey ever "higher" into space (of course, "upward, downward, the way is one and the same,"³⁸) is bound to create anxiety because it will surely upset some of his most deeply embedded sentiments and ideas. The feeling of God's presence, which in some people is stimulated by experiencing the beauty and mystery of the starry heavens above, will lose some of its force as a result of familiarity and close experience with the heavenly bodies. Although the realm of mystery is inexhaustible, although there will always be stars beyond our reach, the conviction will grow, with man's progressive extension into space, that the unexplored is explorable and the unknown is capable of being understood naturalistically. To be sure, no immediate mass conversions to naturalism are expected. Most of those who are

³⁸ *Heracitus*, in Milton C. Nahm's *Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*, New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1940, second ed. fr. 69, p. 92.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

committed to finding the supernatural lurking behind and in the natural will probably continue with this attitude and interpret the results of space exploration as manifesting the glory of God. Thus, Robert Gordis says: "If the ancients saw God's glory pervading the earth, how much greater should be man's reverence when he sees God's manifestations on horizons wider than ever dreamed in the past."³⁹ Although this statement has the appearance of a logical argument, it is only the expression of a private attitude and inclination. The argument which attempts to prove the existence of God from the order and design in the universe has been thoroughly disproved. Belief or disbelief in God should have other sources. Nevertheless, in the long run, continued advancement in knowledge will probably, as in the past, help to bring about a more widespread naturalistic outlook. With increased exploration, mystery after mystery will become mundane. Once man has travelled about the moon and become familiar with its topography, for instance, it will certainly have lost much of its romantic wonder and allure (and the logician's feeble joke about the other side of the moon being composed of green cheese will have become outdated). Lovers and logicians (the two are not mutually exclusive) will have to set their gaze ever farther.

Let our imaginations roam, and let us speculate about the possible conflicts between future discoveries of space exploration and our old religious beliefs, if these religious beliefs are understood as offering knowledge of the kind given by science. Suppose a strangely figured race of creatures with the approximate intelligence of humans and a culture and ethics radically different from ours were discovered on some distant star, would this not pose serious problems to the dogmatic and authoritarian interpretations of the Judaeo-Christian religions?

Would these creatures, who obviously were not descended from Adam and Eve, be tainted with "original sin"? Would they too have souls? Would they be in need of grace and salvation? Did Jesus absorb their sins? Would they be in need of the Messiah? Why is there no mention of these creatures in the divinely written Scriptures? Would they be subject to all the laws and traditions of these earth-centered religions? Would they be eligible to life in the hereafter? How, generally, ought we to behave with them? Are they to be treated as "things" or as "persons"? Suppose again, that their intelligence was vastly superior to ours, how would that affect the answers to the above questions?

The reason I put these questions mainly to the authoritarian religionists is that they would have the greatest difficulties with them, and not because I think that the liberal theologians would not be affected at all by these problems. But I have the highest confidence in the adaptability and mental agility of theologians, of all brands, in reinterpreting Scripture so that it becomes reconciled with the findings of science. It is customary nowadays for priests and scientists to wallow in the proclamation of peace between religion and science, but this truce is due mainly to the numerous and far retreats of religion. "Religion" does not generally have the same meaning which it had but a century ago. There is yet a hard opposition between some scientific conclusions and some dogmatic religious beliefs.

I believe that the further "rise" of man is tightly enmeshed in his adopting both the scientific and humanistic spirits; for, in this way, he can welcome future knowledge, whatever it may be, without the fear of its contradicting some sacred absolute truth, and with the confidence that it will not be used destructively. The authoritarian temper, on the other hand, tends to hinder scientific

³⁹ *New York Post*, May 8, 1958, p. 2.

progress and to divide men into bitter and irreconcilable camps by setting up different and opposite—but equally rigid and dogmatic—limits to human inquiry. Authoritarianism, as Fromm has so convincingly demonstrated, is an expression of man's contempt for, and lack of confidence in, himself, in his ability to understand and cope with his world through his own powers of reason, love, and

productive work. One need but probe a bit to discover that authoritarianism serves both as a mask and crutch for intense anxiety. But, to welcome new experiences, to relish the challenge of developing potentialities, to feel free and easy with the scientific and humanistic attitudes, augurs well for the absence of exaggerated anxiety.

JOURNAL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION

Interim Editor: SAMUEL Z. KLAUSNER, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Room 404, Washington, D. C. 20036.

Next Editor: JAMES DITTES, Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Conn.

Managing Editor: J. PAUL WILLIAMS, Mount Holyoke College

Book Review Editor: ALLAN W. EISTER, Wellesley College

Editorial Board: JAMES LUTHER ADAMS, Harvard Divinity School. ROBERT BELLAH, Harvard University. WALTER H. CLARK, Andover Newton Theological School. JAMES DITTES, Yale Divinity School. CHARLES Y. GLOCK, University of California. JAMES GUSTAFSON, Yale Divinity School. HARMON HOLCOMB, Colgate Rochester Divinity School. HORACE KALLEN, New School for Social Research. SAMUEL Z. KLAUSNER, Bureau of Social Science Research, Washington, and Columbia University. THOMAS O'DEA, University of Utah. PAUL PRUYSER, Menninger Foundation. HUSTON SMITH, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. JACOB TAUBES, Columbia University. GIBSON WINTER, University of Chicago.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION

OFFICERS

President: WALTER HOUSTON CLARK, Andover Newton Theological School.

Vice President: PAUL W. PRUYSER, Menninger Foundation.

Secretary: ALLAN W. EISTER, Wellesley College.

Treasurer: JAMES E. DITTES, Yale University.

Executive Secretary: SAMUEL Z. KLAUSNER, Bureau of Social Science Research.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

North Central: FRED H. BLUM, Social Science Program, University of Minnesota Minneapolis, Minnesota (On leave—Tavistock Clinic, London, England).

Southern Pacific Coast: DAVID D. EITZEN, Southern California School of Theology, Claremont, Calif.

Pacific Coast: CHARLES Y. GLOCK, Survey Research Center, University of California, Berkeley 4.

Middle West: ROBERT J. HAVIGHURST, Committee on Human Development, University of Chicago, Chicago 37, Ill.

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

PETER L. BERGER, New School for Social Research

HORACE L. FRIESS, Columbia University

ISIDOR CHEIN, New York University

HORACE M. KALLEN, New School for Social Research

WILLIAM G. T. DOUGLAS, Boston University

NOEL MAILLOUX, O. P., University of Montreal

CHARLES Y. GLOCK, Univ. of Calif.

PHILIP RIEFF, Univ. of Pennsylvania

Chairman of Publications Committee: J. PAUL WILLIAMS, Mount. Holyoke College.

Concerning manuscripts, address: *Interim Editor, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Room 404, Washington, D.C. 20036.* Authors are requested to enclose a self-addressed, stamped manilla envelope, if a possibly refused manuscript is wanted.

Concerning book reviews, address: *Professor Allan W. Eister, Wellesley College, Wellesley 81, Massachusetts.*

Concerning subscriptions, address: *The Society for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Room 404, Washington, D.C., 20036.*

Concerning advertising and other business details, address: *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 1200 Seventeenth Street, N.W., Room 404, Washington, D.C. 20036.*

The JOURNAL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION is printed by CULTURA PRESS, Wetteren, Belgium, biannually in October and April. Subscription rate, \$8.50 per year.

JOURNAL FOR THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF RELIGION

Official Journal of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion

OCTOBER 1965

VOLUME V, NUMBER 1

Retrospect and Prospect	the Retiring Editor	3
Martin Buber	Maurice FRIEDMAN	4

Empirical Studies

A Study of the Protestant Ministry in America.....	Jeffrey K. HADDEN	10
Religious Fundamentalism and Denominational Preference in the Southern Appalachian Region ..	Gordon J. DE JONG and Thomas R. FORD	24
The Religious Behavior of Graduate Students	Andrew M. GREELEY	34
Religious Differences in Lay Attitudes and Knowledge of Alcoholism and Its Treatment	Arnold S. LINSKY	41
An Exploratory Investigation of Some Needs Met through Religious Behavior	Sam C. WEBB	51
The Treatment of Religion in Introductory Sociology Texts	R. DALE GIVENS and Joe GARZA	59
The Trend in Interfaith Marriages	Paul J. REISS	64

Theoretical Interpretations

The Fall and Rise of Man	Jerome ECKSTEIN	68
Prophetic and Mystic Experience: Comparison and Consequences	Isidor THORNER	82

Methodological Problems

A Taxonomy of Religious Experience	Rodney STARK	97
Reform Judaism: The Origin and Evolution of a "Church Movement"	Stephen STEINBERG	117

St. Augustine's Confessions: Perspectives and Inquiries (A Study under the editorship of Paul Pruyser).

Continuities between the Life and Thought of Augustine	James E. DITTES	130
Notes on Augustine's <i>Confessions</i>	Joseph HAVENS	141
Depth and Rationality in Augustine's <i>Confessions</i> ..	Walter H. CLARK	144
Some Thoughts on Reading Augustine's <i>Confessions</i> ..	David BAKAN	149

Book Reviews

<i>L' Islam dans le Miroir de L'Occident</i> , by JEAN-JACQUES WAARTENBURG (Joseph Bram)	153
<i>Religious Observance in Tibet</i> , by ROBERT B. EKVAL (Huston Smith)	154
<i>Reform, Rebellion and the Heavenly Way</i> , by BENJAMIN B. WEEMS (Wi Jo Kang)	155
<i>Religion, Culture and Society</i> , edited by LOUIS SCHNEIDER (Thomas Luckmann)	155
<i>Death, Property and the Ancestors</i> , by JACK GOODY (Annemarie Shimony)	156
<i>Aztec Thought and Culture</i> , by MIGUEL LEON-PORTILIA (John D. Early)	158
<i>The Latin American Mind</i> , by LEOPOLDO ZEA (William J. Kilgore)	159
<i>Religion in American Culture</i> , by W. SEWARD SALISBURY (Paul M. Gustafson)	160

(Continued on following page)

