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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
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A STUDY OF SOME BASIC THEORETICAL MODELS
OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

by Marie-Anne Quenneville

Thesis submitted to the School
of Graduate Studies of the
University of Ottawa as partial
fulfillment of the requirements
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CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

Marie-Anne Quenneville was born December 23rd, 1928, in Pointe-aux-Roches, Ontario, where she obtained her elementary education. Her secondary education was received at the Ursuline College, Chatham, Ontario. In 1953 she received her Elementary School Teacher's Certificate and taught in the elementary schools for eighteen years, during which time she received Primary Methods Certificates I and II. In 1967 she received her B.A. degree from the University of Ottawa, and in 1968 entered the University of Ottawa as a graduate student in Religious Studies. She received her M.A. in 1970, and began a Ph.D. the same year. She has been a member of the faculty of Brescia College, London, Ontario, since 1971.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION	ix
1. The Problem and the General Context	ix
a) The Problem	ix
b) A New Endeavor in the 1890s	x
c) A Century Later :	x
2. The Model: A New Key to Examine the Literature	xi
a) A Basic Concept of T. S. Kuhn	xi
b) Nature and Function of Models	xii
3. Our Particular Specification of Models	xv
a) Approach	xv
b) Method	xviii
c) Content	xix
4. Purpose, Scope and Pertinent Research	xxvii
a) Purpose	xxvii
b) Scope	xxviii
c) Pertinent Research	xxix
5. Organization of the Research	xxxi
a) Survey of Literature	xxxi
b) Six Basic Models of Religious Conversion	xxxii
i) Exploration	xxxii
ii) Evaluation	xxxii
I. SURVEY OF LITERATURE	1
1. The Context	1
2. The Method for the Survey	4
a) Defining our Historical Periods	5
b) The Initial Theories: 1891-1904	6
c) Our Classification Process	16
3. Survey for the Years 1891-1918	17
4. Survey for the Years 1919-1946	21
5. Survey for the Years 1947-1977	30
6. Summary	46

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
II. GRANVILLE STANLEY HALL'S GENETIC MODEL: 1891-1904	48
1. The Exploration of the Theory	51
a) The Approach	51
i) A Theory of Personality	53
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	55
b) The Method	58
i) The Psychological System	58
ii) Data-Gathering	59
iii) Presentation of the Theory	60
c) The Content	61
2. The Evaluation of the Theory	70
a) The Approach	71
i) A Theory of Personality	71
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	72
b) The Method	75
i) The Psychological System	75
ii) Data-Gathering	76
iii) Presentation of the Theory	77
c) The Content	78
3. A Synopsis of the Model	83
III. JAMES H. LEUBA'S INDUCTIVE MODEL: 1896	85
1. The Exploration of the Theory	88
a) The Approach	88
i) A Theory of Personality	88
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	90
b) The Method	92
i) The Psychological System	92
ii) Data-Gathering	93
iii) Presentation of the Theory	94
c) The Content	95
2. The Evaluation of the Theory	106
a) The Approach	106
i) A Theory of Personality	106
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	108
b) The Method	111
i) The Psychological System	111
ii) Data-Gathering	112
iii) Presentation of the Theory	114
c) The Content	115
3. A Synopsis of the Model	127
Appendix	129

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
IV. WILLIAM JAMES'S RADICAL-EMPIRICAL MODEL: 1902	130
1. The Exploration of the Theory	133
a) The Approach	133
i) A Theory of Personality	134
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	139
b) The Method	148
i) The Psychological System	148
ii) Data-Gathering	149
iii) Presentation of the Theory	151
c) The Content	152
2. The Evaluation of the Theory	161
a) The Approach	161
i) A Theory of Personality	163
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	166
b) The Method	171
i) The Psychological System	171
ii) Data-Gathering	173
iii) Presentation of the Theory	174
c) The Content	175
3. A Synopsis of the Model	189
V. SANTE DE SANCTIS'S PSYCHOANALYTICAL MODEL: 1927	193
1. The Exploration of the Theory	197
a) The Approach	197
i) A Theory of Personality	198
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	204
b) The Method	205
i) The Psychological System	205
ii) Data-Gathering	207
iii) Presentation of the Theory	208
c) The Content	208
2. The Evaluation of the Theory	222
a) The Approach	222
i) A Theory of Personality	223
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	225
b) The Method	227
i) The Psychological System	227
ii) Data-Gathering	228
iii) Presentation of the Theory	229
c) The Content	231
3. A Synopsis of the Model	242

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
VI. MAURILIO T. C. L. PENIDO'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL MODEL:	
1935	245
1. The Exploration of the Theory	249
a) The Approach	249
i) A Theory of Personality	249
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	252
b) The Method	255
i) The Psychological System	255
ii) Data-Gathering	258
iii) Presentation of the Theory	259
c) The Content	259
2. The Evaluation of the Theory	279
a) The Approach	279
i) A Theory of Personality	279
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	281
b) The Method	284
i) The Psychological System	284
ii) Data-Gathering	285
iii) Presentation of the Theory	286
c) The Content	287
3. A Synopsis of the Model	300
VII. WILLIAM WALTERS SARGANT'S PHYSIOLOGICAL MODEL:	
1951-57	303
1. The Exploration of the Theory	306
a) The Approach	306
i) A Theory of Personality	306
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	316
b) The Method	319
i) The Psychological System	319
ii) Data-Gathering	322
iii) Presentation of the Theory	323
c) The Content	324
2. The Evaluation of the Theory	336
a) The Approach	336
i) A Theory of Personality	336
ii) A Theory of Man as Religious	339
b) The Method	341
i) The Psychological System	341
ii) Data-Gathering	343
iii) Presentation of the Theory	345
c) The Content	346
3. A Synopsis of the Model	362

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	365
BIBLIOGRAPHY	388
ABSTRACT OF: A Study of Some Basic Theoretical Models of Religious Conversion	412

INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem and the General Context

a) The Problem

Since the history-making event of Paul's conversion to Christianity, the greatest minds of the East and the West have struggled with questions relating to this basic experience: How is one converted? What happens when one is converted? Is it a project one embarks on or a reality that finds one out? Why are there so few conversions in the line of Paul's?

Scholars have been consistently preoccupied with such far-reaching questions. Generally, they have found that within the Christian framework, religious conversion is a specific type of experience involving a radical change in one's life and one's world, with particular repercussions in the range of values; that it is brought on suddenly or gradually; and that it always implies a new or deeper relationship with God in Jesus Christ. Moreover, this "turning-to-God", however diversely experienced, is the element which really makes religious conversion what it is. But what explanations of this creative fact of man's development do the theoreticians specifically propose?

b) A New Endeavor in the 1890's

The scholarly efforts on this question entered a new era beginning in the 1890's in America. The trend was characterized by a movement away from theology and philosophy towards what was then considered the scientific approach to psychology which emerged both in Germany and in America. The founding of numerous laboratories firmly established the new discipline, guaranteeing its alliance with the empirical sciences. While this discipline was still in the first stages of its development, some psychologists and their graduate students found conversion to be the paradigm of the Christian religious life. For this reason, conversion became the special interest of the psychology of religion.¹

c) A Century Later

Today, the fruits of this endeavor amount to a mass of highly valuable material related to religious conversion. Not the least among the long list of scholars who have invested much of their time and energy in the exploration of this significant Christian experience, are such men as G. Stanley Hall, George A. Coe, William James, Morton Prince, Georges Berguer, Carl G. Jung, Robert H. Thouless, Sante De Sanctis, Gordon W. Allport, William W. Sargant, and Robert M.

¹ P. Homans, Theology after Freud: An Interpretive Inquiry, Indianapolis, Bobbs-Merrill, 1970, p. 96 (hereafter cited as Theology after Freud)...

Doran. Along with creative and productive insights their various contributions also betray shortcomings and limitations. To ensure the future of research in this area, a study is imperative for an analysis, articulation and synthesis of the diverse theories of conversion advanced during the last century.

2. The Model: A New Key to Examine the Literature

a) A Basic Concept of T. S. Kuhn

The present research is an attempt to examine the modern and contemporary research on religious conversion in a new light by applying thereto the concept of "models", which Thomas S. Kuhn's theory has popularized.² No study has as yet been conducted to delineate the basic models psychologists have used to understand the experience of religious conversion. The goal of the present research is then charted as the probing for such basic theoretical

² T. S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, second ed. enl., 1970, 210 pp. (hereafter cited as Scientific Revolutions). Examples of this popularization abound. A few are mentioned here as typical: S. N. Ballard and J. R. Fleck, "The Teaching of Religious Concepts: A Three-Stage Model", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 3, 1975, pp. 164-71; J. D. Carter, "Personality and Christian Maturity: A Process Congruity Model", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 2, 1974, pp. 190-201; H. N. Malony, "Psychology and the Church: Toward a Model for Relating", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 1, 1973, pp. 67-72; S. B. Narramore, "Guilt: Three Models of Therapy", Journal of Psychology and Theology, 2, 1974, pp. 260-65.

models. We therefore now present a brief review of our own understanding of the nature and function of models.

.b) Nature and Function of Models

T. S. Kuhn, an historian of science, has made scientific communities aware of how they proceed in their "normal puzzle-solving research"³ by means of paradigms and/or models. Although he writes simply that "a paradigm is an accepted model or pattern",⁴ the concept of paradigm (or model) itself is far from being simplistic. Indeed, his varied uses of the term have caused some concern. Kuhn himself attempts to clarify his development of the term by acknowledging that he has utilized the word in two different contexts. First, "it stands for the entire constellation of beliefs, values, and techniques" shared by the specialists of a disciplinary matrix. Secondly, it signifies "one element in that constellation".⁵

Kuhn's elaboration of the elements of a model specifies what had been until then mostly implicit in the various scientific systems. He outlines the components of this structure as including symbolic generalizations of a

3 T. S. Kuhn, Scientific Revolutions, p. 179.

4 Ibid., p. 23.

5 Ibid., p. 175. See also p. 181 where Kuhn reports that one sympathetic reader (of his first edition) found twenty-two uses of the key concept.

particular process, metaphysical views relating to this process, a value system to appraise its predictions, and exemplars as "concrete problem-solutions". Kuhn believes that the concept of model as "shared example" is the most novel and least understood aspect of his work.⁶

A model is then like a "supertheory", accepted by the members of a particular scientific community on the basis of its adequacy. In time, the members of such a scientific community can become so accustomed to a particular model that certain aspects of its overall framework become implicit.⁷ Such a situation usually weakens the

⁶ T. S. Kuhn, Scientific Revolutions, p. 187. See also pp. 176-98.

⁷ C. T. Tart, "Scientific Foundations for the Study of Altered States of Consciousness", Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 3, 1971, p. 95, writes: "All paradigms are first introduced as theories, and, as such, they are subject to the requirement of making predictions that are empirically verifiable. By virtue of being extremely successful at prediction, a paradigm comes to be an all-embracing framework that organizes known data and guides a scientist in his research into the unknown, in his search for research topics that are 'likely' to yield useful results. Because of their tremendous success, however, paradigms undergo a change that, in principle, does not happen to an ordinary scientific theory. An ordinary scientific theory is always subject to further questioning and further testing as it is extended: it is always tentative. A paradigm, however, because of its tremendous success, becomes an implicit framework for most scientists working within it, that is, it becomes the 'natural' way of looking at things and doing things, rather than a tentatively held theory that is always subject to further test. It does not seriously occur to its adherents to question it any more (until the effects of a scientific revolution are felt)." Unless otherwise stated all underlining is the author's.

effectiveness of the model, as it becomes detached from some of its foundations. It then becomes urgent to revitalize it in its creative capacity.

Furthermore, in practice, a model is hardly ever declared false: it is more likely to be replaced by "a promising alternative".⁸ Such a process would explain the criterion for acceptance of a model: "a theory must seem better than its competitors, but it need not, and in fact never does, explain all the facts with which it can be confronted".⁹

Generally speaking then, for psychologists, a model is a functional construct representing a specific framework or system which is used to examine, test, verify, control, and finally theorize about one aspect of man's praxis, in the present case, religious conversion. This is why a specific model usually begins as a theory or supertheory. In this sense, a model is indeed as Ian Barbour suggests: "an imaginative tool for ordering experience".¹⁰ However, this is far too general an understanding of model for our

⁸ I. G. Barbour, Myths, Models, and Paradigms: A Comparative Study in Science and Religion, New York, Harper & Row, Publishers Inc., 1974, p. 10 (hereafter cited as Myths, Models, and Paradigms).

⁹ T. S. Kuhn, Scientific Revolutions, pp. 18-19.

¹⁰ I. G. Barbour, Myths, Models, and Paradigms, p. 66. This understanding of model clearly goes beyond other meanings such as, a miniature of the real thing, a physical or mechanical device to show how something works.

study. Specific criteria are necessary in order to permit as much consistency as possible in the evaluation of the literature and, more importantly, in the discovery of the models implied therein. Furthermore, such criteria will ensure a fairer treatment of the insights, suggestiveness, heuristic qualities, and overgeneralizations of the various works examined.

To this end, we have selected a triad singled out by Amedeo Giorgi: that of approach, method, and content,¹¹ as basic components of a model. We now proceed to describe each of these three elements.

3. Our Particular Specification of Model

a) Approach

Whereas method and content were the cause of considerable debate in scientific psychology, the element of approach, until recently, was not even considered. It was the implicit component that psychologists never questioned

¹¹ A. Giorgi, "Phenomenology and Experimental Psychology: I", Review of Existential Psychology and Psychiatry, 5, 1965, pp. 228-38 (hereafter cited as "Phenomenology and Experimental Psychology"), uses these three categories to compare two psychologies. See also his Psychology as a Human Science: A Phenomenologically Based Approach, New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970, p. 104 (hereafter cited as Psychology as a Human Science), where he uses these in reference to Kuhn's work: "In effect, Kuhn is acknowledging the relevancy of the scientist's approach in addition to method and content in the pursuit of science."

nor explicitated, unduly afraid as they were of seeming to philosophize.

Approach alludes to and includes the scientist's basic attitude to his discipline, i.e., his perspective, his horizon, his field of vision.¹² Approach also entails a certain concept of man in his nature, his origin, and his destiny.¹³ One's image of man implies a certain world-view which is predicated in one's experience, one's life-world, "the first world that we all come to know simply by being born human beings."¹⁴ Approach thus constitutes the basis of the scholar's scientific investigation,¹⁵ including its assumptions, presuppositions, basic principles or attitudes,

¹² B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, New York, Herder & Herder, 1972, p. 235 (hereafter cited as Method in Theology), writes: "In its literal sense the word, horizon, denotes the bounding circle, the line at which earth and sky appear to meet. This line is the limit of one's field of vision. As one moves about, it recedes in front and closes in behind so that, for different standpoints, there are different horizons. Moreover, for each different standpoint and horizon, there are different divisions of the totality of visible objects. Beyond the horizon lie the objects that, at least for the moment, cannot be seen. Within the horizon lie the objects that can now be seen."

¹³ M. B. Arnold, "Basic Assumptions in Psychology", in M. B. Arnold and J. A. Gasson, The Human Person. An Approach to an Integral Theory of Personality, New York, The Ronald Press Co., 1954, pp. 3-8 (hereafter cited as "Basic Assumptions in Psychology").

¹⁴ A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 134.

¹⁵ M. B. Arnold, "Basic Assumptions in Psychology", p. 3.

the last² of which necessarily concern the researcher himself.¹⁶

Insisting that a scientist always has a particular approach, whether he acknowledges it or not, Giorgi indicates how his work can be enhanced if he articulates it: (1) This articulation often serves to highlight what was previously unclear and/or problematic in the field. (2) The rationale of certain successful processes can be disclosed. (3) Hunches for tackling new problems can be made tangible.¹⁷

Notwithstanding the difficult and problematic nature of this element of the triad,¹⁸ it must be analyzed because of its serious repercussions on method and content. In our exploration of theoretical models of religious conversion, our consideration of approach will refer to two principal issues: (1) a view of man according to nature, or a certain theory of personality, and particularly (2) a view of man

16 M. B. Arnold, "Basic Assumptions in Psychology", p. 3. See also p. 15: "Psychology as a science enjoys an advantage no other natural science possesses: the observer is always one of the objects he is observing." A. Giorgi Psychology as a Human Science, p. 126, writes: "By establishing the category of approach we mean to take into account the researcher himself in the enterprise of science."

17 A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 131.

18 Ibid. See also p. 126: "We also recognize that, in a very real sense that task is inexhaustible. That is, no person could ever make completely explicit all of the characteristics of his approach. However, we would also maintain that it is worthwhile to make explicit whatever one can. We would argue against the position that would say that since one cannot make fully explicit his presuppositions, or his approach, there is no sense in trying at all."

according to religion, as a specific understanding of what it is to be religious.

b) Method

Psychology unfolded as a distinct discipline after the "golden era" of progress that development of the scientific method brought to the physical sciences. So, quite naturally, early psychologists generally had an exaggerated eagerness to develop their own domain by means of the same basic method of direct observation which encompassed collecting, measuring, testing, verifying, analyzing, and reducing data to theory.¹⁹ The proliferation of laboratories for the study of psychology was a direct result of the wide desire to apply this method.

However, method in our view can very justifiably have a much broader sense, and as will be seen, the originators of the theories leading to our models of religious conversion performed activities quite evidently with greater scope.

More recently, Bernard Lonergan defines method as "a normative pattern of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressing results".²⁰ Since this

¹⁹ A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 113, indicates that "the implication is that objectivity can be obtained only by means of the method of the natural sciences."

²⁰ B. J. F. Lonergan, Method in Theology, p. 4, continues: "There is a method, then, where there are distinct

definition is applicable to any science, it is used to specify our own understanding of method which is the particular process a psychologist employs to arrive at his theorizing about his subject matter.

In our examination of the models our discussion of method will treat (1) a particular psychological system; (2) its accompanying method of data collection; and (3) a particular procedure in the presentation of the theory.

c) Content

We have explained briefly the scope and vision implied by the first two elements, approach and method, of the triad chosen to develop theoretical models of religious conversion. The third element, content, requires a more lengthy treatment, both to bring out how the sense given the term by psychologists has continued to be broadened and diversified since the time of the earliest investigations and also to specify a distinction that will be useful in elaborating the models later on.

Wilhem Wundt, who launched psychology as a scientific discipline with the founding of the first psychological laboratory in Leipzig in 1879, has defined the subject matter

operations, where each operation is related to the others, where the set of relations forms a pattern, where the pattern is described as the right way of doing the job, where operations in accord with the pattern may be repeated indefinitely, and where the fruits of such repetition are, not repetitious, but cumulative and progressive."

of experimental psychology as "the immediate contents of experience", i.e., "processes of a composite character",²¹ comprising "a content objectively presented and an experiencing subject".²²

Wundt's psychology focuses upon contents of consciousness rather than upon the experiencing process as such; however this position is strongly contested by a contemporary, Franz Brentano, who argues that the data of consciousness proceed from either of two great classes: the class of physical or the class of mental phenomena.²³ Examples of physical phenomena are a color, a figure, a landscape, a sound, etc., whereas mental phenomena imply "every idea or presentation which we acquire through sense perception or imagination". Brentano insists that it is the "act of presentation", i.e., hearing a sound, or seeing a colored object, which is the special concern of psychology.²⁴ This insistence concurs with the fact that besides being

21 W. Wundt, Outlines of Psychology, trans. with the cooperation of the author by C. H. Judd, Second rev. Eng. ed. from the fourth rev. German ed., London, Williams and Norgate, 1902, p. 29.

22 Ibid., p. 4.

23 F. Brentano, Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt, Duncker and Humblot, Leipzig, 1874. First published in the United States in 1973 as: Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint; ed. O. Kraus; trans. from the German by A. Rancurello, D. B. Terrell, L. L. McAlister, New York, Humanities Press, 1973, p. 77 (hereafter cited as Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint).

24 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

presentations or "based upon presentations",²⁵ mental phenomena have a distinguishing characteristic--that of "intentional inexistence"--by which he means: "reference to a content, direction to an object [...] or immanent objectivity."²⁶ Moreover, mental phenomena "always appear to us as a unity", because they possess actual and intentional inexistence.²⁷ Since therefore, acts are part and parcel of the intentional process, Brentano concludes that psychology is an empirical science only insofar as it is grounded on perception and experience and concerned mainly with the acts rather than with the contents of the intentional process.²⁸

25 F. Brentano, Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint, p. 85.

26 Ibid., p. 88. The word "inexistence" is used here as signifying existence within. The translators sometimes use "intentional in-existence" (p. 97), sometimes "intentional inexistence" (p. 88), and sometimes simply "intentional existence" (p. 92).

27 Ibid., p. 97.

28 A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 28, referring to Brentano's psychological system, writes: "He was convinced that neither physiological nor association psychology was on the right track; hence he had to examine their presuppositions. [...] Perhaps more than anything else, Brentano is remembered for his conception of mind. Brentano believed that mental phenomena were irreducible, and that they were characterized by intentionality. By this Brentano meant that mental phenomena could be distinguished by the intentional inexistence of an object in a mental act." H. Spiegelberg, Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry. A Historical Introduction, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1972, pp. 4-5 (hereafter cited as Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry), summarizes Brentano's most original findings: "(1) A new phenomenon, 'intentionality';

These divergent views on the nature of the content of psychology held by Wundt and Brentano in Germany show the early polarization regarding this component of the triad. An examination of the concurrent research conducted in America reflects the same debate. With the publication of William James's psychological opus, The Principles of Psychology, in 1890,²⁹ psychology is defined as "the Science of Mental Life, both of its phenomena and their conditions."³⁰

Any attempt to delineate the essential scope of this apparently simple statement brings out its complex nature on the one hand, and James's originality on the other. For, if Wundt and Brentano polarize the issue, James's unsystematic,³¹

or better, reference to an object, the most important distinguishing characteristic of psychic phenomena in contrast to physical phenomena. References differ in quality in such acts as perceiving, imagining, judging, willing, etc. (2) a new act, inner perception "as the simultaneous awareness of our own acts, an act that is 'self-evident', and even infallible as far as it goes. (3) a new order of the phenomena, the classification into three basic groups of psychic phenomena - representations (Vorstellungen), judgments, and feelings of 'love' and 'hatred'. The latter two groups in contrast to the first one, are distinguished by their polarization into positive and negative opposites."

29 W. James, The Principles of Psychology, London, Macmillan, 1901, 2 vols. Copyright, 1890, Henry Holt & Co., New York (hereafter cited as Principles).

30 Ibid., I, p. 1.

31 Speaking to the complexity of James's psychology, J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", in Beyond the Classics? Essays in the Scientific Study of Religion, ed. C. Y. Glock, P. E. Hammond, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1973, p. 291 (hereafter cited as "Beyond William James"), writes: "Thought, least of all James's, has no center; thought, least of all James's, cannot be captured by propositions.

yet radically empirical approach to psychology³² makes it necessarily an open-ended question. This fundamental stance before the phenomena that "we call feelings, desires, cognitions, reasonings, decisions and the like",³³ undercuts the dichotomy established by Wundt and Brentano, and introduces a basic responsibility to describe these phenomena as they are experienced. Such an approach defies the restrictive artificiality of a scientific but mechanistic-positivistic model of psychology as outlined by Wundt.

However, the problematical issue of content is not resolved with James's all-inclusive examination of

Thought, most of all James's, is a living flow." H. Linschoten, On the Way Toward a Phenomenological Psychology: The Psychology of William James, ed. A. Giorgi, Pittsburg, Duquesne University Press, 1968, p. 311 (hereafter cited as Toward a Phenomenological Psychology), adds: "He who studies the work of William James is astonished when he quickly notices how unsystematic he is; and he may be annoyed by his inconsistency. James's psychology at first shows a methodological pluralism and hence a seeming confusion of heterogeneous viewpoints and explanations." And on p. 312: "His seeming lack of system is in fact a consequence of a more profound, more comprehensive systematic view." G. Murphy and J. K. Kovach, Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1928, p. 195 (hereafter cited as Historical Introduction to Modern Psychology), write: "Just as Wundt was the systematic psychologist par excellence, so James might be called the unsystematic psychologist par excellence."

32 James defines this approach in his: Essays in Radical Empiricism and a Pluralistic Universe, New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., (1912), 1971, p. 25 (hereafter cited as Essays in Radical Empiricism): "To be radical, an empiricism must neither admit into its constructions any element that is not directly experienced, nor exclude from them any element that is directly experienced."

33 W. James, Principles, I, p. 1.

experience whether he calls it the stream of thought, consciousness, self, experience, or pure experience. He greatly broadens the scope of content, but others still revert to polarization. Edward B. Titchener, one of Wundt's first pupils, devotes himself to a "pure" Wundtian experimental psychology,³⁴ in which consciousness as "the mind's awareness of its own processes",³⁵ is "the direct object of psychological study".³⁶ Thus the primary concern is again with the contents of mind, but few years elapse before this position is vehemently opposed by John B. Watson.

³⁴ Titchener is responsible for translating Wundt's Physiological Psychology into English. E. Heidbreder, Seven Psychologies, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1961, p. 151, writes: "Beyond question, the psychology of Titchener played a major role in the development of American psychology, not only as a distinct and lasting achievement, but also as a gallant and enlightening failure." R. S. Woodworth, Contemporary Schools of Psychology, New York, The Ronald Press Co. (rev. ed.), 1948, p. 26, reports that Titchener coined the terms "functional and structural psychology", in order to differentiate the American psychology from his "content" psychology. See also Woodworth's "The Adolescence of American Psychology", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, p. 13 (hereafter cited as "The Adolescence of American Psychology"), where he refers to the confusion possible arising from "the curious history of the words 'structure' and 'structural'. In 1892, 'structure' meant anatomy, usually the anatomy of the nervous system. About 1900, a distinction was drawn between 'structural' and 'functional' psychology, 'structure' now referring to the composition of mental states or processes as made up of elementary sensations."

³⁵ E. B. Titchener, A Text-Book of Psychology, replaces Outline of Psychology, stereotyped in 1896, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1924, p. 17.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 19.

Watson states that "the subject matter of human psychology is the behavior of the human being."³⁷ He argues that behavior must be the content of psychology if it is to be considered a natural science. In his opinion, consciousness cannot be known through observation, but, he says, "We can observe behavior - what the organism does or says".³⁸ Watson's total rejection of consciousness as the content of psychology results in the elimination of the subjective pole and an alignment with an objective-observant stance to the person.

Another scholar to raise a voice of protest over the content of psychology is Sigmund Freud. His original clinical approach in psychology speaks strongly against the academic approach of all previous psychology. It would of course be too lengthy to elaborate on Freud's system here, but we can at least point to his discovery of such functional mental systems as the Unconscious, the Preconscious and the Conscious.³⁹ His primary interest is with man's psyche as

37 J. B. Watson, Behaviorism, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957, first published, 1924, p. 1, also claims that "consciousness is neither a definite nor a usable concept".

38 Ibid., p. 6.

39 S. Freud, "The Unconscious", in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. from the German under the general editorship of J. Strachey, in collaboration with A. Freud, assisted by A. Strachey and A. Tyson, London, The Hogarth Press, 1962-1974, 14, pp. 159-215 (further references to Freud's works will be cited as from the Standard Edition).

can be seen in The Interpretation of Dreams.⁴⁰ Freud joins forces with the functionalists, who, in search of therapeutic results, view man in his dynamic processes. Later, Freud moves from intrapsychic processes to a more "interpersonal" approach.⁴¹

As can be seen, the question of the true content of psychology has been problematical from the time of the earliest researchers. But without undue simplifications, we can say there emerges from the continuing debate a certain polarization. On the one hand, men like I. P. Pavlov and J. B. Watson tended to focus on the strictly objective phenomena, while those like W. James and S. Freud tended more to the subjective.

The structure of the experience of religious conversion is the specific content of interest in the present research and, as we shall see, it can itself be examined from a position at either of these poles.⁴²

40. S. Freud, Standard Edition, volumes 4 and 5.

41. J. P. Cole develops the evolutionary character in Freud's system from the somatic, to the psychological, to the metapsychological, which seems to hold for the major tenets of his understanding of person and reality. Just as his view of the self progresses from a mechanical model as described in The Interpretation of Dreams (1900), to a more developed awareness of a historical dimension in The Ego and the Id (1923), so his grasp of "reality" undergoes development from material reality to social reality. See J. P. Cole, The Problematic Self in Kierkegaard and Freud, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1971, especially pp. 33-54 and 175-96.

42. P. Homans, Theology after Freud, 1970, p. 95, writes: "The kind of psychology available to the

We wish to emphasize that our somewhat lengthier treatment of content is not to downplay method (which in any case has always been given more than appropriate recognition). Neither is it to downplay approach, the new and most significant element of Giorgi's "trialogue",⁴³ which we have chosen as a reference for our examination of the significant literature on religious conversion.

4. Purpose, Scope and Pertinent Research

a) Purpose

The thrust of this research is an exploration of the literature on religious conversion by psychologists from the beginning of their scientific theorizing on this subject in the 1890's up to 1977, and a delineation of the models of religious conversion that emerge from this work up to 1970. The more than one hundred and seventy works on the subject both in English and in French constitute the primary data of the research. Moreover, the investigation of this literature

psychologists of religion determined their interpretation of religion."

43 A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 184. Giorgi applies the term to specify fidelity to the phenomenon of man as person: "We mentioned previously that for any science the priority should be with the relationships among the approach, the method and the content. We still agree with this position, but what we want to emphasize here is that within the context of such a triad, a human scientific psychology would stress fidelity to the phenomenon of man as person."

for basic models has lead to the identification of major trends by which the theorizing evolves. It is with the purpose of giving prominence to the evolution of these trends that the models chosen are explored in the order of their historical appearance.

b) Scope

The scope of this research is the examination of those models which we consider basic. The criterion which qualifies a model as basic is that it must present a new approach and method in its theorizing on conversion. Any later theory situated within the same model is automatically disqualified for exploration here; however, such disqualification of specific studies is not a judgment on their essential merit or demerit. This criterion has led to the identification of six basic models appearing before 1970. A more detailed treatment of the selective process whereby we arrived at choosing these six basic models of religious conversion is given in a survey of literature in chapter one. Furthermore, the survey will also confirm that these basic models have not as yet been examined as such.

Since our aim is a search for some basic models of religious conversion, it embraces a threefold endeavor: (1) to reveal the trends in this theorizing; (2) to explore and evaluate six major theories constituting models; and

(3) to point to significant conclusions for future research.

c) Pertinent Research

Only two unpublished doctoral dissertations appear closely related to this study, and these are now examined. The first of these dissertations is that of Walter J. Kenny, presented in 1957, at the Gregorian University in Rome,⁴⁴ and the second is that of Barbara E. Jones, presented in 1969, at Union Theological Seminary, in New York.⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that both of these studies are from theological schools. Both are at once similar and strikingly different from our own. Their similarity stems from the fact that both are historical explorations of psychological theories of religious conversion. But significant differences exist in their aim and scope.

Kenny's research data consist of fifteen theories of English-speaking psychologists from 1896 to 1957, grouped under five schools, designated as The Clark School, William

44 W. F. Kenny, Theories of Religious Conversion among English-Speaking Psychologists from James H. Leuba to the Present, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Rome, Gregorian University, 1957, 265 pp. (hereafter cited as Theories of Religious Conversion among English-Speaking Psychologists).

45 B. E. Jones, Conversion: An Examination of the Myth of Human Change, unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York, Union Theological Seminary, in co-operation with Columbia University, 1969, 469 pp. (hereafter cited as Conversion).

James, After James, The influence of Depth Psychology and Contemporary Efforts. However, Kenny examines only some of these English-speaking theories and does not offer any selective criteria to justify the repetitious presentations on the one hand, and the arbitrary omissions on the other.⁴⁶ The application of a theological criterion to the various theories leads to a major contribution in the form of a fourfold typology: the slow and sudden intellectual conversions, and the slow and sudden moral conversions. Kenny has the merit of being the first to attempt critical examination of these important data.

Barbara E. Jones's research project is more inclusive. Her data are procured from the General History of Religions, and from the Old and New Testaments, as well as from the Psychology of Religion. She does not single out schools or trends, but rather examines the vast literature at her disposal for patterns of conversion. Her aim is to show that "the process of conversion has been expressed in a myth with a standardized pattern and vocabulary which has tended to obscure and deprecate the profound truths which the myth contains."⁴⁷ By means of this search, she develops

⁴⁶ Kenny does not explain why he omits such theories as those of Sv. Norborg, W. B. Thomas, L. W. Lang, E. T. Clark, A. R. Uren, and C. C. Josey, to name but a few. Neither does he account for the order of presentation of the fifteen theories. On the whole, he seems to follow "schools", but he does not consistently follow the chronology within these schools.

⁴⁷ B. E. Jones, Conversion, p. 61.

a theory of religious conversion which she considers to be the product of the relevant literature. She concludes moreover, that psychologists "have tightened the literalization of the myth".⁴⁸ Although she is not aware of Kenny's contribution, her own analysis reaffirms the theoretical-practical importance of this significant literature.

Our aim, in the present thesis, is neither to identify schools nor to formulate a new theory of conversion. It is rather to survey the literature in English and in French from 1891 to 1977, to find the basic models of religious conversion offered in the first eighty years of this period and to explore and evaluate them.

5. Organization of the Research

a) Survey of the Literature

The search for basic models of religious conversion is outlined in Chapter One, where we offer conclusions drawn from the survey of more than one hundred and seventy studies on conversion. The survey, which is broken down into three periods, 1891-1918, 1919-1946, and 1947-1977, highlights the discovery of these models and the trends which ensue therefrom. The first period produces three models and the second two more, while the third period, up to 1970 inclusively, points to only one additional model. As we show briefly, the

48 B. E. Jones, Conversion, p. 204.

analyses of the remaining years already reveal more models, but an explanation of these falls outside the scope of this study.

b) Six Basic Models of Religious Conversion

Chapters Two to Seven of this thesis consist of an examination in chronological order of these six theoretical models of religious conversion. Each is submitted to the twofold process of exploration and evaluation.

i) Exploration

The exploration of each model will consist in the methodical examination of the three elements: approach, method and content. Investigating the approach will reveal a particular theory of personality as well as a theory of man as a religious being. Probing for the method will manifest the psychological system employed, the data-gathering techniques, and the procedure used in theorizing. The examination of the content, which as a matter of fact is very similar in all the models, will disclose the specific structure of religious conversion.

ii) Evaluation

The very act of model-building implies limitations and creative possibilities which are inherent to any model. Our evaluation will specifically examine each element of the

triad--approach, method and content--bringing out their internal articulation along with their limitations and possibilities. In so doing, the evaluation of a particular model prepares the way for the emergence of the next model, which usually appears more suitable, more harmonious, and more comprehensive. However, although the new framework offers "an alternative reality", it also embodies specific limitations and creative possibilities of its own.⁴⁹

Finally, from the variety of leads found in the survey of literature since 1891 to the present, and from the exploration and evaluation of six basic theoretical models of religious conversion, we hope to offer valuable suggestions for future model-builders and researchers.

⁴⁹ See L. LeShan, Alternate Realities: The Search for the Full Human Being, New York, M. Evans & Co. Inc., 1976, pp. 86-119. LeShan's theory of "alternate realities" appears in the light of the present research as a way of inventing and discovering reality according to certain basic modes or models. The four basic models of reality which he describes are sensory, clairvoyant, transpsychic, and mythic. Each model contains its own laws, implications, goals, and answers. In other words, each is determined within certain limits and certain creative possibilities. Each as a model of reality determines all the questions that can be asked and the answers that can be received. See also A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, pp. 162-63.

CHAPTER I

SURVEY OF LITERATURE

1. The Context

The psychology of religious conversion reaches back to the 1880's,¹ develops to such an extent in the 1890's² that, by the turn of the century,³ it is not only one of the popular religious phenomena examined, it is the phenomenon of greatest interest both in genetic psychology,⁴ and in

1 The first study to appear is that of G. S. Hall, "The Moral and Religious Training of Children", Princeton Review, New Series, 9, 1882, pp. 26-48 (hereafter cited as "The Moral and Religious Training of Children").

2 By the end of the 1890's, the following had already published one or more articles directly bearing upon the psychology of religious conversion: G. S. Hall; W. H. Burnham; A. H. Daniels; E. G. Lancaster; J. H. Leuba; E. D. Starbuck; and G. A. Coe.

3 G. A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1916, p. 1 (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion), states: "The closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening of the twentieth mark the beginning of a definite determination to use the resources of scientific psychology in the investigation of religion. The roots of modern science reach far into the past, of course, yet a distinctly new departure was made when systematic, empirical methods were employed in order to analyze religious conversion and thus place it within the general perspective of the natural sciences."

4 G. S. Hall, "The Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", in Adolescence, its Psychology and its Relations to Philosophy, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education, New York, Appleton, (1904), 1905, vol. 2, p. 357 (hereafter cited as "Adolescent Psychology of

psychology of religion.⁵ Moreover, the claim of Théodore Flournoy and others that psychology of religion was born in America,⁶ rests on the fact that it is here that this

Conversion"), writes: "Indeed, the chief fact of genetic psychology is conversion, a real and momentous change of unsurpassed scientific and practical importance and interest."

5 P. Homans, Theology after Freud, p. 96, writes: "This methodological stance toward religion is intimately related to probably the most notable and memorable feature of the psychology of religion, namely, its special fascination with the conversion experience. For the conversion experience, they argued, is clearly the paradigm of the religious. The psychologists of religion had available to them a great deal of anthropological and historical data, yet they seemed mysteriously drawn to and preoccupied with those conversion experiences that were so much a part of the religious institutional life of their time." W. E. Oates, The Psychology of Religion, Waco, Texas, Word Books, Publisher, 1973, p. 92 (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion), writes: "From the beginning of its efforts as a scientific study of religious experience, the psychology of religion has, as a discipline, been concerned with conversion."

6 Psychology of religion is a distinctly American applied or functional psychology. Many studies attest to these beginnings of psychology of religion in America. T. Flournoy, "Les Principes de la psychologie religieuse" Archives de Psychologie, (de la Suisse Romande), 2, 1902, p. 34 (hereafter cited as "Principes de la psychologie religieuse"), confirms this evidence in his historical survey of psychology of religion. He states that about twenty studies have already been conducted, that they are almost exclusively from America and that no mention has yet been made of them in the current manuals of psychology. J. B. Pratt, "The Psychology of Religion", Harvard Theological Review, I, 1908, p. 442 (hereafter cited as "Psychology of Religion"), notes: "The psychology of religion was born and has flourished best in America; and for the very good reason that there is so much religion here to be studied." J. C. Flugel, A Hundred Years of Psychology, 1833-1933, 2nd ed., London, Duckworth, 1951, p. 118 (hereafter cited as A Hundred Years of Psychology), also mentions this new discipline: "Together with these important developments in social psychology, the nineties witnessed also the

pioneer theorizing on religious conversion began.

Indeed the publication of James's Principles of Psychology, in 1890, marks a new era of investigation into religious conversion.⁷ The distinctive characteristic of this new research lay in direct observation and, therefore, in its empirical nature.⁸ The ensuing studies of religious conversion are notable for their use of specific psychological systems.

It is important in beginning an historical survey of the theories of religious conversion to consider the dual aspect of such a bold approach to a religious experience which until then had been almost the exclusive property of theological investigation. Peter Homans summarizes well the twofold approach with which scholars examined religious conversion:

We have here an important methodological point regarding the work of the psychologists of religion: a close and mutually determinate relation between understanding the nature and purpose of psychology,

beginnings of the psychology of religion." See also V. Ferm, "The Psychology of Religion", in A. A. Roback, Present Day Psychology, New York, Philosophical Library, 1955, p. 963.

7 G. A. Coe, Psychology of Religion, p. 2, writes: "The whole constitutes a fresh chapter that belongs on the one hand to psychology and on the other to the science of religion."

8 Ibid., "What is new is the use of critical, empirical methods, and the specific results of applying them." A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 52, notes that "the criteria for acceptability during these times was 'empirical data'."

on the one hand, and the psychological nature and meaning of religion, on the other hand. The kind of psychology available to the psychologists of religion determined their interpretation of religion.⁹

2. The Method for the Survey

As previously stated, the literature on religious conversion in English and French covers nearly a century, and includes more than one hundred and seventy studies. It would be impossible to review each work here; rather the present survey will report on the conclusions of our exhaustive examination of these works following an historical sequence and in such a way as to reveal the trends that emerge therefrom. We propose to present our conclusions as trends within historical periods so as to justify our choice of six basic, theoretical models of religious conversion.

After defining our historical periods, we shall examine some of the initial theories in order to establish some reference points for our survey and we will outline the manner in which we intend to classify trends. The survey itself then follows.

a) Defining our Historical Periods

The natural periods in which the two World Wars divide the years from 1891 to 1977 happen to correspond to

9 P. Homans, Theology after Freud, pp. 94-95.

major periods of psychological study relating to our present interest. Homans' statement that "the nineteenth century as an ideological synthesis 'ended' at the time of the First World War",¹⁰ and Giorgi's remark about the radical change effected within psychological investigation due to the rise of behaviorism in 1916,¹¹ confirm that the pioneer period for our survey can then be adequately represented as extending from 1891 to the end of the First World War, i.e., 1918. The second period falls roughly between 1919 and 1946, i.e., to the end of the Second World War.

Misiak and Sexton point out that Gordon Allport and Henry Murray were already proposing new humanistic trends in the 1930's, and that Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow both published in this line in the early 1940's; however, the new humanistic psychology took root only after the Second World War.¹² One or more subdivisions could be emphasized within this period, but for our purposes here, we are accepting it as a whole, covering the years 1947-1977.

10 P. Homans, Theology after Freud, p. 99.

11 A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 31.

12 H. Misiak, and V. S. Sexton, Phenomenological, Existential and Humanistic Psychologies: A Historical Survey, New York, Grune & Stratton, 1973, p. 109. See also A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 39 (From World War II to the Present.)

b) The Initial Theories: 1891-1904

Our survey must begin with Granville Stanley Hall's first theoretical study on the subject of religious conversion, an essay published in 1882 entitled "The Moral and Religious Training of Children". In 1891 it reappeared as "The Moral and Religious Training of Children and Adolescents".¹³ Though the article is considerably shortened, it is not otherwise altered except in its title. Moreover, since no other studies intervene during this time, the later printing is taken as the first theorizing within psychology on religious conversion and merits close attention if only for its pioneer character.

The titles of Hall's articles are a good indication that his interest in religious conversion coincides with his own genetic psychology--a functional psychology emphasizing stages of growth¹⁴ and an abiding search for origins,¹⁵

¹³ See Princeton Review, New Series, 9, 1882, pp. 26-48 and Pedagogical Seminary, I, 1891, pp. 196-210.

¹⁴ The fact that almost ten years later, Hall merely shortens this article and enlarges its scope by including "adolescents" in the title, indicates that he had found no additional data with which to revise substantially the position held in the first article; that he felt it encompassed the experience of the adolescent period as well; and that he was continuing to develop his genetic psychology.

¹⁵ Hall speaks to this interest in his Life and Confessions of a Psychologist, New York, London, D. Appleton & Co., (1923), 1924; p. 358 (hereafter cited as Life and Confessions): "I think my curiosity somehow got an early tilt toward origins, and even in college I brought much censure upon myself by advocating the view that man had sprung from apehood."

motivated by his acceptance of Darwinian philosophy.¹⁶ Hall refers to specific data indicative of the empirical nature of his study. In this he inaugurated a trend, particularly among his own students, towards statistical data-gathering techniques.¹⁷ Moreover, Hall found opportunity to publish a more rigorous report on his theory in 1904.

The next publications to appear are all from Hall's graduate students at Clark University.¹⁸ The first two, "The Study of Adolescence", by W. H. Burnham,¹⁹ and "The New Life: A Study in Regeneration", by A. H. Daniels,²⁰ present no new theories of religious conversion as such, but they

16 G. S. Hall, Life and Confessions, pp. 359-60. Hall admits that the highest compliment ever payed him was to have been introduced by "an overzealous friend as the Darwin of the mind".

17 Hall is the first to introduce the questionnaire method into psychology. See his Life and Confessions, p. 387. The outcome of this innovative method can be examined in the Pedagogical Seminary (a journal he founded) between the years 1894-1915.

18 As president of Clark University from 1888 (a post he holds for some thirty years), Hall and his graduate students become known as the "Clark School" of the psychology of religion. See P. L. Harriman, The New Dictionary of Psychology, New York, Philosophical Library, 1947, p. 288. J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 436. G. Berguer, "Psychologie religieuse normale", Archives de psychologie, Genève, 14, 1914, p. 23.

19 W. H. Burnham, "The Study of Adolescence", Pedagogical Seminary, 1, 1891, pp. 174-95 (hereafter cited as "The Study of Adolescence").

20 A. H. Daniels, "The New Life: A Study in Regeneration", American Journal of Psychology, 6, 1895, pp. 61-106 (hereafter cited as "The New Life: A Study in Regeneration").

serve to confirm Hall's findings on adolescent conversion.²¹ However the next study, published in 1896 by James H. Leuba, is more significant.²²

Leuba constructs a theory almost entirely upon individual concrete experiences of conversion by means of a "questionnaire case-study" survey. He builds upon Hall's meagre findings, but his approach and method bear significant differences from those of his director: (1) His rigorous theorizing is founded upon the specific reliability of personal documents which he publishes; (2) his respondents are mostly adults; (3) his approach is largely from within the functional physiological psychology made popular by William James.²³ Finally, his theory of religious

21 A. H. Daniels, "The New Life: A Study in Regeneration", pp. 90, 95. The following statements reaffirm Hall's findings: "This change at puberty has been called a second birth." "I think it is possible to show by statistics that the majority of conversions in most churches occur during adolescence", as "the most natural period for conversion."

22 J. H. Leuba, "A Study in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena", American Journal of Psychology, 7, 1896, pp. 309-85 (hereafter cited as "A Study").

23 See E. G. Boring, "The James Celebration", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, p. 3. "We have also short papers from Dewey, the co-founder with James of functional psychology." In: "Human Nature VS Sensation: William James and the Psychology of the Present", American Journal of Psychology, 55, 1942, p. 314 (hereafter cited as "Human Nature VS Sensation: William James and the Psychology of the Present"): "He wanted a functional psychology, which could discover the forces that govern the moral and religious life and bring them under control. In fact, the whole conception of a functional psychology is that it considers the adjustment of the total living organism to its

conversion is considered to be the first truly inductive psychological theory based wholly upon individual differences.²⁴ Moreover, it serves largely as the basis for later theorizing on conversion.

By 1896 then, we have two significant methods for the study of religious conversion. Both of these are founded upon the popular Jamesian approach to psychology, which is both functional, because it focuses upon experience in its myriad of varieties, processes, and relations, and physiological, giving it a firm basis in natural science and allowing it to examine a religious phenomenon without having recourse to the theological method. Yet each is original. Hall proceeds from a genetic, or developmental approach to the person, which complements his interests in education in

environment, and is not primarily concerned with the description of the functioning of the small parts of its mechanism." This functional aspect of James's theory of the characteristics of consciousness is foundational, and it clearly differentiates his psychology from that of Wundt and Titchener.

24 J. H. Leuba, "The Making of a Psychologist of Religion", in V. Ferm, Religion in Transition, Freeport, New York, Books for Libraries Press, 1969, p. 181 (hereafter cited as "A Psychologist of Religion"), says the publication of his dissertation in 1896, is, "I think, the first attempt to submit an important religious experience to scientific treatment in the light of contemporary psychology." J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 437: "It was not until the year 1896 that the first article of great intrinsic value appeared; namely the first of a long series of important papers by Mr. James H. Leuba." And: "Mr. Leuba went at his task in thoroughly scientific fashion." On p. 438, writing again about Leuba's contributions to the psychology of religion, he mentions his "keen psychological analysis".

general, and in adolescence in particular, while Leuba proceeds inductively looking for individual differences and similarities, without this genetic thrust. All future theories of conversion are in fact ramifications of these two early ones.

The next three publications from the Clark School are those of E. D. Starbuck. "A Study of Conversion", in 1897,²⁵ is followed the same year by "Some Aspects of Religious Growth".²⁶ In 1899, these findings are enlarged and published as the first full-length book on the subject.²⁷ These publications are most significant for the research on religious conversion. Historians rightly look to Starbuck's research as a pioneer endeavor of great merit.²⁸ It does not extend beyond Leuba's inductive theory, but it greatly

25 E. D. Starbuck, "A Study of Conversion", American Journal of Psychology, 8, 1897, pp. 268-308 (hereafter cited as "A Study of Conversion").

26 Id., "Some Aspects of Religious Growth", American Journal of Psychology, 9, 1897, pp. 70-124 (hereafter cited as "Some Aspects of Religious Growth").

27 Id., The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness, London, Walter Scott Ltd., 1899, 423 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion). We know of no earlier work in the field. A later article by Starbuck, "The Psychology of Conversion", Expository Times, 25, 1914, pp. 214-23, does not add any significant contribution.

28 J. C. Flugel, A Hundred Years of Psychology, p. 119, writing of Starbuck's book published in 1899, refers to it as "By far the most significant event in this field. [...] Indeed this collection of manuscripts has been correctly described as the first great inductive approach to this unique aspect of human life."

develops and substantiates Leuba's theory and findings.²⁹

In fact, Starbuck's great achievement lies in his being the first to test, clarify, and amplify the findings of his predecessors which had not been submitted to such exacting verification.

We turn now to George Albert Coe, of the University of Chicago, whose publications on religious conversion follow those of Starbuck. "A Study in the Dynamics of Personal Religion", 1899,³⁰ is included in The Spiritual Life, published in 1900.³¹ These studies of Coe reveal a much more differentiated empirical method than any employed before him, for he supplements the questionnaire method with personal interviews and hypnotic experiments.³² Though his aim is to investigate the role of temperament, if any, in

29 Along with his questionnaire, Starbuck publishes a total of 32 Tables and 14 Figures. Of these, one which has often been used, is that of "A Study of Conversion", p. 289, illustrating "the mental processes at conversion, as shown by the feeling accompaniments". These mental processes also elaborate three phases of conversion: sense of sin or feeling of incompleteness, the conversion moment, and new life.

30 G. A. Coe, "A Study in the Dynamics of Personal Religion", Psychological Review, 6, 1899, pp. 484-505 (hereafter cited as "Dynamics of Personal Religion").

31 Id., The Spiritual Life, New York, Eatons & Mains, 1900, 279 pp. (hereafter cited as Spiritual Life). On p. 8, Coe indicates chapter III is "with alterations and additions", an article previously published in September, 1899.

32 Ibid., pp. 109-10. Coe also presents interesting results from his research in Tables and Figures.

religious conversion,³³ he manages as well to confirm such hypotheses as the co-ordination between religious development and psycho-physiological growth, the normative fact of conversion at adolescence, as well as the possibility of one undergoing several conversions.³⁴ Coe is also the first to conduct a comparative statistical study of the occurrence of religious conversion at adolescence.³⁵

Coe's investigation of the dynamics of temperament in sudden religious conversion makes him (along with Starbuck) a leader in a long line of scholars observing, verifying, and searching for new variables in conversion. His conclusions indicating that expectation, abundance of feeling, and passive suggestibility are the principal dynamics of temperament in sudden conversion, are a distinct advance in theory even though his method does not differ fundamentally, from that of Leuba and Starbuck.

But in 1902, William James's classic The Varieties of Religious Experience³⁶ opened a new era in the psychology

33 G. A. Coe, "Dynamics of Personal Religion", p. 484. Coe notes the principal conclusions of the Clark School investigations: (1) definite correlations are established between religious experience and adolescence; (2) adolescence is the period of greatest religious transformation for both males and females; (3) "conversion is only one of many forms in which a normal adolescent religious change clothes itself." Coe conducts his investigation in order to determine if temperament is responsible for these differences in religious change.

34 Id., Spiritual Life, pp. 29-49.

35 Ibid., pp. 39-55.

36 W. James, The Varieties of Religious Experience,

of religious conversion.³⁷ James's radical commitment to experience³⁸ makes his functional psychology an eminently practical one,³⁹ suited to examine religious conversion as the gateway to saintliness. In presenting his theory, which embodies his own search for, and expectations of authentic religion, James uses the lecture-method, a vehicle well

a Study in Human Nature, New York, Crowell-Collier Publishing Co., (1902), 1972, 416 pp. (hereafter cited as Varieties).

37 J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 441, writes: "The most important single contribution to the psychology of religion is, of course, Professor James's Varieties of Religious Experience." O. Strunk, "Humanistic Religious Psychology: A New Chapter in the Psychology of Religion", Journal of Pastoral Care, 34, 1970, p. 90, states: "When William James elected to speak on what he called 'man's religious constitution' as his Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in 1902, he could not have guessed that his subject matter would launch a discipline capable of attracting some of the keenest minds in Europe and America [...] it was undoubtedly James who set the stage and established part of the future pattern of the discipline." W. E. Oates, Psychology of Religion, pp. 93-95, says of James: "As a professor of psychology at Harvard, he became the best-known and most-quoted psychologist of religion of our times. We are permanently indebted to William James. Hence, his definition of conversion has become somewhat normative for a working hypothesis of conversion."

38 J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", p. 333: "Data can be noted by a computer, but reality, including its abstraction into data, can be experienced only by a person who has approached with questions that he feels to be personally real and urgent for answer." P. 317: Dittes speaks of James as conforming to one authority - "experience".

39 James's commitment to a radical empiricism which allows the examination of all of experience, is the aspect of his psychology which makes it so practical.

suited to such private sectors of experience.⁴⁰ He makes excellent use of Starbuck's data⁴¹ along with other autobiographical and biographical materials, to arrive at his own unique theory of conversion. By means of a more empirical approach to experience, which he calls a radical empirical approach, James goes beyond Leuba and Hall, and presents a new theory of religious conversion which becomes a standard for all of psychology of religion.⁴²

40 J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", p. 291, brings out that James's scientific journey coincided with his personal journey in such a way that "the discoveries and formulations of the mind" had meaning in the "here and now", "for me", and "maybe". Critical, disciplined thinking, which was the essence of every "lecture", had one end: "to enable us to live more effectively in our world." On p. 312, he adds that "his way of treating anything was to take it very seriously and to take it fresh". Dittes adds (p. 316) that one has only to read the book carefully to discover that James "becomes totally immersed in the substance and tools of each chapter" or lecture. The lecture approach no doubt enables James to vibrate all the more easily to the subject at hand.

41 E. D. Starbuck, "A Student's Impressions of James in The Middle 90's", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, pp. 128-31, tells of his amazement and gratitude when he saw that James had added his own name to those already approving his questionnaire of religious growth. Later when James asked him if he had "any unused data from which he might draw", Starbuck was only too happy "to express him a barrellful and two large cartons of raw data". Starbuck adds that James "never failed to make acknowledgments" even contrary to specifications.

42 The genius of James which is captured in the Varieties, is admitted by countless scholars. We quote a few: J. G. Arapura, Religion as Anxiety and Tranquility: An Essay in Comparative Phenomenology of the Spirit, Paris, Mouton & Co., 1972, p. 19, refers to James's radical empirical approach as "a potentially powerful alternative of dealing with all empirical actualities including the

With the publications of James's Varieties a third procedure for the study of conversion appeared in America,⁴³ so brilliantly enunciated that it remained unchallenged for years. In fact, a quarter century elapsed before the appearance of a really new one, as is confirmed by an examination of the trends set in motion by these original orientations--the genetic by G. S. Hall, the inductive by J. H. Leuba and the radically empirical by W. James. Hall's expansion of his theory of conversion in 1904,⁴⁴ marks the end of what we designate as the pioneer period. The remainder of the studies published within the first period, 1891-1918, can then be examined as subdivisions or implications of these three earlier orientations.

religious." C. Wilson, New Pathways in Psychology: Maslow and the Post-Freudian Revolution, London, The Trinity Press, 1972, p. 81 (hereafter cited as New Pathways in Psychology), writes of the Varieties: "It may well be the most important single volume in the history of psychology, since it is a direct attack upon the problem of man's spiritual evolution." W. A. Clebsch, American Religious Thought: a History, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1973, p. 153 (hereafter cited as American Religious Thought), claims that in the Varieties, James "was drawing the boundaries of religiousness."

43 We know of no other theories of conversion presented elsewhere. Moreover, the fact that Flournoy and Pratt indicate that psychology of religion begins in America makes the issue conclusive. See footnote 6 above.

44 See G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", pp. 281-362.

c) Our Classification Process

From the three basic orientations--the genetic, the inductive and the radically empirical--we can trace many off-shoots in the subsequent literature. A presentation of these is a complicated undertaking. It may even appear to be arbitrary. Capps, Rambo and Ransohoff certainly confirm the complexity of classifying a selective bibliography on the one hand, and the impossibility of expecting completeness on the other.⁴⁵ These authors organize the literature on psychology of religion since 1950 according to six dimensions of religion: the mythological, ritual, experiential, dispositional, social, and directional. Each of these divisions they redivide. Although our own survey is only concerned with section "D:2" (Conversion Experience) of their bibliography, we can offer many subdivisions of this one subsection but we do not claim our own to be exhaustive. However, they have proven to be quite adequate to classify all the material we have examined in a way as to throw new light on its evolution.

In examining the various implications and dimensions contained within the remaining studies of our survey, we proceed basically according to chronology, with the

⁴⁵ D. Capps, L. Rambo, P. Ransohoff, Psychology of Religion. A Guide to Information Sources, Detroit, Gale Research Co., 1976, pp. ix-xii (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion).

exception that once we identify a group of studies, e.g., "psychologies of religion", we proceed with all the subsequent studies within that group, before returning to chronology. We now turn to a more thorough survey of the first period.

3. Survey for the Years 1891-1918

The first studies following that of Hall are theorizations on various genetic factors. These are largely concerned with developmental and educational issues. Such studies as those of W. H. Burnham, A. H. Daniels, E. D. Starbuck, E. P. Hammond, G. A. Tawney and E. S. Ames⁴⁶ serve to entrench firmly this initial interest in the psychology of religious conversion. Then, following Leuba's inductive model in 1896, Starbuck presented the first attempt at a typology of conversion, in 1897, while in 1899, Coe determined the role of temperament therein. By 1904, with G. Tawney's investigation into the age of conversion, there

46 W. H. Burnham, "The Study of Adolescence"; A. H. Daniels, "The New Life: A Study on Regeneration"; E. D. Starbuck, "A Study of Conversion"; "Some Aspects of Religious Growth"; and Psychology of Religion; E. P. Hammond, Early Conversion, New York, J. S. Ogilvie, Publishing Co., 1901, 232 pp. (hereafter cited as Early Conversion); G. A. Tawney, "The Period of Conversion", Psychological Review, 11, 1904, pp. 210-16 (hereafter cited as "The Period of Conversion"); E. S. Ames, The Psychology of Religious Experience, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910, Chapters 13 and 14 deal with conversion. See pp. 236-75 (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religious Experience).

were three studies focusing specifically on particular issues of conversion.

In 1900, Coe presented the first in a long line of general studies on the psychology of religion to include important theorization on conversion. Only a decade later did E. S. Ames and J. H. Leuba resume this trend, which is now quite common. Coe himself published a second text of this type in 1916.⁴⁷ By 1901, there emerged a series of popular studies of conversion, beginning with that of E. P. Hammond. Those of G. B. Cutten, G. Jackson, and E. H. Begbie followed rapidly.⁴⁸ Though these studies are mostly edifying, their borrowings from the basic orientations render them both appealing and authoritative to the layman.

Following James's seminal theories of religious

47 G. A. Coe, Spiritual Life; E. S. Ames, Psychology of Religious Experience; J. H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion; Its Origin, Function, and Future, New York, AMS Press, 1969, (originally published in 1912), 271 pp. (hereafter cited as A Psychological Study of Religion). Though this study does not contain a specific study of conversion, it is nevertheless of great merit for the psychology of religion in general because of its pioneer status. G. A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion, see Chapter IX, pp. 152-74.

48 E. P. Hammond, Early Conversion; G. B. Cutten, The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908, 497 pp. (hereafter cited as The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity); G. Jackson, The Fact of Conversion, New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1908, 236 pp. (hereafter cited as The Fact of Conversion); E. H. Begbie, Broken Earthenware; a Footnote in Narrative to Professor William James's "The Varieties of Religious Experience", New York, F. H. Revell Co., 1909, 280 pp. (hereafter cited as Broken Earthenware).

conversion, a few very significant critiques and historical studies were presented by J. B. Crozier, T. Flournoy, G. Berguer and J. B. Pratt.⁴⁹ The last three publications dwell largely on the basic principles underlying the first studies. In so doing, they also lay the foundations of the methodology of psychology of religion and give an accurate historical survey of its achievements.

Meanwhile, as early as 1902, the psychiatric implications of these studies on conversion are noted by J. B. Crozier and M. Prince.⁵⁰ Another group of psychologists focuses upon the American tradition in general, and on James's orientation in particular. The publications of R. B. Perry, G. Berguer, J. B. Pratt and E. S. Ames can be classified in this category.⁵¹

49 J. B. Crozier, "The Problem of Religious Conversion", Forthnightly Review, 72, New Series, 1902, pp. 1004-18 (hereafter cited as "The Problem of Religious Conversion"); T. Flournoy, "Les Principes de la psychologie religieuse"; G. Berguer, La Notion de la valeur, sa nature psychique, son importance en théologie, Genève, Imprimerie Romet, 1908, 365 pp. (hereafter cited as La Notion de la valeur). This book contains the earliest and most thorough historical evaluation of the psychology of religious conversion. The second section of the book pp. 185-292, deals entirely with the subject. A later publication, "Revue et bibliographie de psychologie religieuse", Archives de psychologie, 14, 1914, pp. 52-91 (hereafter cited as "Revue et bibliographie générale"), is also valuable for this historical research; J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion".

50 J. B. Crozier, "The Problem of Religious Conversion"; M. Prince, "The Psychology of Sudden Religious Conversion", Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1, 1906, pp. 42-54 (hereafter cited as "The Psychology of Sudden Religious Conversion").

51 R. B. Perry, "The Religious Experience", Monist,

Another significant trend of the period is the appearance of apologetical studies on religious conversion. The works of E. H. Begbie, H. N. Marshall, W. B. Greene, W. Lutoslawski and T. L. Mainage⁵² indicate the degree of concern that the psychological method not rob conversion of its supernatural character. These studies also show the need for a better understanding of those basic principles first enunciated by Flournoy in 1902 regarding the methodological agnosticism in the psychology of conversion and the physiological interpretation of the experience as well. Although these principles are still valid today, they are now either taken for granted or explained very differently.

14, 1904, pp. 752-66; G. Berguer, La Notion de la valeur; J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion".

52 E. H. Begbie, Broken Earthenware; H. N. Marshall, Conversion or the New Birth, London, National Council of Evangelical Free Churches, 1909, 284 pp. (hereafter cited as Conversion or the New Birth); W. B. Greene, "Has the Psychology of Religion Desupernaturalized Regeneration?", Bibliotheca Sacra, 67, 1910, pp. 177-203 (hereafter cited as "Has the Psychology of Religion Desupernaturalized Regeneration?"); W. Lutoslawski, "Psychologie des conversions", Rapport du VIe Congrès International de Psychologie, (tenu à Genève du 2 au 7 août 1909) 1910, pp. 707-16 (hereafter cited as "Psychologie des conversions"). The author's theory is based on his own experience of conversion. T. L. Mainage publishes two important books focusing particularly on an apologetical approach to the psychology of conversion. The first, Introduction à la psychologie des convertis, Paris, J. Gabalda, 1913, 129 pp., spells out a method (for studying conversion) which will defend the faith of the convert. La Psychologie de la conversion, Paris, Beauchesne, 1915, 433 pp., is an empirical study of conversion by means of a veritable fund of personal documents. Two factors appear particularly significant to the author: the experience of duality reported by numerous converts, and the plausibility of James's incubation theory of conversion. Mainage does not adhere to the principle of methodological agnosticism.

Finally, an important dimension of conversion examined during this early period is that of its relation to the socialization process. Two psychologists, E. S. Ames and G. A. Coe,⁵³ examine this aspect which will receive notable attention only in the 1960's and 1970's. Ames inquires into the interaction between the rise of religion in the individual and the genesis of social consciousness, a fact which Hall notes but does not explain while Coe notes the social functions of conversion.

Our discussion of the initial theories (Section 2(b)) identified 1904 as the end of the pioneer period during which three basic orientations emerged. We have now seen that subsequent work until 1918 simply developed trends arising from these orientations, but not initiating fundamentally new ones. The basis of selection of our three models is thus clear and we can now proceed to a survey of the next period.

4. Survey for the Years 1919-1946

The literature for the middle years of our survey is not nearly as abundant as that of the two other periods. Scholars usually attribute this fact to the methodological change which takes place in psychology at the time of the First World War. Homans is of the opinion that psychology of religion goes into a rather undramatic decline about this

⁵³ E. S. Ames, Psychology of Religious Experience; and G. A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion.

time, a fact he attributes to a cultural shift in self-understanding which produces theological existentialism and psychoanalysis. Moreover, these two movements seem to argue against the type of religion that psychologists of religion investigate. Furthermore, these years saw the rise of behaviorism with its opposition to functionalism, i.e., the Jamesian psychological approach which had lent itself so well to the study of religious conversion.⁵⁴ However, the trends of the pioneer period continued to develop and some new orientations emerged.

We first notice the continuation of the apologetical type of study of conversion. The publications of J. Huby, E. Hugon, J. Segond, W. Lutoslawski, (who rewrites his original theory printed in French in 1910) and M. Neeser⁵⁵ are important.

The next course taken is a new one. It deals with comparative studies, usually to determine if religious conversion as it is found in the Christian paradigm is also

54 P. Homans, Theology after Freud, pp. 99-100.

55 J. Huby, La conversion, Paris, Beauchesne, 1919, 119 pp.; E. Hugon, "La notion théologique de la psychologie de la conversion", Revue Thomiste, 24, 1919, pp. 226-41; J. Segond, "Le Problème psychologique de la grâce et de la conversion", Journal de psychologie normale et catholique, 1920, pp. 418-56 (hereafter cited as "Le Problème psychologique de la grâce et de la conversion"); W. Lutoslawski, "The Conversion of a Psychologist", Hibbert Journal, 21, 1923, pp. 697-710; M. Neeser, Du Protestantisme au Catholicisme - Du Catholicisme au Protestantisme: Essai de psychologie des conversions confessionnelles, Paris, Editions Victor Attinger, 1926, 236 pp.

found in other religious systems. Beginning with E. A. Annett in 1920, we find important studies in this field. There is particularly the monumental work of R. Allier, that of A. C. Underwood and that of A. D. Nock.⁵⁶

Also in 1920 appeared the tendency to theorize upon the psychiatric implications contained within religious conversion. The first reference to this trend comes from Carl G. Jung.⁵⁷ Though he is not directly concerned with conversion at this time, Jung does present, although very briefly, a significant theory of Paul's conversion. The next notable study along this line and one to contend with, comes from Sante De Sanctis, an Italian medical psychiatrist and professor at the University of Rome.⁵⁸ De Sanctis

56 E. A. Annett, Conversion in India: A Study in Religious Psychology, Calcutta, Christian Literature Society for India, 1920, 105 pp.; R. Allier, La Psychologie de la conversion chez les peuples non-civilisés, Paris, Payot, 1925, 2 vols., 585 pp. and 509 pp.; A. C. Underwood, Conversion: Christian and Non-Christian; a Comparative and Psychological Study, London, Allen & Unwin, 1925, 283 pp.; A. D. Nock, Conversion: The Old and New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo, New York, Oxford University Press, 1961, 309 pp.

57 C. J. Jung, "The Psychological Foundations of Belief in Spirits", in Proceedings of the Society for Physical Research, 31, 1920. Now available in The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche, vol. 8, of The Collected Works, (ed. by H. Read, M. Fordham, and G. Adler, tr. by R. F. C. Hull), Bollingen Series XX, New York, Pantheon, 1956, pp. 301-18.

58 H. Misiak and V. Staudt, Catholics in Psychology: A Historical Survey, with a foreword by E. G. Boring, Toronto, McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1954, pp. 127, 236, 231 (hereafter cited as Catholics in Psychology), give pertinent information about De Sanctis: "A special place among Italy's

published his theory in La conversione religiosa. Studio bio-psicologia, 1924. It was translated into English in 1927.⁵⁹

Whereas previous studies of this type merely attend to one or another psychiatric implication of conversion, De Sanctis develops a complete theory of conversion by means of psychoanalysis, a method supposedly alien to religion. His theory is built wholly upon personal, clinical case-studies of four clients, as well as on feedback from his students in psychology of religion. Since his theory is an original venture, it is accepted here as leading to a clinical model of religious conversion, the first new orientation since that of James.

Following De Sanctis's work, we note first of all, two articles centering upon the psychiatric implications of religious conversion, one from Sigmund Freud, the other from Anton T. Boisen. Freud reports on the case of a young medical doctor who experienced religious conversion in a dissecting room. Freud understands this experience to be an

pioneers in psychology is held by Sante De Sanctis (1863-1935), an eminent figure not only in psychology but also in psychiatry. Through his enthusiasm for the new science, his versatile activities, his writings, and his personal charm, he left a deep impression on Italian psychology." They also say that De Sanctis was awarded one of three autonomous chairs of psychology on the university level in 1906.

59 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion: a Bio-psychological Study, London, Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner, 1927, 324 pp. (hereafter cited as Religious Conversion).

obvious confirmation of his theory of the Oedipus Complex.⁶⁰ Boisen's article is of a different nature. Engaged in clinical pastoral work, he presents some far-reaching implications in the field of religion and mental health. Though he merely refers to conversion by way of example in a 1928 article, a book written in 1936, The Exploration of The Inner World,⁶¹ is a plea for a pastoral orientation to pathological experiences. His clue in this direction comes from his observation that persons suffering from acute mental illness (of non-organic origins) accompanied by panic and self-blame have a distinctly religious content with a definite similarity to conversion. Though his aim is to understand why so few mentally-ill persons are able to achieve constructive change (as he himself experiences it twice) out of the destructive forces within them, Boisen, as one of the founders of Clinical Pastoral Education,⁶² is also the first to examine religious conversion within this perspective. However, because it is not presented strictly

60 S. Freud, "A Religious Experience", (1928), in Standard Edition, vol. 21, 1961, pp. 169-72 (hereafter cited as "A Religious Experience").

61 A. T. Boisen, "The Psychiatric Approach to the Study of Religion", Religious Education, 23, 1928, pp. 201-7 (hereafter cited as "The Psychiatric Approach to the Study of Religion"); The Exploration of the Inner World: A Study of Mental Disorder and Religious Experience, Philadelphia, University of Philadelphia Press, 1936, 322 pp.

62 See P. E. Johnson, "Early Experiences in Clinical Pastoral Education", Journal of Religion and Health, 14, 1975, pp. 79-81.

speaking within a framework different from that of De Sanctis, Boisen's work is not accepted as leading to a basic model for the present research.

Other studies with clinical orientation are those of T. H. Hughes, W. L. Jones, E. Harms and J. G. McKenzie.⁶³

The Jamesian type of study which originated earlier was also pursued in this period and just as the clinical interest leads to a new model of conversion, so does this Jamesian interest. Indeed, following works of this type by J. B. Pratt, J. Howley, W. S. Bruce, C. C. Josey, and T. H. Hughes,⁶⁴ a study of conversion, Jamesian in origin, but

⁶³ T. H. Hughes, The New Psychology and Religious Experience, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1933, 232 pp. (hereafter cited as New Psychology and Religious Experience); W. L. Jones, A Psychological Study of Religious Conversion, London, Epworth Press, 1937, 397 pp. (hereafter cited as Religious Conversion); E. Harms, Psychology and Psychiatry of Conversion, Leiden, Holland, A. W. Sijthoff, 1939. Originally published in German as Psychologie und Psychiatrie der Conversion (hereafter cited as Psychology and Psychiatry of Conversion); J. G. McKenzie, Psychology, Psychotherapy and Evangelism, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1940, pp. 166-78 (hereafter cited as Psychology, Psychotherapy and Evangelism), in particular, where he applies his theory to conversion.

⁶⁴ J. B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness; a psychological study, New York, Macmillan Co., 1920, Hafner Publishing Co., 1971, 488 pp. (hereafter cited as The Religious Consciousness); J. Howley, Psychology and Mystical Experience, London, Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner, 1920, 275 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology and Mystical Experience). The author presents a critique of James's theory of incubation and a lengthy study of the Ignatian exercises as a preparation for his theory of conversion. Part I treats entirely of conversion. W. S. Bruce, The Psychology of Christian Life and Behaviour, Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1925, 335 pp. See pp. 89-114 in particular (hereafter cited as

truly original is presented by Maurilio T. L. Penido, a Brazilian, who studied and held a professorship in Fribourg, Switzerland. Though Penido began his career as a philosopher and neo-Thomist theologian, as his writings attest,⁶⁵ he also turned his attention to psychology of religion and focused his research on religious conversion. His interest and his rigor in this field are shown by at least two scholarly articles and one book, La Conscience religieuse; essai systématique, 1935.⁶⁶

Penido's academic approach clearly differentiates it from that of De Sanctis, and his insight into conversion can be seen as originating from James's proto-phenomenology.⁶⁷

The Psychology of Christian Life and Behaviour); C. C. Josey, The Psychology of Religion, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1927, 362 pp. Pp. 147-210 treat of conversion (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion); T. H. Hughes, New Psychology and Religious Experience.

65 M. T. L. Penido, La Méthode intuitive de M. Bergson: essai critique, Genève, Imprimerie Atar, 1918, 220 pp.; Le Rôle de l'analogie en théologie dogmatique, Paris, J. Vrin, 1931, 478 pp.; and Dieu dans le Bergsonisme, (Collection Questions disputées, 15), Desclée de Brouwer et Cie, 1934, 261 pp.

66 M. T. L. Penido, "Conversion, subconscience et surnaturel", Divus Thomas (Frib.), 1930, pp. 305-16 (hereafter cited as "Conversion, subconscience et surnaturel"); "Psychologie religieuse, phénoménologie et théologie", Revue Thomiste, mars-avril 1932, pp. 195-225 (hereafter cited as "Psychologie religieuse, phénoménologie et théologie"); La Conscience religieuse; essai systématique, Paris, P. Téqui, 1935, 250 pp. (hereafter cited as Conscience religieuse).

67 F. D. Duncan, The Contribution of William James to the Psychology of Religion, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1974, doctoral dissertation, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1974, p. 182 (hereafter cited as The

Indeed, Penido's originality in his theorizing upon religious conversion comes from his phenomenological framework as that best suited to analyzing the experience in its entirety--hence our choice of his work as leading to another of our basic models.

Two other Jamesian studies worthy of mention are those of W. L. Jones and P. E. Johnson.⁶⁸

We find no other basis for a new model within this period, although existing trends are pursued. We note studies on conversion within "psychologies of religion" such as those of J. B. Pratt, R. H. Thouless, F. S. Hickman, W. B. Selbie, C. J. Flower, C. C. Josey, T. H. Hughes, H. N. Wieman and R. N. Wieman, J. G. McKenzie and P. E. Johnson.⁶⁹

Contribution of William James), writes about this quality of James's theorizing as that most typical and most original of his work and adds: "He became the first to use a method of phenomenological psychology to examine religious experience. His method focused precisely on the concrete aspects of religious experience. [...] Recently, modern scholarship has discovered a strong, pioneering influence by James on the phenomenological psychology movement."

⁶⁸ W. L. Jones, Religious Conversion; P. E. Johnson, Psychology of Religion, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1945, rev. ed., 1959, 304 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion).

⁶⁹ J. B. Pratt, The Religious Consciousness, R. H. Thouless, Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, New York, The Macmillan Co., first ed. 1923; 2nd ed. 1956; rev. ed. 1971, 152 pp. (hereafter cited as Introduction to the Psychology of Religion); F. S. Hickman, Introduction to the Psychology of Religion, New York, Abingdon Press, 1926, pp. 226-67 (hereafter cited as Introduction to the Psychology of Religion); W. B. Selbie, The Psychology of Religion, London, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1926, 310 pp. See chapter X in particular (hereafter cited as Psychology of

A few psychologists also speak to the genetic or developmental dimension of religious conversion. In this line, we note the work of W. S. Bruce and L. W. Lang. The Wiemans present conversion entirely within a normative or developmental view.⁷⁰

During this period we also have some historical studies. Among the most prominent are those of W. B. Selbie, C. J. Flower, A. R. Uren, W. B. Thomas, and G. Berguer.⁷¹ Only one distinctly inductive study appears in the period. It comes from E. T. Clark, who attempts to repeat Starbuck's

Religion); C. J. Flower, An Approach to the Psychology of Religion, London, K. Paul, 1927, pp. 168-85 (hereafter cited as An Approach to the Psychology of Religion); C. C. Josey, Psychology of Religion; T. H. Hughes, New Psychology and Religious Experience; H. N. Wieman and R. N. Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion, Connecticut, Greenwood Press, (1935) 1971, 564 pp. (hereafter cited as Normative Psychology of Religion); J. G. McKenzie, Psychology, Psychotherapy, and Evangelism; P. E. Johnson, Psychology of Religion.

⁷⁰ W. S. Bruce, The Psychology of Christian Life and Behaviour; L. W. Lang, A Study of Conversion. An Inquiry into the Development of Christian Personality, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1931, 262 pp. (hereafter cited as A Study of Conversion); H. N. Wieman and R. N. Wieman, Normative Psychology of Religion.

⁷¹ W. B. Selbie, Psychology of Religion; C. J. Flower, An Approach to the Psychology of Religion; A. R. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology; A Study in the Psychology of Religion, (a critical exposition of the methods and results of representative investigators of the psychological phenomena of religion), Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1928, 279 pp. (hereafter cited as Recent Religious Psychology); W. B. Thomas, The Psychology of Conversion; with Special Reference to Saint Augustine, London, Allenson, 1935, 190 pp.; G. Berguer, Traité de psychologie de la religion, Lausanne, Payot, 1946, 367 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychologie de la religion).

empirical study thirty years later.⁷² Two other psychologists attend to the dimension of typology, M. T. L. Penido, and Sv. Norborg.⁷³

This summary of the scholarly work on religious conversion within the second period shows how it is characterized by two aspects: (1) history, in the aftermath of the First World War and (2) new methods in psychology, psychoanalysis and behaviorism as the first and second forces in psychology which, as Homans points out, led to theological existentialism.⁷⁴

5. Survey for the Years 1947-1977

The contemporary period is also characterized both by an historical factor--the sequels of the holocaust of the Second World War--and a methodological one, the humanistic shift or third force to emerge within psychology. This latter fact is of particular importance. Among the pacesetters of this third force we can single out Gordon W. Allport, Abraham H. Maslow, and Victor Frankl.

Allport is among the first to herald a distinctly

⁷² E. T. Clark, The Psychology of Religious Awakening, New York, The Macmillan Co., 1929, 170 pp.

⁷³ M. T. L. Penido, Conscience religieuse; Sv. Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience, Minneapolis, Augsburg Publishing House, 1937, 289 pp. (hereafter cited as Varieties of Christian Experience).

⁷⁴ P. Homans, Theology after Freud, pp. 99-100.

human psychology focusing upon man as a conscious being aware of his becoming as well as of his orientation toward the future. To Maslow, credit is given for the introduction of research on the healthy or self-actualized man, while Frankl, a victim himself of the Nazi concentration camps, argues that man can find a will to meaning by means of self-transcendence. Moreover, this humanistic shift is now nourishing a fourth force as well--transpersonal psychology.

The emergence of these new forces is due in part to the progress achieved from the earlier forces and in part to their limits. For, a distinct characteristic of the first and second forces is their perspectivistic approach, (they operate either from a subjective or an objective approach) which makes them only part-psychologies⁶. There thus arises an urgent need for comprehensive or holistic approaches which will allow research and theorization of the whole man by encompassing or undercutting the subjective and the objective stances. It is not our purpose here to elaborate on either the ideological or the methodological backgrounds of this interval, but mention of these factors will help in classifying the studies and sifting them for new orientations.

Whereas the middle years of the survey show a declining interest in the psychology of religious conversion, the contemporary ones reveal a renewed concern. Most of the earlier trends continue and give evidence of more precise

delineation of the various facets of conversion.

One of the first to be noted is the genetic or developmental dimension of conversion. In this line, we find important studies by G. W. Allport, R. V. Ozment, L. A. Ferman, R. N. Beck, V. V. Herr, A. Vergote, C. W. Christensen, J. Allison, T. M. Levin and L. S. Zegans.⁷⁵

Another is the historical analysis and the critique of one or more theories of conversion. The first two in this category are the unpublished dissertations of W. J. McKeefery, and W. F. Kenny.⁷⁶ Other studies we place in this

75 G. W. Allport, J. M. Gillespie, and J. Young, "The Religion of the Post-War College Student", Journal of Psychology, 25, 1948, pp. 3-33; R. V. Ozment, Conversion in Christian Education and Revivalism, doctoral dissertation, Boston University, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1956, 322 pp.; L. A. Ferman, Religious Change on a College Campus, doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1961, 400 pp.; R. N. Beck, "Hall's Genetic Psychology and Religious Conversion", Pastoral Psychology, 16, 1965, pp. 45-51 (hereafter cited as Hall's Genetic Psychology and Religious Conversion); C. W. Christensen, "Religious Conversion in Adolescence", Pastoral Psychology, 16, 1965, pp. 17-28; V. V. Herr, Religious Psychology, New York, Alba House, 1965, 277 pp. See particularly pp. 98-160 (hereafter cited as Religious Psychology); A. Vergote, Psychologie religieuse; Bruxelles, Charles Dessart, 1966, 338 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychologie religieuse); J. Allison, "Religious Conversion: Regression and Progression in an Adolescent Experience", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 8, 1969, pp. 23-38; T. M. Levin and L. S. Zegans, "Adolescent Identity Crisis and Religious Conversion: Implications for Psychotherapy", British Journal of Medical Psychology, 47, 1974, pp. 73-82 (hereafter cited as "Adolescent Identity Crisis and Religious Conversion").

76 W. J. McKeefery, A Critical Analysis of Quantitative Studies of Religious Awakening, unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York, Union Theological Seminary and Columbia Teachers College, 1951, 113 pp.; W. F. Kenny,

group are those of M. Argyle, Y. M. Congar, D. M. Lloyd-Jones, L. I. Granberg, J. V. Drakeford, W. H. Clark, J. Allison, I. Ramage, and M. Glenn.⁷⁷

The Jamesian style of theorizing on conversion is carried on in the studies of G. W. Allport, L. W. Grensted, W. H. Clark, W. E. Oates, and G. E. W. Scobie.⁷⁸ Also noted

Theories of Religious Conversion Among English-Speaking Psychologists.

⁷⁷ M. Argyle, Religious Behaviour, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, 196 pp.; Y. M. Congar, "The Idea of Conversion", Thought, 23, 1958, pp. 5-20 (hereafter cited as "The Idea of Conversion"); D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual, London, Inter-Varsity Press, 1959, 40 pp. (hereafter cited as Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual); L. I. Granberg, "Some Issues in the Psychology of Christian Conversion", Reformed Review, 15, 1962, pp. 1-27 (hereafter cited as "Some Issues"); J. W. Drakeford, Psychology in Search of a Soul, Nashville, Broadman Press, 1964, 301 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology in Search of a Soul); W. H. Clark, "William James: Contribution to the Psychology of Religious Conversion", Pastoral Psychology, 16, 1965, pp. 29-36 (hereafter cited as "William James: Contribution to the Psychology of Religious Conversion"); J. Allison, "Recent Empirical Studies of Conversion Experiences", Pastoral Psychology, 17, 1966, pp. 21-34 (hereafter cited as "Recent Empirical Studies of Conversion Experiences"); I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1967, 269 pp. (hereafter cited as Battle for the Free Mind); M. Glenn, "Religious Conversion and the Mystical Experience", Psychiatric Quarterly, 44, 1970, pp. 636-51 (hereafter cited as "Religious Conversion and the Mystical Experience").

⁷⁸ G. W. Allport, The Individual and his Religion, New York, Macmillan, 1950, 170 pp. (hereafter cited as The Individual and his Religion); L. W. Grensted, The Psychology of Religion, London, Oxford University Press, 1952, 181 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion); W. H. Clark, The Psychology of Religion, New York, Macmillan, 1958, 485 pp. See pp. 53-257 (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion); W. E. Oates, The Psychology of Religion, Waco, Texas, Word Books, 1973, 291 pp. See pp. 66-110 particularly (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion);

very clearly is a recurrence of the practice of investigating religious conversion within a general examination of the psychology of religion. We see this continued by the following: G. W. Allport, L. W. Grensted, M. Ostow and B. A. Scharfstein, W. H. Clark, L. Linn and L. W. Schwartz, J. V. Drakeford, V. V. Herr, A. Vergote, W. E. Oates, and G. E. W. Scobie.⁷⁹

As we have seen, the trend based on the psychiatric or clinical approach to conversion started in 1902 by James was given renewed impetus by De Sanctis. It is from further development that the last truly original theory of conversion before the seventies evolves. Indeed, the first study in this group, that of William Walters Sargant in 1951,⁸⁰ already presents signs of its emergence. Other important

G. E. W. Scobie, "Types of Christian Conversion", Journal of Behavioural Science, 1973, 1, pp. 265-71 (hereafter cited as "Types of Christian Conversion").

⁷⁹ G. W. Allport, The Individual and his Religion; L. W. Grensted, Psychology of Religion; M. Ostow and B. A. Scharfstein, The Need to Believe: The Psychology of Religion, New York, International Universities Press, 1954, 162 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion); W. H. Clark, Psychology of Religion; L. Linn and L. W. Schwartz, Psychiatry and Religious Experience, New York, Random House, 1958, 307 pp. See pp. 23-79 (hereafter cited as Psychiatry and Religious Experience); J. V. Drakeford, Psychology in Search of a Soul; V. V. Herr, Religious Psychology; A. Vergote, Psychologie religieuse; W. E. Oates, Psychology of Religion; G. E. W. Scobie, Psychology of Religion, London & Sydney, B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1975, 189 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology of Religion).

⁸⁰ W. W. Sargant, "The Mechanism of Conversion", British Medical Journal, 2, 1951, pp. 311-16 (hereafter cited as "Conversion").

studies which intervene are those of A. M. Tiebout, A. T. Boisen, L. Salzman, M. Ostow and B. A. Scharfstein.⁸¹

Then, in 1957, Sargant, a British physician, psychiatrist, and prolific writer, published his revolutionary theory on religious conversion in his book, Battle for the Mind,⁸² following experiences with subjects exposed to the horrors of the Second World War. Reviewers of this book are unanimous in witnessing both to the impact of the theory and to its originality. In fact, they consider it diversely as "the first truly original piece of theorizing on the subject since the Varieties",⁸³ a reductionistic theory and "a rape of the mind,"⁸⁴ "a fascinating, readable, and suggestive

81 H. M. Tiebout, "Conversion as a Psychological Phenomenon" (treatment of the Alcoholic), Pastoral Psychology, 13, 1951, pp. 28-34; A. T. Boisen, "The Genesis and Significance of Mystical Identification in Cases of Mental Disorder", Psychiatry, 15, 1952, pp. 287-96 (hereafter cited as "The Genesis and Significance of Mystical Identification in Cases of Mental Disorder"); L. Salzman, "The Psychology of Religious and Ideological Conversion", Psychiatry, 16, 1953, pp. 177-87 (hereafter cited as "The Psychology of Religious and Ideological Conversion"); "The Psychology of Regressive Religious Conversion", The Journal of Pastoral Care, 8, 1954, pp. 61-75 (hereafter cited as "The Psychology of Regressive Conversion"); M. Ostow and B. A. Scharfstein, Psychology of Religion.

82 W. W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind: A Physiology of Conversion and Brain-Washing, London, Pan Books Ltd., 1957, rev. ed., 1959, 218 pp. (hereafter cited as Battle for the Mind).

83 W. H. Clark, "William James: Contributions to the Psychology of Religious Conversion", p. 29.

84 J. G. McKenzie, quoted by D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual, pp. 3-4.

study of religion",⁸⁵ "the most startling theory of religious conversion in recent days",⁸⁶ "an extremely dangerous book",⁸⁷ and a work of "positive value".⁸⁸ Indeed, Sargant's theory is startling for at least two reasons. First, until its publication, behaviorism (the only truly American differential psychology) was not thought appropriate to the examination of religious conversion. The other reason is the far-reaching implications of this unusual theory.

Sargant uses a behavioristic approach to arrive at a physiological theory of religious conversion. Although it is borne out of a clinical concern, it remains nevertheless, very different from that of De Sanctis, and is accepted here as leading to another basic model, the last to appear before 1970, according to our exploration of the literature.

Additional studies focusing on the psychiatric implications of conversion originate from F. C. Cesarman, L. Linn and L. W. Schwartz, T. C. Brock, E. Harms and

85 W. H. Clark, H. N. Maloney, J. Daane, A. R. Tippett, with a foreword by L. E. Travis, Religious Experience: Its Nature and Function in the Human Psyche, Springfield, Illinois, Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1973, p. 17 (hereafter cited as Religious Experience).

86 J. W. Drakeford, Psychology in Search of a Soul, p. 243.

87 D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual, p. 3.

88 Ibid., see pp. 32-40.

C. W. Christensen.⁸⁹ We have as well, three significant articles from J. Allison, and others from W. E. Oates, L. Salzman, G. Sedman and G. Hopkinson, C. M. Spellman et al., and T. M. Levin and L. S. Zegans.⁹⁰

The pastoral orientation to religious conversion is particularly examined by A. M. Tiebout, A. T. Boisen, E. Routley, D. M. Lloyd-Jones, O. Brandon, S. Hiltner,

⁸⁹ F. C. Cesarman, "Religious Conversion of Sex Offenders during Psychotherapy"; Journal of Pastoral Care, 11, 1957, pp. 25-35; L. Linn and L. W. Schwartz, Psychiatry and Religious Experience; T. C. Brock, "Implications of Conversion and Magnitude of Cognitive Dissonance", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, I, 1962, pp. 198-203 (hereafter cited as "Implications of Conversion and Magnitude of Cognitive Dissonance"); E. Harms, "Ethical and Psychological Implications of Religious Conversion", Review of Religious Research, 3, 1962, pp. 122-31; C. W. Christensen, "Religious Conversion", Archives of General Psychiatry, 9, 1963, pp. 207-12.

⁹⁰ J. Allison, "Recent Empirical Studies of Religious Conversion Experience"; "Religious Conversion: Regression and Progression in an Adolescent Experience"; and "Adaptive Regression and Intense Religious Experiences", in Beit-Hallahmi, ed., Research in Religious Behavior: Selected Readings, Monterey, California, Brooks/Cole Publishing Co., 1973, pp. 308-32 (hereafter cited as "Adaptive Regression and Intense Religious Experiences"); W. E. Oates, "Conversion and Mental Health", Pastoral Psychology, 17-18, 1966, pp. 43-48 (hereafter cited as "Conversion and Mental Health"); L. Salzman, "Types of Religious Conversion", Pastoral Psychology, 17-18, 1966, pp. 8-20 (hereafter cited as "Types of Religious Conversion"); G. Sedman and G. Hopkinson, "The Psychopathology of Mystical and Religious Conversion Experiences in Psychiatric Patients", Confinia Psychiatrica, 9, 1966, pp. 1-19; G. E. Allison, "Psychiatric Implications of Religious Conversion", Canadian Psychiatric Association Journal, 12, 1967, pp. 55-61; M. Glenn, "Religious Conversion and the Mystical Experience"; C. M. Spellman, G. D. Baskett and D. Byrne, "Manifest anxiety as a Contributing Factor in Religious Conversion", Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 36, 1971, pp. 245-47; T. M. Levin and L. S. Zegans, "Adolescent Identity Crisis and Religious Conversion".

W. E. Oates, and P. E. Morentz.⁹¹

With H. L. Zetterberg's article in 1952,⁹² the sociological implications of conversion are again investigated, but only with H. Carrier and A. Vergote,⁹³ is this dimension examined seriously and accepted as part of the conversion process. A. Billette's 1967 survey demonstrates that the conversion of a Christian from Catholicism to Protestantism or inversely implies behavioral change only and not attitudinal change. His conclusion is, moreover, that such changes would be better qualified as changes of church affiliation rather than as religious conversions.⁹⁴

91 A. M. Tiebout, "Conversion as a Psychological Phenomenon"; A. T. Boisen, "The Genesis and Significance of Mystical Identification in Cases of Mental Disorder"; E. Routley, The Gift of Conversion, London, Lutterworth Press, 1957, 144 pp. (hereafter cited as The Gift of Conversion); D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual; O. Brandon, Battle for the Soul: Aspects of Religious Conversion, London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1960, 96 pp. (hereafter cited as Battle for the Soul); S. Hiltner, "Toward a Theology of Conversion in the Light of Psychology", Pastoral Psychology, 17-18, 1966, pp. 35-42 (hereafter cited as "Toward a Theology of Conversion in the Light of Psychology"); W. E. Oates, "Conversion and Mental Health"; P. E. Morentz, "A Psychiatrist Theologian Looks at 'Religious Conversion'", Lutheran Forum, May 1969, pp. 4-8.

92 H. L. Zetterberg, "The Religious Conversion as a Change of Social Roles", Sociology and Social Research, 36, 1952, pp. 159-66.

93 H. Carrier, Psycho-sociologie de l'appartenance religieuse, Rome, Presses de l'Université Grégorienne, 1960, 314 pp. (hereafter cited as Psycho-sociologie de l'appartenance religieuse); A. Vergote, Psychologie religieuse.

94 A. Billette, "Conversion and Consonance", Review of Religious Research, 8, 1967, pp. 100-4.

T. S. Lebra, J. Seggar and P. Kunz⁹⁵ also examine this sociological aspect of conversion, and with Jean-Claude Sagne and André Billette,⁹⁶ we have two new models of conversion arising from this perspective. Sagne investigates religious conversion from a socio-psychological approach using psychoanalysis, and finds conversion emanating from conflict at the level of ethics. Billette's psychosociological inquiry into conversion leads him to investigate conversion at the level of discourse. His theory into the role of discourse in conversion is truly original. The last member of this group is R. W. Wilson,⁹⁷ who discovers that modeling roles in conversion depend upon the socialization process.

A subgroup of this sociological dimension of conversion has to do with conversion to a cult. We note in this regard the works of J. Lofland and R. Stark,

95 T. S. Lebra, "Religious Conversion as a Breakthrough for Transculturation: A Japanese Sect in Hawaii", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 9, 1970, pp. 181-96 (hereafter cited as "Religious Conversion as a Breakthrough for Transculturation"); J. Seggar and P. Kunz, "Conversion: Evaluation of a Step-Like Process for Problem-Solving", Review of Religious Research, 13, 1972, pp. 178-84.

96 J. C. Sagne, Conflit, changement, conversion, Paris, Cerf-Desclée, 1974, 175 pp.; A. Billette, Récits et réalités d'une conversion, Montréal, Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1975, 235 pp.

97 R. W. Wilson, A Social-Psychological Study of Religious Experience with Special Emphasis on Christian Conversion, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Florida, University of Florida, 1976, 530 pp. (hereafter cited as A Social-Psychological Study of Religious Experience).

T. S. Lebra, and R. A. Walsh.⁹⁸ Besides, a recent number of the American Behavioral Scientist is devoted entirely to the study of conversion and commitment to contemporary religious cults. Valuable research is presented by J. Lofland, J. T. Richardson and Mary Stewart, R. W. Balch and D. Taylor, and others.⁹⁹

An interesting group of studies centers on the fact and the nature of conversion. We note works from P. B. Maves, J. Pitts, W. Hill, E. Routley, R. V. McCann and O. Brandon.¹⁰⁰ Other studies in this line are those of

⁹⁸ J. Lofland and R. Stark, "Becoming a World-Saver: A Theory of Conversion to a Deviant Perspective", American Sociological Review, 30, 1965, pp. 862-75; Doomsday Cult: A Study of Conversion, Proselytization, and Maintenance of Faith, Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1966, 276 pp.; T. S. Lebra, "Logic of Salvation: The Case of a Japanese Sect in Hawaii", International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 16, 1969, pp. 45-53; R. A. Walsh, "Moonies--Religious Converts or Psychic Victims?", America, May 14, 1977, pp. 438-40 (hereafter cited as "Moonies--Religious Converts or Psychic Victims?").

⁹⁹ The following articles are all from the American Behavioral Scientist, 20, 1977: J. Lofland, "'Becoming a World-Saver' Revisited", pp. 805-18; J. T. Richardson and M. Stewart, "Conversion Process Models and the Jesus Movement", pp. 819-38; R. W. Balch and D. Taylor, "Seekers and Saucers: The Role of the Cultic Milieu in Joining a UFO Cult", pp. 839-60; D. Anthony, T. Robbins, M. Doucas, T. E. Curtis, "Patients and Pilgrims: Changing Attitudes Toward Psychotherapy of Converts to Eastern Mysticism", pp. 861-86; F. R. Lynch, "Toward a Theory of Conversion and Commitment to the Occult", pp. 887-908; R. B. Simmonds, "Conversion or Addiction: Consequences of Joining a Jesus Movement Group", pp. 909-24.

¹⁰⁰ P. B. Maves, "Conversion: A Behavioral Category", Review of Religious Research, 5, 1953, pp. 41-48 (hereafter cited as "Conversion: A Behavioral Category"); J. Pitts, "Conversion: Its Nature and Necessity", Religion

A. Z. Muthumalai, J. P. Kildahl, J. B. Tamney, J. M. Buscarlet, E. H. Furgeson, J. O. S. Huntington, D. A. Thangasamay, B. E. Jones, M. Laski, R. Travisano, W. H. Clark, R. L. Austin and M. Heirich.¹⁰¹

in Life, 22, 1953, pp. 261-72; W. Hill, "The Psychology of Conversion", Pastoral Psychology, 6, 1955, pp. 43-46; E. Routley, The Gift of Conversion; R. V. McCann, The Nature and the Varieties of Religious Change, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Harvard University, 1954, 453 pp. (hereafter cited as The Nature and the Varieties of Religious Change); R. V. McCann, "An Empirical Study of Religious Change", Acta Psychologica, 15, 1959, pp. 510-11 (hereafter cited as "An Empirical Study of Religious Change"); O. Brandon, Battle for the Soul.

101 A. Z. Muthumalai, "La Psychologie de la conversion", Le Christ au Monde, 1, 1960, pp. 73-82; J. P. Kildahl, "Religious Conversions", Dialog, 2, 1963, pp. 240-41; J. B. Tamney, An Exploratory Study of Religious Conversion, doctoral dissertation, Cornell University, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1963, 229 pp.; J. M. Buscarlet, Chemins intérieurs: psychologie de la grâce, Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1965, 174 pp.; E. H. Furgeson, "The Definition of Religious Conversion", Pastoral Psychology, 16, 1965, pp. 8-16 (hereafter cited as "The Definition of Religious Conversion"); J. O. S. Huntington, "Conversion", Holy Cross Magazine, 76, 1965, pp. 3-7; D. A. Thangasamy, "The Process of Conversion", Indian Journal of Theology, 16, 1967, pp. 204-10; B. E. Jones, Conversion; M. Laski, "Conversion", in R. Cavendish, ed., Man, Myth and Magic: An Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Supernatural, New York, Marshall Cavendish Corporation, 1970, vol. 4, pp. 513-15 (hereafter cited as "Conversion"); R. Travisano, "Alternation and Conversion as Qualitatively Different Transformations", pp. 594-606, in G. P. Stone and M. Faberman, eds., Social Psychology Through Symbolic Interaction, Waltham, Mass., Ginn-Blaisdell, 1970; W. H. Clark, "Intense Religious Experience", in Research in Religious Development: A Comprehensive Handbook, M. P. Strommen, ed., New York, Hawthorn Books Inc., 1971, pp. 521-50; R. L. Austin, "Empirical Adequacy of Lofland's Conversion Model", Review of Religious Research, 18, 1977, pp. 282-87 (hereafter cited as "Empirical Adequacy of Lofland's Conversion Model"); M. Heirich, "Change of Heart: A Test of some Widely Held Theories about Religious Conversion", American Journal of Sociology, 83, 1977, pp. 653-80.

The studies in the remaining classifications are less numerous than the preceding. We note one study which can be properly designated as popular, that of E. S. Jones.¹⁰² A few studies investigate the role and the presence of personality variables in religious conversion. Along these lines we have the important studies of J. P. Kildahl, G. Stanley, F. J. Roberts, and R. W. Wilson.¹⁰³ R. O. Ferm presents a Starbuckian inductive study, and R. V. McCann reports on an empirical one.¹⁰⁴

We then note the beginning of a new trend in studies stemming from the behavioristic implications of Sargant's theory of conversion as is evident in the works of D. M. Lloyd-Jones, D. A. Windemiller, J. D. Frank, T. C. Brock,

¹⁰² E. S. Jones, Conversion, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1959, 253 pp.

¹⁰³ J. P. Kildahl, Personality Correlates of Sudden Religious Converts Contrasted with Persons of Gradual Religious Development, unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1957, 152 pp.; "Religious Conversions"; "The Personalities of Sudden Religious Converts", Pastoral Psychology, 16, 1965, pp. 37-44 (hereafter cited as "The Personalities of Sudden Religious Converts"); G. Stanley, "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Religious Conversion", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 4, 1964, pp. 60-63 (hereafter cited as "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Religious Conversion"); F. J. Roberts, "Some Psychological Factors in Religious Conversion", British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 4, 1965, pp. 185-87 (hereafter cited as "Some Psychological Factors in Religious Conversion"); R. W. Wilson, A Social-Psychological Study of Religious Conversion.

¹⁰⁴ R. O. Ferm, The Psychology of Christian Conversion, New York, Westwood, 1959, 251 pp. (hereafter cited as The Psychology of Christian Conversion); R. V. McCann, "An Empirical Study of Religious Change".

I. Ramage, W. C. Tremmel and R. A. Walsh.¹⁰⁵

Another dimension examined is that of the typology of conversion. We note in particular the investigations of C. Baudoin, and R. O. Ferm. L. Salzman distinguishes between the progressive and the regressive types, while A. Vergote discloses five types of truly religious conversion by means of a phenomenological analysis. We have as well the studies of W. C. Tremmel, G. E. W. Scobie, that of W. H. Clark, who in his typology incorporates the drug-induced religious conversion, and that of R. L. Austin, who spells out the conditions for total conversion.¹⁰⁶

Two studies deal with general issues in conversion,

¹⁰⁵ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual; D. A. Windemiller, The Psychodynamics of Change in Religious Conversion and Communist Brainwashing: With Particular Reference to the 18th Century Evangelical Revival and the Chinese Thought Control Movement, doctoral dissertation, Boston University, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1960, 176 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychodynamics of Change); J. D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1961, 282 pp. (hereafter cited as Persuasion and Healing); T. C. Brock, "Implications of Conversion and Magnitude of Cognitive Dissonance"; I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind; W. C. Tremmel, "The Converting Choice", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 10, 1971, pp. 17-25 (hereafter cited as W. C. Tremmel, "The Converting Choice"); R. A. Walsh, "Moonies--Religious Converts or Psychic Victims?".

¹⁰⁶ C. Baudoin, Psychanalyse du symbole religieux, Paris, Fayard, 1957, pp. 57-75 (hereafter cited as Psychanalyse du symbole religieux); R. O. Ferm, The Psychology of Christian Conversion; L. Salzman, "Types of Religious Conversion"; A. Vergote, Psychologie religieuse; W. C. Tremmel, "The Converting Choice"; W. H. Clark, Religious Experience; R. L. Austin, "Empirical Adequacy of Lofland's Conversion Model".

one by L. I. Granberg, and another by J. R. Scroggs and W. G. T. Douglas.¹⁰⁷ V. V. Herr continues in a sense, the work begun in the comparative studies by basing his theory on data from a Japanese convert.¹⁰⁸ We also note F. Colborn's original interdisciplinary approach in which he compares the understanding of conversion in psychology with that in theology by analyzing Carl Roger's theory of change and the sanctification process found in the Tridentine Church. Barrie Ryan conducts a similar study by comparing conversion as it occurs in Gestalt therapy with that occurring in the Christian experience.¹⁰⁹ The issue of suddenness in conversion is again examined by J. Allison, H. R. Bagwell, R. M. Boyer, K. Dewhurst and A. W. Beard.¹¹⁰

107 L. I. Granberg, "Some Issues"; J. R. Scroggs and W. G. T. Douglas, "Issues in the Psychology of Religious Conversion", Journal of Religion and Health, 6, 1967, pp. 204-16 (hereafter cited as "Issues in the Psychology of Religious Conversion").

108 V. V. Herr, Religious Psychology.

109 F. Colborn, "Psychotherapy and Conversion", American Ecclesiastical Review, 167, 1973, pp. 75-90; B. Ryan, "The Lost Self Changes: Gestalt and Christian Concepts of Rebirth", Journal of Religion and Health, 15, 1976, pp. 247-70 (hereafter cited as "The Lost Self Changes").

110 J. Allison, "Adaptive Regression and Intense Religious Experiences"; H. R. Bagwell, "The Abrupt Religious Conversion Experience", Journal of Religion and Health, 8, 1969, pp. 163-78 (hereafter cited as "The Abrupt Religious Conversion Experience"); R. M. Boyer, Sudden Human Change, doctoral dissertation, Northwestern University, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1970, 135 pp. (hereafter cited as Sudden Human Change); K. Dewhurst and A. W. Beard, "Sudden Religious Conversions in Temporal Lobe Epilepsy", British Journal of Psychiatry, 117, 1970, pp. 497-507.

Finally, we note another original investigation of religious conversion, this time focusing on the implications of growth. Of interest in this development is the study of B. Saler who focuses on self-aggrandizement, and that of T. R. Sarbin and N. Adler, who examine conversion as a self-reconstituting process. J. Allison proves that even apparently regressive experiences of conversion can be adaptive measures in the service of the ego, while T. M. Levin and L. S. Zegans point out the tendency in conversion to define and to transcend oneself.¹¹¹ But it is Robert N. Doran who produces the most original theory in this line. Doran uses Lonergan's theoretical understanding of conversion comprising the religious, the moral, and the intellectual conversions.¹¹² He demonstrates that Lonergan's model must be complemented by a psychic conversion in order to have it embrace the total person. Doran's argument is founded on Jung's individuation process which is indeed a growth or self-actualizing model.

Our survey of this third period clearly reveals

¹¹¹ B. Saler, "Religious Conversion and Self-Aggrandizement: A Guatemalan Case", Practical Anthropology, 12, 1965, pp. 107-14; T. R. Sarbin and N. Adler, "Self-Reconstitution Processes: A Preliminary Report", Psychoanalytic Review, 57, 1970-71, pp. 599-616; J. Allison, "Adaptive Regression and Intense Religious Experiences"; T. M. Levin and L. S. Zegans, "Adolescent Identity Crisis and Religious Conversion".

¹¹² R. N. Doran, "Psychic Conversion", The Thomist, 41, 1977, pp. 200-36.

significant issues for our study of religious conversion. We note again the emergence of only one original model between the Second World War and 1970, the behavioral or physiological one due to W. W. Sargant.

The seventies yield at least three more. Sagne and Billette's models appear as distinct although both articulated within a psycho-sociological dimension. Sagne demonstrates how the ethical moment is the ground or stage where the playing out of conversion occurs. Billette brings out the revolutionary power of discourse by obviating a mere external analysis of the conversion discourse which leads only to commemorative and explicative needs; he shifts to an internal analysis which focuses upon the anticipatory and performative functions of that discourse. Finally, Robert Doran's theory of the psychic conversion is perhaps the most significant as it points to the great shift taking place at the level of man's awareness of interiority. Indeed, with the appropriation of his psyche man can become whole again.

6. Summary

Besides indicating general trends our purpose in presenting this historical survey is to justify our choice of setting up six models, namely, Hall's genetic model formulated in 1891-1904; Leuba's inductive model in 1897; James's radical-empirical model in 1902; De Sanctis's psychoanalytical model in 1927; Penido's phenomenological

model in 1935; and Sargant's physiological model in 1951-57. Others might have made their choice in slightly different fashion, but we believe we have satisfactorily pointed to the originality and the fundamental nature of the theories selected and trust that our detailed exploration and evaluation of each of them in the following chapters will further justify this.

CHAPTER II

HALL'S GENETIC MODEL: 1891-1904

Granville Stanley Hall (1844-1924), a man with unusual vitality and a flair for establishing laboratories, founding journals, and initiating disciplines, leaves no one in doubt about his academic achievements.¹ His output and his contributions as a pioneer psychologist² deserve to be mentioned before an examination of his theory of religious conversion is undertaken.

Hall obtained the first Ph.D. in psychology under William James at Harvard in 1878.³ He was Wundt's first American student in 1879, and witnessed the opening of the

1 E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 2nd ed., 1950, pp. 517-24 (hereafter cited as A History of Experimental Psychology). On p. 517, Boring adds: "He was a 'founder' if there ever was one in psychology".

2 H. S. Langfeld, "Fifty Volumes of the Psychological Review", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, p. 143, says Hall was considered as "the prime mover of the new psychology in America." See also J. McKeen Cattell, "The Founding of the Association and the Hopkins and Clark Laboratories", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, p. 63 (hereafter cited as "The Founding"), where he compares Hall with James saying: "He and James were giants in the land."

3 R. S. Woodworth, "The Adolescence of American Psychology", p. 17; H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology: An Overview, New York, Grune & Stratton, 1966, pp. 137-38 (hereafter cited as History of Psychology), mention that this degree is awarded from the Harvard philosophy department. See also E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, p. 520.

first formal laboratory of psychology in Leipzig that year.⁴ Hall founded the first formal laboratory of psychology in America, at Johns Hopkins University in 1883,⁵ and he inaugurated the American Journal of Psychology in 1887.⁶ In 1888, he was appointed the first president of Clark University (a post he maintained for some thirty years)⁷, and in 1892, he was named first president of the American Psychological Association.⁸ Hall also opened the first center for child study at Clark, and set up the National Association for the Study of the Child in 1893.⁹ Moreover, he was the

4 H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology, p. 138.

5 E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, p. 520; S. C. Fisher, "The Psychological and Educational Work of Granville Stanley Hall", American Journal of Psychology, 36, 1925, p. 3 (hereafter cited as "The Psychological and Educational Work of G. S. Hall"). The author says Hall founded it in 1882.

6 E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, p. 520; G. S. Hall, Life and Confessions, p. 227, says it was "the first in its field in English". He published the Pedagogical Seminary in 1891 (which still exists as the Journal of Genetic Psychology), and the American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education in 1904, which lasted until 1914.

7 E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, p. 520.

8 R. S. Woodworth, "The Adolescence of American Psychology", p. 17; H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology, p. 139; W. H. Burnham, "The Man, G. Stanley Hall", Psychological Review, 32, 1925, p. 89: "A year ago tonight one of the most productive psychologists of the world was the newly elected President of this Association, G. Stanley Hall."

9 H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology, p. 138. See also Hall's article "Child Study at Clark"

first to initiate psychological pedagogy,¹⁰ and historians generally consider him as the founder of the psychology of religion.¹¹ Indeed, one historian, J. C. Flugel, singles him out as the first American psychologist to examine religious phenomena.¹²

While these personal achievements are, on the whole, phenomenal, we are particularly concerned here with Hall's initiation of psychological pedagogy and psychology of religion.

It is the fusion of these interests into a theory of development of the religious attitude in the child and in the adolescent which is the backdrop of his evolving theory of conversion. In exploring this theory we shall draw mainly from two publications: the essay printed in 1891 as "The Moral and Religious Training of Children and Adolescents", and the longer version of the same entitled, "The Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", appearing as a chapter of his two-volume work on adolescence.¹³ We proceed now to

University", American Journal of Psychology, 14, 1903, pp. 96-106, for other achievements.

10 H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology, p. 139.

11 P. L. Harriman, The New Dictionary of Psychology, New York, Philosophical Library, 1947, p. 288; J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 436; G. Berguer, "Psychologie religieuse normale", p. 23.

12 J. C. Flugel, A Hundred Years of Psychology, p. 118.

13 See Chapter 1, footnotes 1, 4, and 13.

an exploration and an evaluation of the genetic model of religious conversion.

1. The Exploration of the Theory

a) The Approach

The approach in both studies just referred to is identical. The same presuppositions, the same view of man in his humanness and in his religiousness underlies them. One of Hall's major preoccupations at the time is to transform psychology by casting it in the major tenets of Darwinism. This, of course, presupposes an abiding interest in origins and conviction about developmental processes. Typical of his primary assumptions in this regard is the statement in the Preface to his Adolescence that "there are no finalities save formulae of development".¹⁴ The most pertinent explication of his understanding of the "recapitulation theory" upon which he builds his theory of conversion may be seen in the following paragraph:

Holding that the child and the race are each keys to the other, I have constantly suggested phy-
letic explanations of all degrees of probability.
Some of these, I think, have been demonstrated so
far as is now possible in this obscure and compli-
cated domain. [...] Realizing the limitations and
qualifications of the recapitulation theory in the
biologic field, I am now convinced that its psycho-
genetic applications have a method of their own, and
although the time has not yet come when any formu-
lations of these can have much value, I have done

14 G. S. Hall, Adolescence, p. viii.

the best I could with each instance as it arose. Along with the sense of the immense importance of further coordinating childhood and youth with the development of the race, has grown the conviction that only here can we hope to find true norms. [...] While individuals differ widely in not only the age but the sequence of the stages and repetition of racial history, a knowledge of nascent stages and the aggregate interests of different ages of life is the best safeguard against very many of the prevalent errors of education and of life.¹⁵

Many scholars have attempted to retrace the origins of this recapitulation theory which is the main tenet of Hall's psychological system. Robert E. Grinder states that it is now impossible to know who is responsible for alluding to "the idea that each individual retraces the historical record of his species development (phylogeny) in his own growth (ontogeny)".¹⁶ But David Elkind claims that Hall borrowed it from "the nineteenth-century biologist-artist Ernst Haeckel who, on the basis of Fritz Muller's embryological studies, contended that ontogeny was the epitome of phylogeny."¹⁷ Misiak and Sexton understand Hall's approach as an original view of man's life "not as a succession of mental states but rather as a product of years of biological

15 G. S. Hall, Adolescence, p. viii.

16 R. E. Grinder, "The Concept of Adolescence in the Genetic Psychology of G. Stanley Hall", Child Development, 40, 1969, p. 357 (hereafter cited as "Adolescence in the Genetic Psychology of G. Stanley Hall").

17 D. Elkind, "The Development of Religious Understanding in Children and Adolescents", in M. P. Strommen, ed., Research in Religious Development: A Comprehensive Handbook, New York, Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1971, p. 659.

development."¹⁸ Sarah C. Fisher is of the opinion that the recapitulation theory or psychonomic law is for Hall

an adaptation to the mental sphere of the concepts of biological evolution and the dependent doctrine of physical recapitulation, developed largely by Haeckel and Herbert Spencer. It assumes that the psychical life and its expressions in the individual develop from birth onward through a series of stages more or less closely corresponding to successive cycles of habits through which life and especially early man and his immediate ancestors are conceived to have passed.¹⁹

Although the origins of this recapitulation theory may remain obscure, Hall incorporates it into the first science of human development.

i) A Theory of Personality

Hall's genetic or evolutionary approach permeates his theory of personality as exemplified in the following statements:

The pupil should, and in fact naturally does, in a trite sense, repeat the course of the development of the race, and education is simply the expediting, shortening and normalizing of this course.²⁰

If a child's mental growth repeats the experience of the race, the idea of God is not flashed in upon the infant mind complete and vivid at first by any native intuitions.²¹


18 H. Misiak, and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology, p. 138.

19 S. C. Fisher, "The Psychological and Educational Work of G. S. Hall", p. 22.

20 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 198.

21 Ibid., p. 202.

The life of the mere individual ceases and that of the person, or better of the race, begins.²²

This preoccupation is also evident in the Adolescence. Such assumptions as "the child and the race are each keys to the other";²³ "reenforced by psychonomic recapitulatory impulses, the child can enter upon his full heritage";²⁴ and "the boy is fa  the man"²⁵ all stem from psychogenetic applications of the recapitulation theory which Hall borrows from biology.

These statements all allude to Hall's concern with a developmental view of man which is again evident in his examinations of the various stages of growth. In the 1891 essay, Hall traces a process beginning in infancy, proceeding to the kindergarten stage and the first years of school and leading to adolescence. The following affirmations in the Adolescence illustrate the same preoccupation: "man is rapidly changing"; "his soul is in a transition stage, and all that we can call progress is more and more rapid".²⁶

While never deviating from his concern with the developmental stages of growth, Hall's pedagogical theory is

22 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 206.

23 Id., Adolescence, p. viii.

24 Ibid., p. xi.

25 Ibid., p. x.

26 Ibid., p. viii.

guided by abiding humanistic concerns,²⁷ a fact he spells out himself much later in his Life and Confessions.

The true psychologist born and bred, yearns with all his heart for a deeper understanding of man and of all his psychic life, past and present, normal and morbid, good and bad, at all stages of his life.²⁸

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Hall's humanism tends directly toward the religious aspect of man's growth. Besides indications of this-in such statements as "research is nothing less than a religion", and "the university is becoming the church of the future",²⁹

²⁷ J. McKeen Cattell, "The Founding", p. 63, remarks that Hall cares for "the human aspects of life" rather than "abstract quantitative measurements"; R. N. Beck, "Hall's Genetic Psychology and Religious Conversion", p. 46, says it is Hall's aim "to reinstate the individual into his true place in the world and to recover his health and wholeness". D. H. Meyer, "The Scientific Humanism of G. Stanley Hall", Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 11, 1971, p. 211 (hereafter cited as "The Scientific Humanism of G. Stanley Hall"), writes that "Hall had the largeness of mind to realize that a truly scientific psychology need not and ought not be permitted to reduce man to a moral nullity."

²⁸ G. S. Hall, Life and Confessions, p. 436.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 446, where he refers to the psychologist as the "humanist par excellence" and assesses psychology as providing "a better knowledge of man", which is the "greatest of all the great and many needs of the world to-day"; See D. H. Meyer, "The Scientific Humanism of G. Stanley Hall", pp. 210-11. The author is of the opinion that Hall is seeking a new theology in the new psychology. H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology, p. 137, where they relate that Hall obtained a divinity degree and did some preaching before moving over to psychology. See Hall's Life and Confessions, p. 362, where he states that the taboo placed upon the teaching of evolution by the church amounts to robbing the people of "the most stimulating of all cultural influences."

there is further evidence in autobiographical works of graduate students at Clark which state that studies of religious phenomena were encouraged there; indeed students with this interest, such as Leuba and Starbuck, were attracted there for this reason.

That this concern with the religious dimension flows directly from Hall's humanism can be seen in both his essays. In the earlier one he writes that religion is: "the popular culture of the highest ideal"; "a natural disposition"; performed in us by nature".³⁰ In the later essay, he holds religion to be "the most comprehensive kind of growth", and "the consummation of human development".³¹ It is noteworthy that Hall himself mentions that this humanistic approach is characteristic of the Bible, which in his view,

at the very least (it) expresses the result of the ripest human experience, the noblest tradition of humanity.³²

However, if Hall's approach to man is generally that of an optimistic humanist, there is another dimension of his view of man which is most important for his theory of religious conversion. It is his acknowledgment of man's basic need of deliverance, which implies that he is not in

30 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", pp. 197-98.

31 Id., Adolescence, p. 304, 328.

32 Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 204.

"unity with nature", and that he is experiencing "estrangement" or "alienation", due to the loss of a primitive relation to nature.³³ Hall notes again that this need is central in the Bible:

It assumes the same needs, instincts, possibilities, talents, and predispositions in all for receiving the deliverances [...] of the Holy Spirit.³⁴

Hall assumes that religion as a "natural predisposition", "performed in us by nature",³⁵ is the way whereby man can fulfill the basic need of reconciliation or deliverance.

In conformity with Hall's Darwinian approach, religion must not appear as "the irruption of a foreign principle, a graft from a new stock" but "as purely authoritative".³⁶ For, if on the level of nature man develops spontaneously through certain stages, Hall believes that on the level of religion man's growth also happens according to certain developmental stages.³⁷

³³ G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", pp. 197-98. Hall does not demonstrate what he specifically intends by "nature". However, the general tone of the study implies that Hall uses the term as signifying the psycho-physiological dimension. In many instances, therefore, "unity with self", and "estrangement" or "alienation", refer to conflict within the self.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 197.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 198. In this article, the second reference reads: "If religion can be taught or revealed, it must already be performed in us by nature." The 1882 article reads "preformed" and seems more in line with Hall's evolutionary approach. (Underlining ours.)

³⁶ Ibid., p. 198.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 199.

Finally, we note basic implications for education specified by Hall:

Religion is the most generic kind of culture as opposed to all systems or departments which are one-sided. All education culminates in it because it is the chief among human interests, and because it gives inner unity to the mind, heart, and will. How now should this common element of union be taught?³⁸

Hall's theory of religious conversion is a response to this question insofar as it is the presentation of an ideal educational system which will permit growth on both the levels of nature and religion.

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

As the founder of two psychological laboratories in America, G. S. Hall was evidently committed to the experimental method, stressing the use of "observation, description, and induction"³⁹ and even suggesting going "back to Aristotle in rebasing psychology on biology".⁴⁰ From this he shifted to the study of the child,⁴¹ a concern which led

38 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 199.

39 Id., Adolescence, p. viii.

40 Ibid., pp. vii-viii.

41 R. S. Woodworth, "The Adolescence of American Psychology", p. 16; H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology, pp. 138-39; R. E. Grinder & C. E. Strickland, "G. Stanley Hall and the Social Significance of Adolescence",

him to enunciate the first theory of human development or genetic psychology: a functional psychology based on the assumption that the individual's psychic life develops from birth onward through a series of stages.⁴²

ii) Data-Gathering

The difficulty if not the impossibility of using the method of introspection in child study prompted Hall to apply to psychology Francis Galton's questionnaire method as a data-gathering technique.⁴³ In so doing, he inaugurated a trend in psychological method which reveals a concern to

in R. E. Grinder, Studies in Adolescence: A Book of Readings in Adolescent Development, 2nd ed., London, Macmillan, 1970, p. 9 (hereafter cited as "Social Significance of Adolescence"). The authors note Hall's fascination both with the psychological laboratory and Wundt's experimental psychology until the 1880's when he slowly turns his back on the laboratory and begins to theorize on "the origin and development of the psyche".

42 R. E. Grinder & C. E. Strickland, "Social Significance of Adolescence", pp. 9-10.

43 See Hall's Life and Confessions, pp. 390-91, where he speaks of the dangers, inconsistencies, and limitations of this questionnaire method, as well as its chief merit--suggestiveness. E. D. Starbuck, "G. Stanley Hall as a Psychologist", Psychological Review, 32, 1925, pp. 103-20, presents an interesting application of this method of data collecting. In 1924, in preparing an address for the American Psychological Association in memory of G. Stanley Hall, Starbuck undertook a questionnaire survey among the members to gather important data concerning Hall's career as a psychologist. 165 members answered Starbuck's questionnaire and he tabulated their evaluation of Hall's contributions. Five central themes emerge from these data. Hall appears as an emancipated personality, as persistently youthful, as a philosopher-psychologist, as a poet-psychologist and as one who centers his values in persons.

be scientific.⁴⁴ His own studies on religious conversion are founded on applications of this method.

In both publications mentioned earlier, Hall supplements the statistical data available to him by generous borrowings from anthropology, sociology, and religion. He does not state how he obtains his data for the first essay, except for a reference to statistics--"so far as I have yet been able to collect them"⁴⁵--pertaining to the age of conversion. In the later study, he tells us of the printing of a "request for information" in the leading weekly religious papers,⁴⁶ and of the collation of statistics from various other sources, namely, the Drew Theological Seminary, Luther Gulick (collected from members of the Young Men's Christian Association), a Mr. Ayre (concerning clergymen), E. D. Starbuck, Rev. L. A. Pope, and the Rev. E. P. Hammond (each of these for males and females), G. A. Coe (average for men) and E. G. Lancaster.⁴⁷ From these, Hall presents a table detailing a comparison of statistical averages for the age

44 The outcome of this innovative method can be examined largely in the two huge volumes of Adolescence, and in the Pedagogical Seminary, where the bulk of the 194 questionnaire studies in genetic psychology conducted between 1894-1915 is set forth.

45 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 205.

46 Id., "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 288.

47 Ibid., pp. 288-93.

of conversion. He does not publish any questionnaire nor does he give any hints as to whether the "request for information" implied responding to a specific questionnaire or if it was merely a request to borrow existing data.

.iii) Presentation of the Theory

In the first article, Hall presents his findings on the stages of growth in nature and in religion in two parts: the period of childhood and that of adolescence. In the second enlarged essay, his presentation appears more complex. It must be remembered that in this second instance Hall had the new advantage (as well as the challenge) of publishing a study on religious conversion after the important scientific contributions of Leuba, Starbuck and James, to name but a few. He begins the 1904 essay with three preliminary considerations: (a) an historical overview of revivals in America; (b) a survey of the age of most frequent conversions, and (c) a study of the relationship between the age of conversion and that of sexual maturity.⁴⁸ These are followed by a six-part study of conversion: (1) conversion as a normal and universal process of growth; (2) the implications of the sense of sin on conversion; (3) the adolescent characteristic of doubt; (4) conversion as the core of a true philosophy of history; (5) a summary of the reductive

48 G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", (a) pp. 281-88; (b) pp. 288-92; (c) pp. 292-301.

tendencies of the psychology on religious conversion, and finally, (6) another examination of the philosophy of conversion; showing it to be the high point of all systems of education.⁴⁹

c) The Content

Just as the approach and the method of Hall's theory of conversion appear similar in both studies, so the content or the structure of religious conversion which Hall discloses is basically one, revealed in the first study and simply enlarged upon in the second, although the wide acceptance of the scientific tradition established by Leuba, Starbuck and James in the intervening years might have called for a more striking difference. Therefore, in presenting his theory of conversion, we will follow the first essay and refer to the later study in the Adolescence, for purposes of clarification only.

Part I of the 1891 essay centers particularly upon the moral development of the child. This process begins in the cradle, where "the unconsciousness of a child is rest in God".⁵⁰ According to Hall, this state of rest, transmitted through the sense of touch, is the fruit of the

49 G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", (1) pp. 301-5; (2) pp. 305-15; (3) pp. 315-31; (4) pp. 331-42; (5) pp. 342-51; (6) pp. 351-62.

50 Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 199.

mother's tenderness and care. Gradually, the child recognizes the mother's face and voice and, following the normal course of the awakening of consciousness, learns "gratitude, trust, dependence, love, etc."⁵¹ Hall believes the whole superstructure of religion is built upon these sentiments. He describes the role of religion in childhood this way:

Religion, then, at this important stage, at least, is naturalism pure and simple, and religious training is the supreme art of standing out of nature's way. So implicit is the unity of soul and body at this formative age that care of the body is the most effective ethico-religious culture.⁵²

One of Hall's basic principles is that the child should become familiar with nature and its laws before learning anything about the supernatural. Since the child is unable to distinguish between nature and the supernatural during the kindergarten stage of childhood, during this period the native curiosity of the child is to be encouraged. Of great significance are the phenomena of nature which foster sentiments of awe and sublimity.⁵³ Also, since Hall believes that country life is religion for children, the most effective way to foster sound morality and religion is simply "leaving all to naturalism and spontaneity at first, and feeding the soul according to its

⁵¹ G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 199.

⁵² Ibid., p. 200.

⁵³ Ibid.

appetite and stages of growth."⁵⁴ He writes further:

It is clear that natural religion is rooted in such experiences, and precedes revealed religion in the order of growth and education; whatever its logical order in systems of thought may be.⁵⁵

For the early years of childhood, Hall focuses on "conscience-building" as the next phase of the gradual religious development of the child.⁵⁶ He emphasizes certain basic laws for this period: that the process not be hurried; that it requires much tact; that the child be taught obedience;⁵⁷ that literature, history, and the sciences be encouraged; and that stories from the Old Testament are particularly suited to the child's needs.⁵⁸ He also maintains that religion is not to be taught in a coercive way as the child needs time to work out convictions. In following these principles, Hall believes religion can truly become

the readjustment of conduct to conscience, as restored harmony with self, reunion with God, or newly awakened love for Jesus.⁵⁹

This, of course, presupposes that true religious

54 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 201.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid., p. 203.

57 Ibid., p. 204.

58 Ibid., p. 205.

59 Ibid., p. 197.

development is gradual, a point which Hall emphasizes repeatedly in the later study. He writes:

True religion is normally the slowest because the most comprehensive kind of growth, and the entire ephebic decade is not too long and is well spent if altruism or love of all that is divine and human comes to assured supremacy over self before it is ended.⁶⁰

In Part II, Hall concentrates on nature and religion during adolescence, a period which, for him, begins between the ages of twelve and sixteen and ends about twenty-four or twenty-five. He finds this period accompanied by such impressive changes that he compares it to "a physiological second birth" characterized particularly by "a new capital of energy".⁶¹ Hall believes the physiological changes regulate an awakening of altruism on the psychological level which makes of adolescence the time when "the life of the mere individual ceases and that of the person, or better of the race, begins." It is the "period of realization", "the golden age of life", both physiologically and psychologically.⁶² Hall adds that Christianity as "the apical stage of human development", also glorifies adolescence and is glorified by it.⁶³

60 G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 204.

61 Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 205.

62 Ibid., p. 206.

63 Id., "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 361.

Hall's ideal educational system for this period is based on the following principles: intellectual interests and sports are to be encouraged; neurotic disturbances may appear; premature development of sexuality is a great danger, and premature conversion is also a great danger.⁶⁴

Finally, Hall enlarges upon the nature of conversion (or religion, as he calls it),⁶⁵ which is essentially, for him, a slow process following the same patterns as those of natural growth within the race or the individual. If religion develops naturally, that is, gradually, then morality becomes strengthened by religion. Hall's definition of conversion in the Adolescence stresses this dimension:

In its most fundamental sense, conversion is a natural, normal, universal, and necessary process at the stage when life pivots over from an auto-centric to an heterocentric basis.⁶⁶

He brings out the normative and gradual aspects of conversion again in the following:

64 G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", pp. 315-31. Hall gives another elaboration of this ideal educational system to meet the needs of adolescents. He sums these up as: (1) an intellectual reconstruction which implies working through doubt; (2) a historico-critical approach to the Bible; (3) some religious philosophy; (4) some psychology to understand their own development.

65 Hall never clearly differentiates between conversion and religion. He generally uses an etymological meaning to describe religion, such as, at-one-ment, a process which conversion seems particularly apt to represent. Religion is therefore understood principally as a psychological need.

66 G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 301.

Normal and imperceptive as this evolution is ideally, the transition is in fact the chief anti-thesis in all the human cosmos. While it involves transformation in nearly every sphere of thought, conduct, and sentiment, it may occur in one field after another, and be so slow in each field as to occupy the longest and fullest lifetime and then be incomplete.⁶⁷

Hall theorizes that when the individual crisis builds up gradually until it becomes a change of heart, it is that "which psycho-physiology describes as adolescence, and of which theology formulates a higher spiritual potency as conversion."⁶⁸ He does not agree with the revivalists who claim that conversion should be sudden. He fears lest too sudden and violent an experience use up in a brief moment what is meant to last a lifetime. Finally, he maintains that a developmental theory of growth implies a gradual development with "something of importance before it and after it in healthful religious experience."⁶⁹

Essential to the conversion process is the element of crisis which seems to crystallize at adolescence. Hall implies that the conflict arises from the existential fact that the adolescent finds himself having to choose between,

67 G. S. Hall; "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 304.

68 Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 210. In the "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 304, Hall describes it this way: "The same is true of that individual crisis which physiology describes as adolescence, and of which theology formulates a spiritual aspect or potency called regeneration and conversion."

69 Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 210.

on the one hand, "a deep personal sense of purity and impurity", and on the other, "a serious sense of God within", as well as responsibilities, and a feeling for duties. These, says Hall, may very well be "the origin of religion itself in the soul."⁷⁰

Furthermore, Hall states that the psychophysiological and the religious development at adolescence should normally climax in the experience of conversion or regeneration, the time when "the previous selfhood is broken up", and "a new individual is in the process of crystallization".⁷¹

He writes:

Complex as the process is, a pivotal point is somehow discernible where the ego yields to the alter.⁷²

and:

All these are phases of the great change of base from the egoism, normal and necessary to the first stage of human life, to the self-subordination of the stage of philoprogenitive maturity which is

70 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 209. Hall enlarges upon the fact and the results of crisis in the "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", pp. 305-15. He examines the heightening of crisis (pain) which arises from the sense of sin and lists five effects of sin: pain, guilt, craving for just punishment, the need for confession and a sense of innate iniquity. Moreover, according to him, these illustrate three basic laws: the power of conscience and the conviction of sin, the dissociative action of depression, and the deep tendency to shift from pain to joy. This shift characterizes conversion, a moment when the individual surrenders to a new self.

71 Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 207.

72 Id., "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 304.

ripening to die for what it lives for, where love has done its perfect work.⁷³

Hall concludes that this "growth from a life of self to one of service" is the one constant element found when one compares the slowest of conversions with the most sudden. This element even transcends the differences in "ages, races, and sects".⁷⁴ Moreover, this transition from a life of self to a life for the other is the special characteristic of Christianity. Hall writes:

This change fills and alone gives unity to history, for Christianity marks the same pivotal point in ethnic adolescence where self-love merges in resignation and renunciation into love of man. Religion has no other function than to make this change complete, and the whole of morality may well be defined as life in the interest of the race, for love of God and love of man are one and inseparable.⁷⁵

Indeed, this "growth from the life of self to one of service"⁷⁶ is, for Hall, the essential element of religious conversion.

Another basic tenet of Hall's theory of conversion is that he finds "the age of religion and that of sexual

⁷³ G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 353.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 358.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 358. By 1904, there is some sound theorizing on religious conversion, some of which Hall takes exception to because of its reductive tendencies which he enumerates as follows (pp. 342-51): the attempt at making conversion into an instantaneous experience, intensifying the symptoms, normalizing the process into onset, progress, and outcome, and displacing it up and down the age scale.

maturity to coincide."⁷⁷ He re-establishes adolescence as the age of conversion by means of countless statistics, and demonstrates this theoretically as well by a lengthy comparison of religion and love which adolescence best exemplifies.⁷⁸

If, psychophysically, there is a second birth at adolescence, so on the level of religion there is a second birth during this period, a conclusion which Hall substantiates this way:

It is therefore not surprising that statistics show--so far as I have yet been able to collect them--that far more conversions, pro rata, take place during the adolescent period, which does not normally end before the age of twenty-four or five, than during any other period of equal length.⁷⁹

2. The Evaluation of the Theory

Being the very first in which religious conversion is examined from the approach of the new psychology,⁸⁰

⁷⁷ G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 292.

⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 288-92. This stance is basic to Hall's understanding of adolescence as exemplified by a statement to this effect in the Adolescence, p. xii: "Adolescence is a new birth, for the higher and more completely human traits are now born. The qualities of body and soul that now emerge are far newer." Hall often dwells upon the similarities and the relationships of sexuality and religion; in fact, this is the whole rationale for a lengthy comparison of their covariants (pp. 295-301).

⁷⁹ Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 205.

⁸⁰ See R. O. Ferm, The Psychology of Christian Conversion, pp. 19-20. "As early as 1891, G. Stanley Hall

Hall's model constitutes a first step beyond the normative revival pattern of conversion then prevalent in American life.⁸¹

a) The Approach

Hall's theorizing contains many unqualified anthropological, theological, historical, sociological and psychological assumptions from which he builds his theory of man.

i) A Theory of Personality

An anthropological assumption known as "the recapitulation theory" which posits a spontaneous growth through various hierarchical stages, serves as the basis for Hall's developmental view of man. However, Hall does not attempt to demonstrate nor to test its basic tenet that the individual repeats in his own experience that of the entire race. Linked to this fundamental assumption are some significant psychological presuppositions: (1) that the individual develops normally, and naturally, through stages of growth

attempted an explanation of the religious awakening and conversion during the period of adolescence; to Hall religious conversion was a normal adolescent experience which was essentially an outgrowth of the period of youthful storm and stress."

⁸¹ W. A. Clebsch, American Religious Thought, pp. 11-56, where he shows how Jonathan Edwards had established a kind of pattern or an implicit psychology of religious conversion whereby he could recognize, encourage, or denounce it.

to an apex reached at the time of adolescence;⁸² (2) that psychophysiological development is necessarily progressive and maturational;⁸³ (3) that a gradual evolution or development is more lasting, more natural and therefore superior to the sudden variety.⁸⁴

These assumptions underlie Hall's humanistic concerns, the most important of which appears to be the structuring of an ideal system of education based on the nature-is-right principle, a trusting approach favoring natural growth while insisting on the necessity of obedience and of education for every child.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

An important aspect of Hall's view of religious man is the fact that he finds man suffering from a metaphysical problem or existential dichotomy, a sense of estrangement

82 This raises a problem. If adolescence is the apex of life, "the golden age of life", what of maturity? Also, if the individual develops normally and naturally up to this peak, why does the child need education?

83 Although Hall mentions that neurotic disturbances "are liable to appear and become seated during this period", he seems to overlook the possibility and to stress creative healthful growth. See "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 350, and "Moral and Religious Training", p. 207. W. E. Oates, Psychology of Religion, p. 96, is of the opinion that the principle whereby all rapidation of growth is forward in its movement toward greater growth and maturity should be challenged.

84 Hall's insistence on the gradual unfolding of conversion causes him to overlook the fact and the creative force of sudden conversion, as for instance, in Paul of Tarsus.

or loss of a relationship with nature. However, Hall seems to create ambiguity as he also believes that this alienation can be remedied by the religious predisposition in man, which is regulated by psychophysiological growth.⁸⁵ For Hall, morality and spiritual life are implicit in human nature.⁸⁶

We find that Hall draws a parallel between the psychophysiological and the religious dimensions and that he argues for a basic postulate. As in psychophysiology, so in religion! This leads Hall to formulate various hypotheses. There are two births in the psychophysiological life, so there are two births in the spiritual life. Growth is natural according to psychophysiology, so it must be according to religion. Growth is progressive and maturational in psychophysiology, so it must be in religion. As it is during adolescence that conflict yields a new dimension of psychological growth, so it is in this period that

85 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 205, explicitly states that the psychophysiological changes "constitute" a natural predisposition for a "change of heart". A few lines further he qualifies this statement and adds that "the physical may be called in a sense regulative rather than constitutive". Although the regulation of the spiritual life by the psychophysiological dimension seems to follow the "grace builds on nature" law, yet, this assumption needs to be substantiated with research on the psychology of faith and research on the religious life of the mentally-handicapped.

86 D. H. Meyer, "The Scientific Humanism of G. Stanley Hall", p. 203, who says Hall "assumed that fundamental moral and spiritual principles are implicit in human nature, and that a careful scrutiny of the human mind would prove that man is, by nature, a moral and religious being."

conversion is born of conflict.

Obviously, Hall grounds his theory of religious man in biology and offers a completely naturalistic or humanistic approach to religion. In keeping with this stance, some of the constructs Hall uses in describing religious man lead to ambiguity either because of a lack of definition or because of a variety of uses. We note the use of "soul", "nature", "conflict and estrangement", and "religion" as the major undefined constructs used variously throughout the first essay.

In spite of the heavy theological undertone of these constructs, Hall utilizes them in a humanistic sense. For instance, "soul" in this work appears as a humanistic category referring to self or to being.⁸⁷ There is ambiguity as to what Hall intends by "nature" since it can refer either to the cosmic dimension of creation and/or human nature in a generic sense, or simply that of the individual. Similarly, "estrangement" or "conflict" can be the experience of conflict within the cosmos or within mankind (the race) as implied in the "fall-motif"; but it can also refer to conflict within the self as the result of individual sin or guilt. "Religion" is presented variously as "a growth or development", "a culture", "a unity" and finally, as "conversion". Admittedly, religion as conversion allows him

⁸⁷ See D. H. Meyer, "The Scientific Humanism of G. Stanley Hall", p. 207.

to account for man's true re-at-one-ment. Hall's understanding of religion is also ambiguous insofar as it is "preformed in us by nature", that is innate, yet needs to be fostered by the right kind of education.⁸⁸

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

Hall's genetic psychology provides him with a scientific framework from which to examine psychophysiological and religious development. As Donald H. Meyer suggests, it gives him as it were, a "map of the human psyche".⁸⁹ However, Hall never does demonstrate how the individual repeats the experience of the race, the assumption arising from his basic methodological principle, the recapitulation theory. He proceeds largely by means of speculation in spite of the fact that it was his concern with empiricism which led him to introduce and to make a wide use of the new questionnaire method in both the fields of genetic psychology and the psychology of religion. His graduate students applied this method with enthusiasm.

Hall believes that the new psychology will

⁸⁸ This is not to suggest that such a position is false but only to show that it is not explained, qualified or substantiated psychologically.

⁸⁹ D. H. Meyer, "The Scientific Humanism of G. S. Hall", p. 206.

foster a more humanistic education⁹⁰ due to a better understanding of the socialization process,⁹¹ and that it will favor a more wholesome religion as well.⁹² Indeed, since he maintains that conversion is "the chief fact of genetic psychology", it is his conviction that psychology can replace theology, a factor emphasizing the broadened religious tenets of his humanistically-oriented psychology.

ii) Data-Gathering

Although Hall stresses the empirical method and refers to statistics in the first essay,⁹³ the reader is left guessing just how and where these were collected, so

90 A primary interest in Hall's works is this pedagogical role of psychology. See D. Ross, G. Stanley Hall: the Psychologist as Prophet, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1972, p. xiv (hereafter cited as The Psychologist as Prophet), where she says of Hall: "He told all who would listen that the science of psychology could transform and revive education and religion; that child-rearing and education were the most important tasks of the race."

91 Hall describes the high ideals present in his psychology. See the "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 328: "Indeed, not only great religious movements and awakenings, but psychology itself, consists in realizing in the immanent here and now all prophecies, dreams, standpoints, and ideals that have seemed remote, supernal, and alien, and in the deepening insight that all that has ever occurred will surely recur if the conditions can be made the same."

92 G. S. Hall, "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", p. 328. Hall states that: "Every higher stage of development involves not only re-interpretation but re-revelation on a higher plane, and religious advancement is the consummation of human development."

93 Id., "Moral and Religious Training", p. 205.

that his questionnaire method is open to question. However, the collating and comparing of the statistics available on the age of conversion is both a scientific and an interesting venture and the table presenting the statistical averages of the age of conversion is a valid effort at scientific objectivity. But, in 1904, Hall had the excellent tables and figures of Starbuck and Coe at his disposal. Moreover, Hall makes use of these important data to strengthen his own hypothesis that 'the' age of conversion is that of adolescence. Much of Hall's data (as in the case of these statistics) are borrowings, but there is no doubt that some of these provide timely insights into the problem of religious conversion.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

In spite of Hall's achievement in the field of psychology, the general tone of his studies is literary rather than scientific and reveals what Dorothy Ross calls the desire "to be both the village preacher and the cosmopolitan man of science".⁹⁴ His essays follow a general

⁹⁴ D. Ross, The Psychologist as Prophet, p. xiv. The following excerpts from "Moral and Religious Training", are examples of this literary style. P. 197: "If all the volumes now in existence which are expressly devoted to moral and religious training were piled together, a structure as large as the tower of Babel might be reared of them alone, and if they could all speak, a confusion of tongues surpassing the 'Babel-babble' would be heard." Hall calls the Holy Spirit "the highest of all muses". Cf p. 199: "The mother's face and voice are the first conscious objects

plan. They also contain much speculation, many assumptions, overlapping of themes, difficulties of method and of style.⁹⁵ Notwithstanding this lack of explicitation and rigor, we must bear in mind, that at least in 1904, there was some empirical basis for his hypotheses in the questionnaire studies of Leuba and of Starbuck (his students).

c) The Content

Although Hall's works seem to be addressed to the problem of the moral and religious training of children and of adolescents, there is a real focus on religious conversion as the pivotal experience of growth and education.

In re-examining his theorizing, we find Hall implying that conversion is a process, but he does not demonstrate this fact except that he traces the pre-conversion stages during childhood and adolescence up to the development of altruism and conflict. He posits that conflict is typical of

as the infant soul unfolds." P. 200: "The child is a plant, must live out of doors in proper season, and there must be no forcing." "The whims and moods of the embryonic personality must be studied." "If, as children grow few and rare the tender but important cradle-battles go against the mother." (sic)

⁹⁵ D. Ross, The Psychologist as Prophet, p. xiv. She adds that Hall had "a canny sense for the underside of every idea, the ambivalence that lurked behind every belief, and often managed to profess both sides at once." S. C. Fisher, "The Psychological and Educational Work of G. S. Hall", pp. 45-51, finds internal contradictions in Hall's study: difficulties of method and of fact, opposition between the order of nature and the educational regime needed in practical situations.

the adolescent period and that it is the trigger causing conversion at this time. Hall emphasizes that conversion is essentially the shift from a life for self to a life for others.

Hall does not explain the actual dynamics of conversion, neither does he account for its after-effects. (He merely alludes to the latter in the first essay.) The reader has a right to ask in what his theory is founded. That conversion is "a natural, normal, universal, and necessary process at the stage when life pivots over from an autocentric to an heterocentric basis" appears to be quite unsubstantiated unless we take Hall seriously. We must read him as saying that conversion is the normal, necessary psychophysiological growth all adolescents must experience if maturity is to occur. We agree with his intuition that adolescence should result in or at least be the pre-condition for this type of growth, but there is no guarantee that adolescent psychophysiological growth will in fact proceed to life for the other. Hall must have sensed this fact insofar as he was so deeply concerned with developing a system of education and a view of man that would encourage the occurrence of such growth more often.

We note one discrepancy in the parallel structure Hall erects between psychophysiological growth and religious growth. While he insists that psychophysiological growth is rapid and critical during adolescence, and that this is

healthy, he maintains that conversion should be gradual so that it not exhaust itself in a brief moment.

Though Hall is critical, in his later essay, of the reductive tendencies of other investigators in the psychology of conversion, his own approach and method are equally a reduction and a confusion of conversion with adolescent growth and with culture.⁹⁶

Hall's model of religious conversion founded upon the psychophysiological growth process up to adolescence, is a naturalistic one. Though he speaks of supernatural life, of the Bible, and makes a wide use of theological constructs, God is not really, for him, the agent of conversion. His genetic psychology is a method which can truly and effectively replace theology, so he believes. Others may differ, but we accept that Hall is the vital link between the earlier revival preachers' implicit theorizations and the new psychology of conversion. He is the first experimental psychologist to apply the scientific method to religious conversion, a phenomenon previously examined only in literature, philosophy, history of religion, and theology. More particularly, he is the leader of a school which associates conversion with adolescence and with sexual

⁹⁶ R. N. Beck, "Hall's Genetic Psychology and Religious Conversion", p. 49, is of the opinion that Hall "viewed conversion as a fundamental redirection of life, necessary to maturity and growing out of earlier stages of development."

maturity, the climax of psychophysiological growth.

Hall is the first to hint at the process-content of conversion, the first to view it as gradual, the first to view it as moral and as an unselfing and therefore the first to connect it with the socialization process.⁹⁷

An interesting aspect of Hall's work, though it appears generally to be that of the theological tradition, and specifically, that of his psychogenetic approach, is the language he utilizes. We note the following words and phrases as typical in the first essay: "Atonement", "primitive relation", "estrangement", "restore the lost friendship", "unity with nature",⁹⁸ "natural predisposition", "alienation", "deliverance", "reconciliation",⁹⁹ "inner unity of mind, heart and will",¹⁰⁰ "the God-idea",¹⁰¹ "conscience-building",¹⁰² "new capital of energy",

97 R. N. Beck, "Hall's Genetic Psychology and Religious Conversion", p. 50; R. E. Grinder, "Adolescence in the Genetic Psychology of G. Stanley Hall", pp. 366-67, brings out Hall's preoccupation with the influences of education on the socialization process. Grinder and Strickland also point out Hall's emphasis upon the "primacy of cultural influences". See "Social Significance of Adolescence", pp. 12-13.

98 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training", p. 197.

99 Ibid., p. 198.

100 Ibid., p. 199.

101 Ibid., p. 202

102 Ibid., p. 203.

"altruistic feelings", "a change of heart", "regeneration",¹⁰³
 "self-estrangement",¹⁰⁴ "conflict", "moral tension", "a
 feeling for duties", "theology of the heart", "most compre-
 hensive kind of growth", "a serious sense of God within",
 "piety",¹⁰⁵ "a growth", "an instantaneous conquest", "health-
 ful religious living".¹⁰⁶

The following appear as most pertinent in the later
 work: "Age of religion",¹⁰⁷ "slowly progressive separate
 personal definiteness", "climacteric period",¹⁰⁸ "a pivotal
 point",¹⁰⁹ "retranslated morality as other-wordly conduct",¹¹⁰
 "nascent period",¹¹¹ "re-at-one-ment", "previous estrange-
 ment", "re-established unity with nature",¹¹² "losing a
 burden", "fall-motif", "primitive state of unity", "surrender
 to a perverse will",¹¹³ "philoprogenitive maturity",
 "ripening to die", "sense of salvage".¹¹⁴

103 G. S. Hall, "Moral and Religious Training",
 p. 205.

104 Ibid., p. 206.

105 Ibid., p. 209.

106 Ibid., p. 210.

107 Id., "Adolescent Psychology of Conversion",
 p. 292.

108 Ibid., p. 303.

109 Ibid., p. 304.

110 Ibid., p. 337.

111 Ibid., p. 346.

112 Ibid., p. 351.

113 Ibid., p. 352.

114 Ibid., p. 353.

3. A Synopsis of the Model

a) Approach

i) A Theory of Human Development

Its basis is the recapitulation theory wherein the individual repeats in his development the evolution of the race.

Man is moral and religious by nature.

ii) A Theory of Religious Development

Psychophysiological growth regulates the religious life of the individual.

A suitable system of education is needed to foster it. Religion is a growth, an inner sense of the unity of mind, heart and will, a serious sense of God within, and life for the other.

b) Method


i) Psychological System

Genetic psychology: a functional psychology explicating a theory of human development which emphasizes hierarchical stages of growth.

ii) Data Collection

Primarily literature, with a mention of statistics.

iii) Presentation

Literary rather than scientific. 
Implicit assumptions rather than explicitation of theory.

Stages of childhood and stages of adolescence.

c) Content

i) Nature

A natural, normal, universal, necessary growth toward altruism.

ii) Aim

To restore unity with God and within self.

iii) Process

A before, a growth, an after.

iv) Age

Adolescence, which begins between 12 and 16 and ends at 24 or 25.

v) Motivational Forces

Conflict and a serious sense of God.
Estrangement and a sense of altruism and growth.

vi) Type

Moral and psychophysical.

CHAPTER III

LEUBA'S INDUCTIVE MODEL: 1896

Our second basic theoretical model of religious conversion follows from the work of James Henry Leuba (1868-1946). Leuba's theory is expounded in his doctoral dissertation--his first publication in the field of the scientific study of religion--published in 1896, under the title "A Study in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena".¹ By 1916 Coe had listed thirty-five works by Leuba.² The majority were directly concerned with religious phenomena while others were addressed to methodological problems in the field of psychology of religion and the relationship between psychology and theology.³ The variety of topics gives some indication both of Leuba's scholarship and of his wide interest in this area. We note works on ethics, mysticism,

1 See above Chapter I, footnote 22. This article is also found in his Studies in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena: The Religious Motive, Conversion, Facts and Doctrines, Worcester, Mass., J. H. Orpha, 1896, 385 pp.

2 G. A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion, pp. 335-37.

3 J. H. Leuba, "Introduction to a Psychological Study of Religion", The Monist, 2, 1901, pp. 195-225; "The Field and the Problems of the Psychology of Religion", American Journal of Religious Psychology, 1, 1904, pp. 155-67; "Revue générale de psychologie religieuse", Année Psychologique, 11, 1905, pp. 482-93; "Psychologie des phénomènes religieux", VIe Congrès International de Psychologie, Genève, 2 au 7 août 1909, Librairie Kundig, 1910, pp. 118-37 (hereafter cited as "Phénomènes religieux").

immortality, the contents of religious consciousness, and the origin and the nature of religion.⁴ There is no evidence that he published any work on religious conversion beyond this date.

Leuba's first publication was made while he was a student of G. Stanley Hall and one of several graduate students at Clark University investigating religious conversion.⁵ Pratt notes that "the subject of the work, as was natural for a pioneer attempt, was the most striking of religious phenomena, conversion."⁶ Leuba specifies why he selects this particular phenomenon for study:

4 The following are typical of Leuba's scholarship: "The Psycho-Physiology of the Moral Imperative", American Journal of Psychology, 8, 1897, pp. 528-59; "The Contents of Religious Consciousness"; The Monist, 11, 1901, pp. 536-73 (hereafter cited as "Religious Consciousness"); The Psychological Origin and the Nature of Religion, Chicago, Open Court Publishing Co., 1909, 94 pp.; "The Development of Emotion in Religion", Harvard Theological Review, 5, 1912, pp. 524-43 (hereafter cited as "The Development of Emotion in Religion"); A Psychological Study of Religion: Its Origin, Function and Future. New York, AMS Press, (1912), 1969, 371 pp. (hereafter cited as A Psychological Study of Religion); The Psychology of Religious Mysticism, New York, Harcourt, Brace Co., Inc., 1925, 336 pp.

5 J. H. Leuba, "A Psychologist of Religion", p. 175. Leuba notes that he obtained a scholarship from Clark University to study psychology under G. Stanley Hall. While he is the fourth of Hall's students to publish papers touching the subject of conversion he is, nevertheless, the first to conduct a research on it from an inductive approach. J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 437, confirms that Leuba's work was "the first article of great intrinsic value", and that he "went at his task in thoroughly scientific fashion".

6 J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 437.

We have chosen conversion because of its striking and well delineated characteristics, and on account of its paramount importance in religious life.⁷

There were, however, some personal reasons as well. He relates that his background was one of a mitigated Calvinism for which he experienced no moral enthusiasm at adolescence, but that the moral ideal presented by the Salvation Army, did move him to sudden conversion.⁸

He subsequently developed a great interest in the natural sciences, in the biological sciences and in Darwin's evolutionary theory. These approaches to man and to life in general, seeming to offer concrete ways of arriving at truth and at an understanding of the mind and of human nature on the whole, interested him passionately,⁹ and eventually led him to the examination of a variety of religious phenomena from that basis.¹⁰

7 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 312.

8 Id., "A Psychologist of Religion", pp. 175-78.

9 Ibid., pp. 179-80.

10 Ibid., pp. 180-81, where he writes that when it came time to choose a dissertation topic he did not hesitate, adding: "No topic had been so interesting and important to me as Christian conversion."

1. The Exploration of the Theory

a) The Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

Search as we may, we do not find anywhere an explicit citation of Leuba's theory of man. There are, however, indications of an implicit one. His psychological view of man seems to be based on the Darwinian evolutionary theory which posits a qualitative continuing physiological growth giving rise to the development of the psyche, of morality and of sociality. His statement that "modern psychology feeds on biology and on physiology, and is the handmaid of pedagogy and of ethics",¹¹ is indication of this aspect of his approach. Moreover, it also lends itself to a functional view of man which underlies Leuba's preoccupation with the question of life. He writes:

The passage from the standpoint of knowledge for knowledge's sake, to that of knowledge for life's sake, expresses one of the aspects of the widest movement of modern intellectual evolution.¹²

This interest in life, which he calls a "great life-wave" is partly the rationale for his concern with "the unconscious, the emotional, the striving forces of nature",¹³ and

11 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 310.

12 Ibid., p. 309.

13 Ibid.

to a lesser extent with the intellectual forces. He notes:

With the increased interest in the impulsive, the instinctive, the affective side of life in general, a number of new lines of research, all having a close relation to life, have been opened.¹⁴

It would seem then that Leuba's psychological view of man is cast in a physiological and functional framework. Though he seems to presume a developmental view of man as did Hall, Leuba does not limit himself to examining stages of growth. He is interested mainly in mature man and this is evident in his understanding of religion. Moreover, his later writings confirm and clarify that this potential, life-oriented approach to man¹⁵ underlies his psychological framework.

Although Leuba does not elaborate upon his theory of man, he clearly states his approach to religion in general, and to religious phenomena in particular, as we shall now see.

14 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 310.

15 See his "Religious Consciousness", p. 572, where he stresses this approach. "Not God but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is in last analysis the end of religion. The love of life at any and every level of development, or, to use another phraseology, the instinct for preservation and increase, is the religious impulse." See also his "Phénomènes religieux", p. 119: "La religion nous apparaît donc comme cette portion de la lutte pour la vie qui se fait avec l'aide de certaines forces de l'ordre spirituel. C'est un des moyens découverts par l'homme pour vivre mieux et plus abondamment; c'est une méthode de vie. Ce point de vue biologique est, nous semble-t-il, le plus étendu et le plus significatif auquel on puisse se placer pour envisager la religion." (Unless otherwise specified, all underlining is the author's.)

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Leuba stipulates that religion is not "external practices, rites or ceremonies", not "intellectual beliefs", nor "craving for metaphysical knowledge". Neither is it "to conjure and sacrifice, no more to adore, no more to believe in dogmas." Religion, if it be real, is "the subjective fact in itself", and must "express itself in psychic and physiological phenomena",¹⁶ which are not different from other psychic phenomena. He writes:

The religious experience named sense of sin, repentance, remorse, aspirations toward holiness, regeneration (conversion), trust, faith, belong to the same class as the affective problems now under study, as, for instance, the question of pain and pleasure.¹⁷

Leuba indicates that religion is made up of all the fundamental needs of man. They are thus intensely practical interests which lead him to state that "the essence of religion is a striving towards being, not towards knowing". It is a "desire to be".¹⁸ He theorizes that even if all ceremonies, rites or dogmas are removed, nothing is changed within.

These common conceptions--generally regarded as essential--rejected or ignored, the religious sense remains, modified perhaps but unweakened, in the feeling of unwholeness, of moral imperfection,

16 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 310.

17 Ibid., p. 311.

18 Ibid., pp. 313, 315.

of sin, to use the technical word, accompanied by the yearning after the peace of unity. No intellectual conviction can rob man of this subjective treasure. Its reality transcends all possible belief concerning the origin and the end of things, because, as we hope to show, it is the psychic correspondent of a physiological growth, and consequently can in no wise fail, except together with that growth. Around this religious root, springing from it, or otherwise functionally related with it, cluster all the familiar religious feelings.¹⁹

Among these religious feelings Leuba groups "altruistic love", "the sense of dependence" and that of "subjection".²⁰ He is particularly interested in Christian conversion and spells out the role of Christ therein. While, for him, Christ emphasized the dualism within man, he showed man how he could save himself from this dualism.²¹ Basically, man's misery comes from sin and religion in general and conversion in particular can save man from this misery. Leuba continues:

Religion has become--or is coming to be--the conglomerate of desires and emotions springing from the sense of sin and its release. [...] The reduction of the dualism thus variously expressed is, in the broadest sense, what we mean by conversion.

Anticipating conclusions to be reached in the third part of the essay, we may say that moral dualisms and their reduction are the psychic correlates of the establishment of new physiological functions. [...] Instead of being an abnormal process, conversion--not necessarily the violent type which we have chosen for our analysis--is the very creating method of nature. It represents a

19 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 315.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. 317.

physiological as well as a psychic step in the evolution of man.²²

Leuba's understanding of religious man also implies a "universal and unquenchable thirst for wholeness, for moral harmony." In fact, "the only apparent motive power in the deepest religious experiences is the feeling of unrighteousness and the effort towards holiness". Moreover, the "power of religion is proportional to the depth and intensity of the feelings connected with that experience."²³

Despite references that might hint otherwise, Leuba's approach is naturalism, pure and simple. It is a question of life and of being, a question of mercy and of power, a question which will claim much if not all of his scholarly attention. It is never a question of God as the personal being man seeks to know and to love, nor a question of beliefs, rites, or churches.

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

Leuba's psychological presuppositions have already been referred to in the discussion of his approach to man where we implied that it was basically a functional, physiologically-oriented psychology imbued with the

²² J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 321.

²³ Ibid., pp. 316-17.

evolutionary spirit. But over and above this, Leuba's system is particularly that of an inductive differential psychology which "approaches human behavior through the investigation of individual differences" as Chaplin and Krawiec describe it.²⁴ Whereas Hall merely alluded to statistics, we shall see that Leuba goes far beyond his master in defining and perfecting the empirical nature of psychology.

ii) Data-Gathering

Leuba's method of gathering data follows upon his inductive, differential system of psychology, i.e., he collects individual data from which he elaborates a theory. "Literature, biographies, memoirs of great revivalists and religious periodicals",²⁵ form part of these data.

He also printed a questionnaire in three newspapers from which he drew up a number of case studies (of which he publishes fifteen) from Anglo-Saxon American Protestants. Leuba complemented these responses with direct interviews.²⁶

24 J. P. Chaplin & T. S. Krawiec, Systems and Theories of Psychology, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., third ed., 1974, p. 545 (hereafter cited as Systems and Theories of Psychology).

25 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 371.

26 Ibid. Leuba states that this questionnaire was published in The Presbyterian of Philadelphia, in The Christian of London, and in The Outlook (of unknown location). The questionnaire appears integrally as an appendix to this chapter. See p. 129.

He does recognize limits of the questionnaire method, namely, the difficulty experienced because of its novelty, the inaccuracies due to the fact that the respondents are not trained in introspection, and the antagonism of some Church officials to science.²⁷ Leuba also mentions his own personal experience of conversion as part of his data.

Leuba did publish his questionnaire as well as several case-studies and documents, but no extensive statistical data he may have had.²⁸

iii) Presentation of the Theory

Leuba's presentation shows above all a concern to be scientific, in the empirical and positivistic sense, and to demonstrate his theory as clearly and as concisely as possible. In his dissertation, after a somewhat lengthy introduction (9 pages), where he elaborates part of his approach, he presents his theory of conversion in two parts. Part I is an analysis of the process of religious conversion,²⁹ while Part II is a clarification of three stages of the process, i.e., justification, faith, and the role of the

27 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 371-72.

28 See Leuba's "The Development of Emotion in Religion", p. 532, where he does specify statistical data: "A few years ago I circulated a questionnaire on several phases of religion, especially upon its impulses and motives. The three hundred answers received were in many cases supplemented by personal correspondence."

29 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 322-54.

will, with reference to some of the doctrines of the Christian Church.³⁰ A lengthy Appendix follows in which Leuba presents his questionnaire and some of the personal documents collected for his research.³¹

c) The Content

To begin with, Leuba indicates his intentions to limit his material to

sudden and well marked cases, for the reason that violent psychic phenomena, by their very emphasis, bring to light what remains obscure in less intense and slower events. In the main the conclusions reached by the study of sudden conversions apply with equal exactitude to slowly progressing regenerations.³²

Leuba indicates that religious conversion is a process revealing two overarching moods or tendencies, which he designates as "the way down" and "the way up", covering six phases: "The Sense of Sin, Self-surrender, Faith, Joy, Appearance of Newness, The Role of the Will."³³

30 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 355-70. In our exploration of the theory, we will disregard Leuba's distinction of Parts I and II, and add his clarifications (Part II) as we present the various stages of the process.

31 Ibid., pp. 371-85.

32 Ibid., p. 312.

33 Ibid., p. 322. However, in developing his theory, Leuba discusses "Justification" as the fourth phase of the conversion-process (pp. 349-51), so that it appears as though he is uncovering a seven-step process. We believe that the phase described as "The Role of the Will" is not really a new link in the process, but only a further clarification of the second one--self-surrender--to which Leuba

The first of these phases--the sense of sin--based on data in conformity with his own approach to religion, is "the feeling of unrighteousness and the effort towards holiness."³⁴ His data reveal that there are two ways of experiencing this phase. There is the way of those whose "natural sin-pain" is altered by theological training, for whom God appears as a judge, and who depend upon a legal transaction for relief. There is another way for those who either have had no such theological training or have discarded it. These experience their sinfulness as an inability to do what they want to do and God appears to them as a Savior.³⁵ Leuba quotes from his case-studies to show examples of the first group for whom the experiences of guilt and condemnation are so strong as to "produce tragic fears and induce grave bodily dangers."³⁶ The second group experiences this sense of sin in a more natural way. An example Leuba gives is that of Augustine who has "not a thought for happiness or misery in a future life",³⁷ but who

attaches so much importance. In our exploration, we shall present Leuba's theorizing according to the phases of the process, i.e., sense of sin, self-surrender, faith, justification, joy, and appearance of newness, and combine there-with the further clarifications he discloses in his Part II.

34 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 317.

35 Ibid., p. 323.

36 Ibid., p. 324.

37 Ibid., p. 325.

looks at himself subjectively, as he is brought face to face with his own wretchedness. God does not seem to be a judge for Augustine. Other examples show a lack of terror and the appeal to the kindness and love of God.³⁸ Leuba points to this sense of sin as

the conglomerate of affective experiences known by that name--made up essentially of general physical discomforts due to unhealthy living [...] and of conflicting moral tendencies, whose painfulness has also its physical basis--is in many, perhaps in most, cases complicated with the affective value of various theological conceptions.³⁹

Leuba presents a number of cases in each of which the respondent focuses on one special vice, manifesting greater or lesser moral weakness.⁴⁰ Not all persons can pinpoint the sense of sin so clearly. Leuba describes reports of a feeling of "diffused sin-consciousness" as in the cases of Eleanor Emerson, John Wesley, Case of P, and the Rev. J. O. Peck.⁴¹ But in all of these, whether it is sharply defined or remains diffuse, the experience of wretchedness, sense of sin or "the way down" is there and leads to the "Regeneration-process"⁴² by way of self-surrender.

38 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 326-27.

39 Ibid., p. 327.

40 Ibid., pp. 328-33.

41 Ibid., pp. 333-35.

42 Ibid., p: 327.

This second phase--self-surrender--is the turning-point in religious conversion. It is the shift in the direction from "the way down" to "the way up" which particularly distinguishes conversion. Leuba notes that there seems to be a discrepancy between the first and second steps and that frequently the process stops at the first stage. However, once the second stage begins Leuba finds that it proceeds to the end of the positive phase to which he gives the general appellation of "the way up" to contrast it with "the way down" of the first movement of conversion.⁴³

Leuba shows how self-surrender, the passive phase of conversion, proceeds from "conversion-conflict". Though the sense of sin differs in everyone, it generally implies "the unification of consciousness through the subjection of a class of desires in opposition to another class of desires."⁴⁴ Leuba says it is experienced diversely as physical misery, remorse, regret, worthlessness, wretchedness, despair, etc.⁴⁵ The moment of self-surrender is the letting go of the wretchedness and the turning to Jesus. One example quoted by Leuba particularly illustrates this phase: "Now, I lay down my arms and am unreservedly ready to whatever Thou shalt command." Leuba notes that this

⁴³ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 337.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 329.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 330, 336.

"corresponds to a peculiar physiological condition",⁴⁶ and he stresses that the experiencing of self-surrender can only happen insofar as the sense of sin has been felt. There is no other way, according to Leuba, whereby the process can evolve.

In his attempt at a deeper understanding of the role of the will and its effectiveness in conversion, Leuba clarifies his views as follows:

We shall conform in this section to the prevalent opinion and use the word "Will" to designate a supposed or real self-determined power of choice, independent of, and of a different nature from, desires; having in itself the ability, by some not understood means, to cause a stronger desire to be overcome by a weaker one, and thus to save our actions from mechanical necessity.⁴⁷

Leuba then points out that empirical scientists did not discover the illusory quality of free-will. That honor, he says, belongs to the Christian church as it long ago formulated the utter impotency of the will for salvation. This teaching comes out forcefully in the fact that man accepts sinfulness as his own but cannot appropriate the goodness he irradiates as his, for it is the Lord's. Leuba sees examples of man's appropriation of basic sinfulness in Paul, Augustine and Luther. He notes, moreover, that this appropriation is the result of theological teaching. He is amazed that man assumes his power to do evil, but cannot

46 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 335.

47 Ibid., p. 364.

assume that to do good. Leuba calls this a "one-sided determinism"⁴⁸ which necessitates self-surrender. If man can do no good on his own, then he must abandon himself, give in, be passive. There is, for him, no other way. It is this fact which accounts for the passivity of the converts who accept to renounce, to give up, to surrender the will because of its inability to do good, and to rely totally "on God's good pleasure".⁴⁹

However, Leuba asks:

But why is it that man looks upon the descending current of the stream of life as his, while he considers the ascending one as not his? Why does he identify himself with the desires to be denied, the evil tendencies; while he ascribes to God the desires to be affirmed? The moral religions and philosophies are expressed from that standpoint. Hence they call for self-surrender, self-renunciation, self-annihilation.⁵⁰

Leuba goes on to show that although the usual conversion vocabulary is passive, the convert also demonstrates an active dimension. Speaking about the convert in general, he notes that

he receives Jesus Christ; he lets God take possession of his being, he yields, he surrenders. Yet the very words "receive", "accept", "surrender", have a positive side; they can just as well be accompanied with that which constitutes effort.⁵¹

48 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 365, 366.

49 Ibid., p. 366.

50 Ibid., p. 369.

51 Ibid.

Therefore, Leuba's conclusion from the analysis of his data is that:

Impulses in two directions, both equally ours, because we feel them both, and equally independent of will-effort, is what analysis brings to light concerning the rôle of the will in conversion.⁵²

It is Leuba's contention that the Church recognizes what modern psychology agrees to i.e., the sense of effort is not will-effort, it is "merely the return sensations of muscle contractions."⁵³

The next phase--faith--is, for Leuba, a basically affective state which includes two elements: a specific affective or volitional state and a certain intellectual belief.⁵⁴ He clearly distinguishes faith from such terms as belief, and knowledge, which for him are based on rational cognition and do not correspond to the specific psychic state which he finds in his data. He considers as inappropriate a definition of faith based on such rational concepts as, e.g., "a specific psychic state which is, or can be, accompanied by certainty as to the reality of intellectual conceptions, religious or other."⁵⁵ Leuba prefers to look for clues into the affective component of this faith-state and he finds some in Wesley's writings:

52 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 370.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid., p. 359.

55 Ibid., p. 338.

Notice the use of the word feel:--a psycho-physiological transformation no more dependent upon intellectual information and belief than a sudden turn in the general condition of a patient depends upon the medical theories he holds. An interesting remark can be made here concerning the influence of suggestion: it is as the change which God works in the heart is being described that the very same transformation takes place in Wesley.⁵⁶

Elaborating upon another individual's experience, he writes that:

He lives in the universal life; he and man, he and nature, he and God, are one. We find here again the raison d'être of this universal craving to yield one's self, to give up, to re-enter Nature's womb and live of its life. That state of confidence, trust, union, with all things, following upon the achievement of moral unity, which we have found, more or less tersely expressed in every conversion considered is the Faith-state.⁵⁷

Leuba states definitively that he accepts faith only in its primary element, i.e., as "a specific affective state" and as "an internal harmony", and he tells us that the secondary element of faith, "certain intellectual beliefs", is weak and ineffective, with no motive power.⁵⁸ Indeed, Leuba notes that intellectual beliefs are usually weak until this period when the convert may seek to be instructed.⁵⁹ He expresses his views on the weak intellectual origins as follows:

56 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 340.

57 Ibid., p. 345.

58 Ibid., p. 359.

59 Ibid., pp. 342, 345, 346.

The preceding pages have made apparent, we hope, the accessoriness of doctrinal beliefs in regeneration. The first part of the conversion-process ending in absolute self-surrender, needs have no dogmatic forerunners or accompaniments; the sense of sin and its natural feeling-consequences are all that must exist. From it flows out every experience of the "way down:" wretchedness, feeling of isolation, conviction of inability to realize the unity of purpose longed for and finally even despair. With the disappearance of every known sinful desire, a psychic revolution, harmonizing the motor tendencies, takes place and brings peace and joy. Neither is there any place for the necessity of doctrinal beliefs in this "positive phase." The only point at which doctrinal beliefs might condition the process is, then, the turning-point; before and after the conversion-process all is determined by physiological laws, just as the round of feelings through which we pass during a bodily disturbance.⁶⁰

Moreover, for Leuba, the significance of the faith-state

lies solely in the fact that it is the psychic correlate of a biological growth reducing contending desires to one direction; a growth which expresses itself in new affective states and new reactions; in larger, nobler, more Christ-like activities.⁶¹

In enlarging upon the nature of the faith-state, Leuba explains that it follows upon the laws of the psyche just as any other affective state must, and that it does not need the special intercession of Jesus, which for Leuba "belongs to the mythology of a by-gone age".⁶² Let us once

60 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 345-46. Leuba gives another good clue as to how he understands this particular phase. On p. 357, he notes: "The particular forms in which the affective states dress themselves, are functions of the intellectual atmosphere of the time."

61 Ibid., p. 346.

62 Ibid., p. 361.

more examine his description of this natural process:

We have seen in previous chapters what are the forerunning links of the process; the facts make plain that salvation (deliverance from moral duality and sin) is a concomitant of faith, and that, faith necessarily follows upon the sin-pain and self-surrender; according to a law of continuity of the same nature as the one determining the succession of our thoughts and feelings. There is no more reason for positing a superhuman intercession in the succession of the phenomena of conversion (sin-pain, self-surrender, unity, joy, disappearance or weakness of certain impulses and desires) than in the more ordinary changes--be they sudden or gradual--of our affective life, as in the cessation of "moral", "mental", or "physical" pain.⁶³

Obviously, for Leuba, the faith-state necessarily leads to what he designates as justification, which is ordinarily understood as an assurance of being saved or justified. Leuba says it is experienced as relaxation, as relief, and as joy--his fourth stage. He emphasizes that "converts feel justified or pardoned".⁶⁴ He believes that Protestant theology reverses the actual experience of the converts at this point of the process. Whereas "Protestant doctrine" considers peace as a result of the moment of justification, Leuba is of the opinion that "man believes himself pardoned and justified, because he finds himself released from the oppression of sin."⁶⁵ Leuba thinks the

⁶³ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 361.

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp. 356, 349-50. See footnote 33.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 357. Leuba appears to be applying James's theory of the emotions. See W. James, Principles of Psychology, vol. 2, p. 442, where he states that his new theory of the emotions consists in the fact that "the

Roman theology is closer to the fact insofar as it looks upon justification as "the covering of sin through an infusion of divine grace."⁶⁶ This state soon merges into that of joy. Leuba notes that this joy is never wanting. It begins violently, subsides gradually, and becomes a steady peace and satisfaction.⁶⁷

The next phase--appearance of newness--which follows the period of joy is, for Leuba, a curious stage because "an appearance of newness beautifies every object; it is as if the state of internal harmony was projected outwardly."⁶⁸ Leuba thinks this state may be "an emotional delusion in which the affective state colors external sense impressions",⁶⁹ and he offers a further clarification into the phenomenon:

The conversion crisis may be supposed to have for physiological counterpart a redistribution of energy involving general modification of the association paths; or an alteration of rhythms, changing the nervous regimen. It is natural enough to admit that to a psychic turmoil so intense as that of conversion corresponds a no less considerable physiological commotion settling in a new arrangement of the motor mechanism.⁷⁰

bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion."

66 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 357.

67 Ibid., p. 351.

68 Ibid., pp: 353, 359.

69 Ibid., p. 354.

70 Ibid.

We can accept this statement as typical of Leuba's conclusions about the conversion-process.

2. The Evaluation of the Theory

Leuba's method leads him to a theory developed on a more scientific basis than that of Hall. It does nevertheless present serious shortcomings which we will now discuss.

a) The Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

As we have stated earlier, Leuba's theory of man is nowhere presented in his work. What we are evaluating here is the theory we have surmised from it.

This implicit theory in which Leuba reduces all aspects of man's life to the subjective level and to naturalism, seems to be a description of what Binswanger would call "homo natura, a creature of organic nature."⁷¹ This general biological approach to man is closely associated with a concern with the instincts and with adaptive behavior to achieve an inner state of balance. Therefore, when he speaks of conversion as "a need", a "redistribution of energies", or as "a new arrangement of the motor mechanisms",⁷² the

71 L. Binswanger, Being-in-the-world: Selected Papers, translated and with a critical introduction by J. Needleman, New York, Basic Books, 1963, pp. 54-55.

72 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 354-55.

biological level figures prominently. Leuba's concern with the emotions, the unconscious, self-surrender, and the will show that he argues also from an emotional bias and accepts as real only that which is emotionally verified and/or satisfying. Therefore, the psychological dimension is also very prominent. Indeed, these two dimensions can hardly be separated in his theorizing except that the biological one is prepotent to the psychological.⁷³

However, Leuba clearly depreciates the role of knowledge and all that touches the intellect, i.e., beliefs, systems, and institutions, on the grounds that these figure little, if at all, in the momentous events of man's life. He thereby dichotomizes, mistrusts, and relegates man's ability to know and to experience truth and love to the psychophysiological dimensions. We think that such a view of man is partial or narrow and propose to show that his view of religious man corroborates our claim.

⁷³ In his theory of human motivation, A. H. Maslow states that physiological needs are the most prepotent of all needs. See his Motivation and Personality, New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1954, p. 82. He adds: "What this means specifically is that in the human being who is missing everything in life in an extreme fashion, it is most likely that the major motivation would be the physiological needs rather than any others. A person who is lacking food, safety, love, and esteem would most probably hunger for food more strongly than for anything else."

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

As an early definition of conversion shows, Leuba posits only two orders of nature--the physiological and the psychological--as a means of understanding this religious experience.⁷⁴ On these grounds, he theorizes that conversion is primarily (and merely) a subjective phenomenon. Since we have already attempted to show (in our exploration) the psychophysiological connections which he draws, we wish now to examine Leuba's questionnaire which we believe contains his overall view of religiousness.

A careful examination of the questionnaire reveals Leuba's primary assumption that conversion is a subjective phenomenon only, and indicates that it is to be treated (that is, described, classified and analyzed)⁷⁵ as such. Its specificity is recognized above all as being an experience of change⁷⁶ which is progressive.⁷⁷ A major consequence flowing from this aspect of change (which sets off many

74 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 321. "Conversion [...] is the very creating method of nature. It represents a physiological as well as a psychic step in the evolution of man."

75 By means of this assumption, Leuba dismisses the possibility of meaning in the formalized dimension of religion, i.e., the institutional church with its ceremonies, prayers, sacramental system, and intellectual beliefs.

76 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 371. See questions 3, 6, 7, 8. Cf. Appendix, p. 129.

77 Ibid. See questions 3, 7, 8.

others as by chain reaction), is that conversion is fixed to a point in time and space.⁷⁸ This experience can be remembered in detail,⁷⁹ and the questionnaire suggests that the process can be analyzed variously: it is essentially related to morality;⁸⁰ it is related to one's physiological and mental health;⁸¹ it is also essentially a crisis experience;⁸² it is by nature an affective experience;⁸³ it can be temporary or permanent;⁸⁴ therefore it can be repeated;⁸⁵ and finally, it can be the result of suggestion.⁸⁶

From this study we find that to be religious, for Leuba, has nothing to do with a supernatural order nor even with a spiritual order as such; neither does it have anything to do with belief in a personal God. Religiousness issues from the good biological and emotional life. It is simply a question of human growth. It is the attainment of a fuller life experienced as a reduction of dualism, as a

⁷⁸ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 371. See questions 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

⁷⁹ Ibid. See questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

⁸⁰ Ibid. See questions 3, 4, 5, 6, 8.

⁸¹ Ibid. See question 4.

⁸² Ibid. See questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

⁸³ Ibid. See questions 4, 5, 6, 7.

⁸⁴ Ibid. See questions 6, 7.

⁸⁵ Ibid. See question 7.

⁸⁶ Ibid. See questions 2, 3, 5.

result of surrendering to a moral imperative.

We must conclude that Leuba is a very early spokesman for the religion of naturalism and the good biological life.⁸⁷ In speaking for the religion of naturalism, Leuba definitely desacralizes religion and claims it in the name of humanism. More than a decade later he still maintained that the physiological order is the most significant from which to study religion.⁸⁸ Sante De Sanctis and Georges

87 A. H. Maslow has become one of the foremost psychologists to promote this view. In The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, New York, The Viking Press, 1971, pp. 324-25 (hereafter cited as The Farther Reaches of Human Nature), he states: "The value-life (spiritual, religious, philosophical, axiological, etc.) is an aspect of human biology and is on the same continuum with the 'lower' animal life (rather than being in separated, dichotomized, or mutually exclusive realms). It is probably therefore species-wide, supra-cultural even though it must be actualized by culture in order to exist. What all of this means is that the so-called spiritual or value-life, or 'higher' life, is on the same continuum (is the same kind or quality of thing) with the life of the flesh, or of the body, i.e., the animal life, the material life, the 'lower' life. That is, the spiritual life is part of our biological life. It is the 'highest' part of it, but yet part of it."

88 See J. H. Leuba, "Psychologie des phénomènes religieux", p. 119. At this Congress, the Psychology of Religion was the first topic on the agenda, and Leuba was the second speaker. His paper treated of two topics: (1) Religion as a biological function, and (2) the relationships of religion with science and philosophy. Concerning the first topic Leuba wrote: "Ce point de vue biologique est, nous semble-t-il, le plus étendu et le plus significatif auquel on puisse se placer pour envisager la religion." That principle is basic with Leuba. He is in fact, more than any other psychologist, responsible for introducing a truly biological approach to religious conversion. In 1902, T. Flournoy argued that biological interpretation of the phenomena was indeed one of two basic principles of the psychology of religion. Leuba had already discovered this principle when he wrote his dissertation.

Berguer are two psychologists who point out that this view is reductionistic.⁸⁹

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

It is obvious that Leuba's aim is to fashion his psychology of the religious phenomena on the natural sciences by emulating their emphasis on objective observation. It is also obvious that Leuba grounds his psychology in physiology, a very successful natural science. If J. T. Hanford can speak of Hall's psychology as representing "an aspiring empiricism",⁹⁰ Leuba, one of Hall's students, appears confident of having attained this aim:

Supposing that these several phenomena have been singled out, and that, as far as our means permit, they have been determined in their cause and in their nature, we should possess in these theoretical results the elements of a science of religion. The new creed would be born; the wings of youth would no more be clipped in the spring of life by a scholastic dogmatism; and the soul-midwifery now extensively,

89 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 11-26, 87-91, 273, concludes that the biological approach is, for Leuba, a way by which he can arrive at a positivistic theory of religion in psychology. In this view, "evolution implies only development." G. Berguer, "Théorie de Leuba", Archives de psychologie, 14, 1914, p. 41, writes: "La religion selon la théorie de Leuba, se réduit à un processus en voie d'évolution."

90 J. T. Hanford, "A Synoptic Approach: Resolving Problems in Empirical and Phenomenological Approaches to the Psychology of Religion", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 14, 1975, p. 220 (hereafter cited as "A Synoptic Approach").

but ignorantly, practiced by our revivalists and pastors, could be based upon a positive knowledge of the psychology of regeneration. "What a fantastic dream!" many will exclaim.⁹¹

While such a claim may be made in the name of science, it also bespeaks of an urgency on Leuba's part to desacralize and to emphasize the agnostic quality of the scientific method. Moreover, he means to discover therein the truth about religious conversion. Admittedly, Leuba stands out for his positivistic method of psychology. John Macquarrie believes that Leuba's method is "more strictly psychological" than that of James and that Leuba "better represents the naturalistic point of view".⁹²

We agree that Leuba's method is truly a genuine natural scientific one, i.e., one imbued with the objective ideal of science and leading to an inductive differential psychology and theory of conversion.

ii) Data-Gathering

Leuba's care in gathering personal data, in analyzing them and in supplementing his information by means of interviews and correspondence is indeed lauded by many scholars.⁹³ Leuba is also a leader in the use of personal

⁹¹ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 311.

⁹² J. Macquarrie, Twentieth-Century Religious Thought, London, SCM Press, 1971, p. 105.

⁹³ See J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 347. Pratt notes that Leuba's 1896 study on religious conversion

historical documents. His method reveals a distinctive advance in the understanding of empiricism in psychology, giving more credence to his objectivity by reporting on his method of gathering data. The printing of the questionnaire by means of which he obtains his major source of information is a precedent. Though he does not, as already noted, reveal his statistical data at this time, he does publish some of his documentary materials and gives bibliographical details for the historical documents. Leuba does not however, make note that his information is based on a very limited sampling: his respondents are all Anglo-Saxon American Protestants familiar with revivals.

According to Coe, Leuba sets "a very good precedent" by admitting of his own experience of conversion.⁹⁴ We

is "the first article of great intrinsic value [...] the first of a long series of important papers." On p. 438, Pratt, still referring to Leuba's work, adds: "In their consistent scientific point of view and their keen psychological analysis they form a body of writings of great value and importance." See also O. Strunk, "Humanistic Religious Psychology", in The Psychology of Religion: Historical and Interpretive Readings, ed. O. Strunk, Nashville, Abingdon, 1971, p. 117. He says Leuba "brought to the field an empirical zeal comparable to any contemporary behaviorist. [...] Because of his scholarship, his works had to be taken seriously." J. Segond, "Le Problème de la psychologie de la grâce et de la conversion", p. 424, calls Leuba "un spécialiste, connu par des articles de revues et des rapports de congrès." A. R. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 6, adds that Leuba is to be commended for his "keen analysis of data".

⁹⁴ G. A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion, p. xl. See J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 371. In 1937, Leuba greatly expanded this self-revelation in an autobiographical account, "The Making of a Psychologist of Religion", pp. 173-200.

regret that Leuba did not, at this time, elaborate on this personal experience. Had he done so, the scientific community would have benefited in knowing that his naturalistic stance was most probably not only methodological but also a matter of personal belief.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

Leuba presents his theory in a truly scientific fashion, but surprisingly so, we note both an oversight and an ambiguity in the phases of the conversion-process. While he speaks of "six subdivisions in the analysis of conversion",⁹⁵ his presentation in fact contains seven due to the inclusion of "justification" as the fourth phase (which he considered important enough to demand further clarifications in his Part II). Moreover, the naming of "the role of the will" as the last phase appears to us merely a further clarification of the second phase--self-surrender--and we explored his theory accordingly spelling out six phases: sense of sin, self-surrender, faith-state, justification, joy, and appearance of newness.

Reference to his own experience of conversion, aside from being a happy precedent according to humanistic psychologists, appears ambiguous to us. On the one hand, it appears contrary to his acceptance of the objective ideal of

95 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 322.

science. On the other, it seems to confirm his belief in the possibility of obtaining positivistic knowledge regarding religious phenomena, and serves as well to reinforce his naturalistic stance before the religious phenomena.

c) The Content

Leuba's analysis particularly uncovers the processive nature of religious conversion. Whereas Hall only alluded to it, Leuba painstakingly details it into phases emphasizing its descending and ascending movements. He stresses the necessary flow and order of the phases within this process which presents an inherent continuity unbroken by the discontinuity marking the passage from one phase to the other.⁹⁶ Leuba affirms that the process begins with a phase of dissonance or conflict popularly called conviction of sin by the "Clark School". No doubt his case studies and documents confirm this fact. Starbuck is quick to disprove this view and shows that although the sense of sin is a very common antecedent, there are, nevertheless, various other motive powers for conversion, the other most frequent one being the search for an ideal.⁹⁷ Another hasty

⁹⁶ J. H. Leuba, "A Study"; p. 337.

⁹⁷ E. D. Starbuck, Psychology of Religion, pp. 44-48. In trying to determine the motivation for conversion, Starbuck finds eight common elements: fears, other self-regarding motives, a moral ideal, conviction of sin, response to teaching, imitation, and social pressure.

conclusion about the process is that it is always progressive in nature. Salzman is one of many psychologists who later demonstrate this inexactitude.⁹⁸

An excellent insight into the process of conversion is that suggestion plays a role therein. Coe gives credit to Leuba for having noted this.⁹⁹ However, if Leuba's analysis of the process is insightful and exact, it is so only for a specific type of converts: Anglo-Saxon American Protestants familiar with revivals.¹⁰⁰ One has to agree with Penido that Leuba generalizes too quickly in taking his case study analysis as typical of all religious conversions.¹⁰¹ This leads to what Norborg calls Leuba's "dogmatic system"¹⁰² which is detectable throughout his work.

Similarly, Leuba draws attention to the fact that the role of the will consists solely in self-surrender, that is, in passivity. Here again, Starbuck is quick to show

⁹⁸ See L. Salzman's three articles: "The Psychology of Religious and Ideological Conversion", pp. 177-87; "The Psychology of Regressive Religious Conversion", pp. 61-75; "Types of Religious Conversion", pp. 8-20.

⁹⁹ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 340. See G. A. Coe, The Psychology of Religion, p. 107.

¹⁰⁰ Leuba's section on certain core doctrines is also directly pertinent to this group of people.

¹⁰¹ M. T. L. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 42.

¹⁰² Sv. Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience, p. 179. See also S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 17, where he says Leuba "never concealed his own austere positivism".

that self-surrender is only one way of becoming converted. Another very frequent kind of conversion, according to Starbuck, is the "spontaneous awakening type"¹⁰³ for whose subject conviction of sin (needing self-surrender) may not be a significant factor.

A further hasty generalization into the process concerns Leuba's statement that joy is always present. Coe points out that Leuba here "misses an essential fact" and directs us to Starbuck's discovery of "the marvelous varieties that cluster about such terms as conversion".¹⁰⁴ While Leuba does substantiate the presence of joy with numerous documentation, he does not really demonstrate its meaning except to mention that it gives the convert the illusion of perceiving divine truths.

As indicated earlier, Leuba's bias with subjectivity and emotion leads him to practically ignore the role of the intellect. A good example of this anti-intellectualism in his theory of conversion appears in his definition of faith as a "specific affective state". Though he admits that it also entails "certain intellectual beliefs", he holds them

¹⁰³ E. D. Starbuck, Psychology of Religion, p. 92, states: "These are cases in which the new life bursts forth without any apparent immediate adequate cause." Yet, although this type appears to follow the lines of normal growth, causes into its occurrence can always be found. Starbuck adds (p. 107) that this type "is the most frequent conversion phenomenon following efforts in the direction of the new life."

¹⁰⁴ G. A. Coe, The Spiritual Life, p. 107.

to be a "non-essential and accidental accompaniment of the faith-state".¹⁰⁵ Only reluctantly does he attribute any importance to intellectual beliefs at the turning-point. It is this bent which prompts Norborg to say Leuba "never reckoned with the aspect of knowing".¹⁰⁶ Leuba actually divorces the intellectual aspect of conversion from its comprehensive dynamism. We believe Leuba identified the role of the intellect with doctrines and beliefs as well as with institutions (all of which left him unmoved), so that abandoning these he relegated the intellectual factor to a very minor role.¹⁰⁷ We have seen how the whole thrust of the questionnaire focused upon a precise experience of the reduction of dualism at the psychophysiological levels. In this sense, Leuba sets another precedent, albeit not a happy one, which Oates calls the "pigeonholing of religion as a part of life" which leads to "faulty thinking, vagueness of

105 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 359.

106 Sv. Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience, pp. 194, 263. See also J. Segond, "Le Problème psychologique de la grâce et de la conversion", p. 428, where he says that Leuba's theory is "une interprétation tendancieuse" qui est "exempte de sympathie intellectuelle."

107 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 314. Leuba insists on "the absolute divorce which must be recognized between intellectual beliefs and religion." See "A Psychologist of Religion", pp. 176-79. It is our belief that Leuba's own "violent" experience of conversion, issuing from "an acute sense of guilt" for having fallen short of "a moral ideal" in which doctrines remained "incomprehensible" and the church people left him "unmoved", had much to do with his own interpretation of the documents.

definition, and damaging practice".¹⁰⁸

The negation of one dimension causes others to be unduly emphasized, in this case, the motive power or affections which, in Leuba's theory of conversion, are wholly effective throughout the process. It must be recalled that for Leuba, "the power of religion is proportional to the depth and intensity of the feelings connected with that experience."¹⁰⁹ Beginning with the sense of sin and its natural feeling consequences,¹¹⁰ the conversion-process breaks through at the moment of self-surrender. The other phases: faith-state, justification, joy; the appearance of newness, all follow through as a "redistribution of energies".¹¹¹ Obviously, Leuba is applying here another fundamental law of biology--homeostasis--a property of all biological organisms which he connects with the process of continuity wherein one state follows upon another. The first state--sin-pain--nearly always, and the second state--self-surrender--always sets in motion an inevitable progression to the opposite polarity: new birth.¹¹² This is what

108 W. Oates, Psychology of Religion, p. 16.

109 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 316-17. No one today doubts the fact that the emotions are the dynamic factor of personality. What we lament is that Leuba theorizes on a very narrow understanding of personality.

110 Ibid., p. 345.

111 Ibid., p. 355.

112 Ibid., pp. 360-61.

Leuba implies when he speaks of "reducing contending desires to one direction".¹¹³ Upon this psychophysiological premise, he dismisses the need for God and posits that conversion emerges from the inner biological need of an organism.

Having established his understanding of process according to biological law,¹¹⁴ Leuba offers us a further lead into its dynamics by connecting affective power or energy with the role of the will, which, in his scheme, must be given up. Only under this paradoxical condition can the process of conversion continue its unfolding which consists in gratifying the inner need for new birth.¹¹⁵ We believe Leuba thereby uncovers an essential and paradoxical dynamic

113 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 346.

114 We do not wish to belabor the point but feel Leuba's view of man is so limited that it might help us to review another author's understanding of organism. See A. Watts, "Psychotherapy and Eastern Religion: Metaphysical Bases of Psychiatry", Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 6, 1974, p. 20, where he cites: "An organism starts as a seed, or a cell, a little small... I'm at a loss for words, because I won't call it an object, and I won't call it a thing, and I won't call it an entity. All these words misdescribe what an organism is. Anyway, it starts tiny, and it swells, and as it swells, it becomes more complicated, not by the addition of parts that are screwed on or welded together, but it has this marvelous capacity for growth...and that's how we came into being. An organism is incredibly intelligent, and its intelligence surpasses anything we might call mechanical intelligence." In our view, Leuba particularly underestimates the fact, the need, and the role of intelligence in conversion.

115 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 355. Conversion here is said to be a need and an experience.

of religious conversion: self-transcendence by means of self-surrender.

In the last analysis, conversion, according to Leuba, so depends upon physiological growth (recall his definition of conversion as "the psychic correspondent of a physiological growth"), that it can fail only insofar as physiological growth fails. He insists that "before and after the conversion-process all is determined by physiological laws".¹¹⁶ Leuba thereby affirms that there is no more need to posit "a superhuman interposition in the succession of the phenomena of conversion, [...] than in the more ordinary changes [...] of our affective life".¹¹⁷

We have retraced Leuba's rationale for the claim that the religious conversion process can rightfully be the subject of a natural scientific method. If Leuba thereby removes the whole process away from the supernatural, away from God in general, it is because of his belief that the God of religion

is known in 'inner processes', i.e., in the appearance in consciousness of particular states or processes. The knowledge of God derived from these experiences is an empirical knowledge. Remove these facts of consciousness and the God of religion may continue to exist, but he ceases to be an object of human knowledge.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 346. See J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", p. 445. Pratt very aptly calls Leuba a "physiological psychologist".

¹¹⁷ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 361.

¹¹⁸ Id., "Theology and Psychology", Harvard Theological Review, 19, 1916, p. 424.

We agree with Paul Pruyser who remarks that Leuba, placed before the question of the existence of God, opted for the stance of illusion.¹¹⁹ Leuba further clarifies this position a few years later by stating: "Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is in last analysis the end of religion."¹²⁰ Leuba thereby definitively links his stance with naturalism¹²¹ as so many humanistic psychologists have done in the name of the

119 P. W. Pruyser, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, New York, Harper & Row, Publishers, 1968, p. 5 (hereafter cited as A Dynamic Psychology of Religion). See also J. H. Leuba, A Psychological Study of Religion, pp. 9-10, where he writes: "The origin of religion is thus entirely within the powers of men, even of the crudest. If the terms 'superhuman' and 'supernatural' have any relevance in religion, it is merely with reference to the gods and their action on man, should they have an existence outside the mind of the believer. As to the word 'sacred', it would continue to have validity even should the gods be no more than mental creations; but then only in the sense in which sacredness belongs to primordial instincts and to the loftier purposes which, little by little, appear as human nature unfolds its fairest aspects."

120 J. H. Leuba, "The Contents of Religious Consciousness", pp. 571-72. See also his A Psychological Study of Religion, p. 10. Leuba here states: "The sacredness of religion would in this alternative be derived solely from the sacredness of life; of generation, of birth and death, of hunger and thirst, of love and hate, of joy and sorrow, of good and evil."

121 J. B. Pratt, "Psychology of Religion", pp. 437-38. Speaking specifically about Leuba's work on conversion he writes: "The whole process was treated from the naturalistic point of view, the causal sequences traced, and the idea of the supernatural intervention ruled out. [...] This naturalistic attitude dominates in a general way all the writers in this field, but no others have carried it through so consistently and emphasized it so strongly and, I may add, so dogmatically, as has Leuba."

humanization of man.¹²²

No doubt such a position could be defended in the name of scientific or methodological agnosticism, but in the name of scientific objectivity, Leuba should have admitted that converts act as if they believe in the existence of God, as if they know him personally.¹²³ In fact, a reading of Leuba's documents confirms that in almost every case the converts specify a very personal experience of God. We note a few examples:

¹²² Maslow has become a classic spokesman for this stance. See his Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences, New York, The Viking Press, 1970, pp. x-xi (hereafter cited as Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences): "The great lesson from the true mystics, from the Zen monks, and now also from the Humanistic and Transpersonal psychologists-- that the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbors, friends, and family, in one's back yard,..." It certainly could be argued that Leuba is here positing more than the merely biological perspective or at least more than is usually understood by biological. Maslow has expressed a much broader definition which seems applicable here. See "The Farther Reaches of Human Nature", Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, Spring 1969, p. 3: Maslow is stating that human needs are biological in origin; even the "higher needs" are biologically based. He writes: "These higher human needs are therefore biological, and I speak here of love, the need of love, for friendship, for dignity, for self-respect, for individuality, for self-fulfillment, and so on."

¹²³ P. Campbell & E. McMahon, "Religious-Type Experience in the Context of Humanistic and Transpersonal Psychology", Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 6, 1974, p. 15, speak to this point: "The issue for transpersonal psychology is not whether the God of various religions exists or does not exist. It is, rather, the empirical fact that man acts and believes as if a God or "the One", "the All", "the superordinate whole" somehow exists and that man feels called, impelled, destined or meant by his very nature to extend himself into and in some way to become one with this larger reality."

A: "I was praying earnestly to God to save me for the sake of Jesus."

C: "As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face."

E: "It was here that God met me face to face, and I shall never forget the meeting."

I: "I realized that I needed a power from outside of myself, a power that could save. He offered me Christ's, and read John iii:16, "Come unto me all ye that labor, etc.," and other passages. He prayed and I also. By every conscious effort of my mind and will, I surrendered myself to the power of Jesus."124.

In our view, whether Leuba deliberately overlooked these statements or simply read them as mere symbolic expressions of physiological needs, or again as illusions, he pays far too little attention to the possible implications of such declarations, and too much attention, we believe, to his own loss of meaning therein.¹²⁵

What is regrettable in Leuba's theory is not his conception of man as a functional biological organism, (such a view is clearly stressed today); rather, the

124 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", pp. 372, 373, 374, 379.

125 See A. H. Maslow, The Farther Reaches of Human Nature, p. xx, where he states that "science has no right to shut out any of the data of experience". See also R. V. McCann, The Nature and Varieties of Religious Change, p. 39, who speaks to this tendency: "As usual in his contributions, Leuba goes far beyond the evidence of his data to make his case for the 'religion of humanity'." See also M. B. Arnold, "Basic Assumptions in Psychology", p. 11. The author refers to Leuba as one of those psychologists "who regard religion as an outworn superstition of former ages, invoke science in support of their disbelief."

weakness is that Leuba limits man's creative spirit to a narrow understanding of the biological dimension which does not call forth or allow for all of man's spiritual dimension.¹²⁶ However, in spite of this seeming lack, Leuba does speak of the spiritual dimension (in Maslowian terms) insofar as he finds (1) that conversion is a reduction of dualism, and (2) that it is a transcendence of self-satisfaction in the moral sphere.¹²⁷

In summary, although it overstresses the biological and affective dimensions, defines the role of the will as that of self-surrender, and dogmatically overlooks the role of the intellect and of God, Leuba's theory of conversion is nonetheless truly a theory. He begins with what is, misery or sin-pain, and shows how this state evolves into the process called conversion by means of six consecutive phases. A contributing factor leading to the construction of this theoretical model of conversion is, no doubt, the

126 J. Progoff, The Death and Rebirth of Psychology, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973, p. 264. The author articulates much more positively and productively, we think, an organismic view of man which brings out the specifically human aspect: "The foundation of the new kind of psychology is its conception of man as an organism of psychological depth and of spiritual magnitude."

127 In a conference recorded by Big Sur Recordings, San Rafael, California, A. H. Maslow, speaking on The Psychology of Religious Awareness, states that the spiritual life from the point of view of a psychologist, is the "transcending of dichotomies". It would seem to us that Leuba very keenly understood this essential characteristic of conversion.

fact that Leuba examined the sudden religious conversion which permitted him to identify the phases of the process more easily. Leuba's theoretical model is the first to be elaborated inductively and we believe it is worthy of note that, to our knowledge, the basic processive nature of conversion which he unfolds has never been falsified.

Finally, let us mention that Leuba definitely enriches the psychological language of conversion. Many of his expressions soon become incorporated into a distinctive conversion-vocabulary. We find the following phrases to be most typical: "sense of pain",¹²⁸ "natural sin-pain",¹²⁹ "the conversion-crisis", "regeneration-process",¹³⁰ "self-surrender", "the turning-point",¹³¹ "sense of duality", "the conversion-process",¹³² "the conversion-conflict",¹³³ "organic transformation",¹³⁴ "the conversion-experience",¹³⁵ "the way-down", "the way-up",¹³⁶ "at one with all creation",

128 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 322.

129 Ibid., p. 323.

130 Ibid., p. 326.

131 Ibid., p. 327.

132 Ibid., p. 328.

133 Ibid., p. 329.

134 Ibid., p. 334.

135 Ibid., p. 336.

136 Ibid., p. 337.

"faith-state",¹³⁷ "a psychic revolution",¹³⁸ "pre-conversion struggle",¹³⁹ "an appearance of newness", "the state of harmony",¹⁴⁰ "new birth", "a redistribution of energies", "a specific transformation", "religious consciousness",¹⁴¹ "an experience of salvation".¹⁴²

3. A Synopsis of the Model

a) Approach

i) A Theory of Personality (Implicit)

Man is a creature of organic nature for whom the biological life is prepotent. The emotional level is very effective and the intellectual level is weak.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

The psychophysiological levels are prepotent in regard to the religious one. Man is religious through his experience of the reduction of dualism at the moral level.

Religion is the psychic correspondent of a physiological growth which is expressed variously, but is entirely naturalistic.

b) Method

i) Psychological System

An inductive differential psychology emphasizing the functional aspects of growth and life.

137 J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 345.

138 Ibid., p. 346.

139 Ibid., p. 349.

140 Ibid., p. 353.

141 Ibid., p. 355.

142 Ibid., p. 357.

ii) Data-Gathering

Case studies set up in answer to a questionnaire and personal interviews and correspondence; some personal historical documents as well. Limited sampling: Anglo-Saxon American Protestants familiar with revivals.

iii) Presentation

A keen analysis of data, but indications of an emotional bias and a depreciation of intellectual powers. A description of the phases of conversion, a synthesis of related Christian doctrines, and a lengthy Appendix of selective documentary materials.

c) Content

i) Nature

Conversion is a need which is essentially a process of the reduction of dualism at the level of morality.

ii) Aim

The attainment of moral perfection and inward unity or harmony.

iii) Process

A six-step process beginning in sin-pain going through self-surrender, justification, faith, joy, and appearance of newness.

iv) Age

No mention of age in the theory although conversion depends upon physiological growth. Examination of the selective materials reveals four of these conversions took place during adolescence, and eleven during adulthood.

v) Motivational Forces

The feeling of unrighteousness (sin-pain) and self-surrender.

vi) Type

Functional, processive, psychophysiological, and naturalistic.

APPENDIX

J. H. Leuba's Questionnaire for a Study of Conversion¹

1. How long ago were you converted? At what age?
2. Were you brought up by Christian parents? What religious education did you receive? (Did you go to Sunday School? How long?)
3. Describe your life, your religious condition and your moral struggles for the period preceding conversion. Were you at peace with yourself? Did you endeavor to reform? What did you do to that end? What measure of success attended your efforts?
4. Where, on what occasion and under what circumstances, were you converted? Had you, before that moment, made up your mind that you would be converted if possible? Tell, in detail, what you meant then by conversion; why did you desire it; what did you expect of it? In what mental and what moral disposition were you at the time? What was the state of your health?
5. Relate your conversion. What were the various thoughts in your mind and the various feelings in your heart at the moment of conversion? What affected you most deeply? Were you very much loved? By what, or by whom were you moved?
6. Describe your feelings and your thoughts immediately after conversion. Were you aware that you had experienced conversion? In what particulars had you become changed? What was temporary and what permanent in the results of your conversion?
7. If you have passed through more than one similar experience, or through other less momentous moral crises, describe each one separately, giving date of each.
8. Do you know of conversions, or of simple reformation as of drunkards, having happened, without the influence of the Christian religion?

¹ J. H. Leuba, "A Study", p. 371.

CHAPTER IV

JAMES'S RADICAL-EMPIRICAL MODEL: 1902

William James (1842-1910) from whom we draw our third model, had an exceedingly broad background from which to launch an investigation of religious conversion. As America's foremost pioneer psychologist, he had already written several major psychological works when he published his Gifford lectures,¹ The Varieties of Religious Experience.² His career began with the study of anatomy and physiology. He obtained a medical degree in 1869 and a Ph.D. soon thereafter.

In the early seventies, James began teaching physiological psychology at Harvard³ where he set up the first

1 Jacques Barzun, "Introduction" in W. James, The Varieties of Religious Experience, New York, New American Library, 1958, p. vi writes: "These lectures are traditionally a virtuoso performance and the highest honor in a philosopher's career. James was asked to deliver them in 1901, when he was fifty-nine and had achieved an international reputation as America's most original thinker since Jonathan Edwards." These lectures were so brilliantly given that almost every writer treating of the phenomenon of religious experience since James gives some indication of having paraphrased him, reinterpreted him, praised him, or blamed him.

2 See above Chapter I, footnote 36.

3 J. McKen Cattell, "The Founding", p. 62 writes: "I once wrote: Harvard with James, Munsterberg, Royce, [...] surpasses every other university in the world in its opportunity for psychological study and research."

psychological laboratory in America.⁴ Although in principle he believed in experimentation, he was personally uninterested in the "brass-instrument psychology",⁵ a trend that quickly dominated the field as psychologists strove to make their discipline seem rigorously scientific. James's broad philosophical view of man and rich cultural background served to anchor him in a different venture. His goal was

E. D. Starbuck, "A Student's Impressions of James in the Middle 90's", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, p. 131, writes about this fact: "It must never be forgotten that James set up the first psychological laboratory in America at Harvard." H. Misiak and V. S. Sexton, History of Psychology: An Overview, pp. 130-31, note that "James played a role similar to that of Wundt in Germany--namely, that of a founding father of the new science. [...] Both men had simple psychological laboratories as early as 1875. While Wundt developed his by 1879 into a world-renowned laboratory, James neglected his."

5 C. H. Grattan, The Three Jameses. A Family of Minds, Henry James, Sr., William James, and Henry James, New York, New York University Press, 1962, p. 118 (hereafter cited as The Three Jameses), quotes W. James as saying: "If there is anything I hate it is collecting." Cf. p. 112, "The smell of the laboratory never got into his mind nor the mustiness of great learning into his talk." P. 134, "He didn't get far with Wundt, who represented a method for which he had but little personal aptitude." R. P. Angier, "Another Student's Impressions of James at the Turn of the Century", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, pp. 132-33 notes: "In the laboratory it was plain that James had neither flair nor patience for experimental work, and that he didn't care who knew it; he was a flat failure at pretense"; W. B. Pillsbury, "Titchener and James", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, p. 73, also notes that "James was outside the true experimental group and was not sympathetic with the Leipzig tradition"; See E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, p. 505, where he states that even though he was not an experimentalist himself, James "believed in experimentalism; he introduced it to America, and he put upon the new psychology the seal of America by emphasizing the functional meaning of mind."

to lay the foundations of a science of psychology that would permit the study of experience in all its varieties. It was this aim which permeated the two huge volumes of the Principles of Psychology⁶ in 1890, and the shorter Psychology⁷ a few years later. R. B. Perry writes that James was

one of the first of the scientific psychologists and one of the last philosophical psychologists. He was familiar with the physiology, biology, pathology, and psychophysics of his day, approached his problems from a standpoint of naturalism; and announced his intention of avoiding metaphysics.⁸

It is worthy of note that by the time James wrote the Varieties, more than a dozen studies on the psychology of religious conversion had been published by the Clark School following Hall's initial work. The major contributions were the three inductive statistical studies by J. H. Leuba and E. D. Starbuck, both of the Clark School and that of G. A. Coe of Chicago.

6 See above, Introduction, footnote 29.

7 William James, Psychology, first published as Psychology the Briefer Course, 1892, second ed., New York, Henry Holt and Co., 1895, Fawcett Publications Inc., 1966, 416 pp. (hereafter cited as Psychology). Three other important books are Essays in Radical Empiricism; Pragmatism and Four Essays from the Meaning of Truth, New York, World Publishing Co., (1907-1909) 1965, 269 pp.; and The Will to Believe and other Essays in Popular Philosophy, Human Immortality: Two Supposed Objections to the Doctrine, New York, Dover Publications, 1956, 332 pp. (Originally appeared in 1897) (hereafter cited as The Will to Believe).

8 R. B. Perry, "James the Psychologist - as a Philosopher sees him", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, p. 122.

Moreover, as we shall see, James's seminal system of psychology lent itself well to the study of religious conversion.

1. The Exploration of the Theory

a) The Approach

James's philosophical assumptions are extremely rich, some fundamental ones underlying both his view of man in general and of religious man in particular. A major premise of James's system can be seen in the spirit underlying it. This system would allow for the investigation of the full potentialities of experience, i.e., thinking, feeling and doing, in a wide variety of forms and relations. Another basic assumption is his methodological testing of any theory against the criterion of common sense,⁹ by which James designates practicality for living and conformity to real experience. He does this by posing such questions as: Can it be a force which helps me to live? Will it allow for the aspects of thinking, feeling and doing? Will it allow for the lived-body, the life-world, and their complicated network? An investigator who is true to experience, according to James, explores and accepts the whole of experience and neglects none of its aspects.

James distinguishes between two orders of logic:

⁹ W. James, Varieties, pp. 34, 63, 297, 347.

that dealing with the existential order examining origins, nature and history in order to arrive at an "existential judgment", and that flowing from a "proposition of value" stressing "importance, meaning, or significance" to arrive at a "spiritual judgment".¹⁰ We shall see that James espouses this latter orientation and weaves it into a unique pragmatic approach to life which is deeply practical rather than theoretical, and serves as a criterion by which to live. This means testing experience by its fruits, consequences, and ends, and probing for the value of experience rather than for its causes or its origins.¹¹ Although James develops this aspect of his work particularly in his Pragmatism, it is discernible through all of his writings and forms a whole with his functional and radical-empirical approach.

i) A Theory of Personality

James's attempt to view man in the totality of his experience shows his keen sense of the psychology of the person. In the Principles and the Psychology, he sees man as a self, a self as process and a self as purpose; a view particularly evident in his original way of theorizing on how man knows. Let us now scan these views on the specificity of consciousness and/or experience.

¹⁰ W. James, Varieties, p. 23. (Unless otherwise indicated, the underlining is the author's.)

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 34-35.

To begin with, James's theory of the characteristics of consciousness is based on the evidence that "Consciousness of some sort goes on. 'States of mind' succeed each other."¹² From this primary insight into dynamism, movement, or function, James proceeds to describe the main characteristics of consciousness as being personal, forever changing, manifesting continuity, relating with objects other than itself, and having the capacity to be selective.¹³ It is not necessary to go into more detail to make it clear that no other psychologist at this time has as comprehensive a view of experience as did James. It is no wonder he rejects the positions of both the medical materialists who held that religion is "nothing but" the work of an organ, and the theorizing of Leuba and Hall as narrow to say the least.¹⁴

The basis of this seminal theory is James's view of

12 W. James, Psychology, p. 147.

13 Ibid., pp. 146-65, for these characteristics of the stream of consciousness.

14 W. James, Varieties, p. 29. "If now the defenders of the sex-theory say that this makes no difference to their thesis; that without the chemical contributions which the sex-organs make to the blood, the brain would not be nourished so as to carry on religious activities, this final proposition may be true or not true; but at any rate it has become profoundly uninformative: we can deduce no consequences from it which help us to interpret religion's meaning or value. In this sense the religious life depends just as much upon the spleen, the pancreas, and the kidneys as on the sexual apparatus, and the whole theory has lost its point in evaporating into a vague general assertion of the dependence, somehow, of the mind upon the body."

consciousness as a field with a centre of energy. This field-theory approach to man's knowing, feeling, and doing is moreover basic to his theory of religious conversion because it describes the dynamics underlying "meaning" and the shifting of meaning as reality-feeling.

But what is the nature of consciousness in James's theory of man? As he describes it, it is composed of a primary and a secondary field which he calls the A-region and the B-region of personality, respectively.¹⁵ "The real self" as the focal point of energy is situated at the centre of the primary field,¹⁶ the one from which emanates the excitement and heat of "embodied self", the centre of "ordinary" or "normal waking consciousness",¹⁷ encompassing whatever the self specifically attends to (in reaching out to the world as experienceable). Experience which is more diffuse corresponds to the margin or periphery of this field. Beyond it, i.e., beyond the reach of the "habitual centre of personal energy",¹⁸ is the B-region, that is, the subliminal or subconscious.

This secondary field appears first of all as a "more",¹⁹ i.e., it is there, one experiences it although "by

15 W. James, Varieties, p. 305.

16 Ibid., pp. 164-65.

17 Ibid., pp. 305, 323.

18 Ibid., p. 165.

19 Ibid., pp. 393, 396.

the filmiest of screens".²⁰ The margin or fringe of the primary field acts as a "door"²¹ allowing one to penetrate the "beyond". (James believes that in religious people the subliminal door is unusually wide open.²²) If one has a "leaky or pervious margin"²³ and a "strongly developed ultra-marginal life",²⁴ one is also likely to experience incursions from the subliminal self.

As a sort of extension of his field-theory, James posits a "farther side" beyond the B-region which, not surprisingly as we shall see, he designates as the "larger Power" or the "religious centre"²⁵ that one encounters in mysterious experiences. Without doubt, the most characteristic aspect of these experiences is that of their exteriority, i.e., they seem to proceed "from forces transcending the individual", or from "a wider self"²⁶ which, for James, is the better self.

James does not say specifically why or how the centre of energy changes in an individual, other than that these

20 W. James, Varieties, p. 305.

21 Ibid., pp. 199, 219, 405.

22 Ibid., p. 376.

23 Ibid., p. 198.

24 Ibid., p. 192.

25 Ibid., pp. 171, 175, 407.

26 Ibid., pp. 198, 398.

shifts have to do with energy, "acuteness", "dynamogenic quality", even "explosive intensity",²⁷ but his analogy of the "centres of our dynamic energy"²⁸ makes it clear that the "whatness" of these shifts has to do with an emotional quality. James refers to it as "reality-feeling", "a sense of reality" which has the necessary power to transform man's life.²⁹

He also shows that there are basically two ways of getting something done, "a conscious and voluntary way, and an involuntary and unconscious way". He cites a typical example of these in the way you attempt to recall a forgotten name. You may strain to remember and finally give up only to discover suddenly that the name "comes sauntering into your mind" on its own.³⁰

In summary, James's view is that man is a self, a self as a centre of energy, a self that can focus or select its own centre and thus, a self that is purposive, able to choose its own meaning for life (reality-feelings) and a self as knowing "more" or "beyond" what is ordinarily apparent. This has direct bearing on his view of man as religious as we shall now see.

27 W. James, Varieties, p. 148.

28 Ibid., p. 165.

29 Ibid., pp. 62-63.

30 Ibid., pp. 172, 176.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

James distinguishes in the Varieties between two common-religious personality types: the healthy-minded and the morbid-minded, and describes how both of these achieve unification of mind through religion.³¹

The healthy-minded religious person has as his basic attitude "the tendency which looks on all things and sees that they are good".³² One of the main characteristics of this type is vividly expressed in its popular qualifier, "once-born". James asserts that these individuals do not need deliverance and do not experience crisis.³³ He distinguishes two ways in which one can be healthy-minded: an involuntary and a voluntary way. The first, the subconscious way, is a way of feeling happy about things which is immediate and natural insofar as evil does not enter the lives of such individuals.

The voluntary or conscious type of healthy-mindedness is an "abstract way of conceiving things as good",³⁴ a deliberate direction of the mind in order to eradicate completely a negative and pessimistic outlook on life, and

31 W. James, Varieties, p. 38.

32 Ibid., p. 150. James insists that "religion is only one of the ways in which men gain that gift [...] to find religion is only one of many ways of reaching unity."

33 Ibid., pp. 80-81, 120, 143.

34 Ibid., p. 85.

is a product of the natural sciences. James writes, "Since you make them evil or good by your own thoughts about them, it is the ruling of your thoughts which proves to be your principal concern."³⁵

James cites the "Mind-Cure" movement, a popular positive-thinking movement of the time, as a widely recognized way to healthy-mindedness which can occur either voluntarily or involuntarily. The mind-cure doctrine, a taking on of "an optimistic scheme of life",³⁶ is "an intuitive belief in the all-saving power of healthy-minded attitudes", which results in numerous regenerations of character.³⁷ The conscious way is a continuous emotional striving for healthy-mindedness. Alternatively, subconsciously, the relaxing and letting-go induced by the power of suggestion³⁸ enables individuals to become "one with the

35 W. James, Varieties, p. 86.

36 Ibid., p. 90, and on p. 104, "The force of personal faith, enthusiasm and example, and above all the force of novelty, are always the prime suggestive agency in this kind of success."

37 Ibid., pp. 90, 100-2. James is struck by the psychological similarity between the mind-cure movement on the one hand, and the Wesleyan movements on the other. What is important is that the method of the mind-cure by way of surrender, passivity, relaxation, letting-go, resignation, is within the reach of persons who have no conviction of sin and care nothing for the Lutheran theology. This approach is contrary to the pre-conversion experiences of the converts examined by the Clark School for whom the conviction of sin appeared as the sine qua non of conversion.

38 Ibid., pp. 103-5.

Divine without any miracle of grace, or abrupt creation of a new inner man",³⁹ and to enjoy the "feeling of continuity with the Infinite Power".⁴⁰

Morbid-minded individuals on the other hand, have a radically opposite attitude to life. James calls them "sick souls", or the "twice-born". The evil aspects of life weigh so heavily upon these individuals that any good in the world is obliterated for them. They are forced to ignore it as they live at the "pain-threshold" or "misery-threshold" of life.⁴¹ James describes this attitude to life as

something more radical and general, a wrongness or vice in his essential nature, which no alteration of the environment, or any superficial rearrangement of the inner self can cure, and which requires a supernatural remedy.⁴²

For James, this sick-soul approach to life is more profound because, accounting as it does for the evil in the world and in oneself, it corresponds more fully with reality than the healthy-minded way.⁴³ In this sense, being a sick-soul may lead to deeper levels of truth. Religions which take these pessimistic and evil elements into consideration are the complete religions for James.⁴⁴ Essentially, they

39 W. James, Varieties, p. 94.

40 Ibid., p. 95.

41 Ibid., p. 119.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid., p. 120.

44 Ibid., p. 141.

are religions of deliverance, and sick-soul individuals "must be twice-born in order to be happy".⁴⁵ They seem to suffer from "an incompletely unified moral and intellectual constitution".⁴⁶ James describes how such individuals suffer from guilt and melancholy:

Unhappiness is apt to characterize the period of order-making and struggle. If the individual be of tender conscience and religiously quickened, the unhappiness will take the form of moral remorse and compunction, of feeling inwardly vile and wrong, and of standing in false relations to the author of one's being and appointer of one's spiritual fate. This is the religious melancholy and "conviction of sin" that have played so large a part in the history of Protestant Christianity. The man's interior is a battle-ground for what he feels to be two deadly hostile selves, one actual, the other ideal.⁴⁷

The struggle that twice-born persons experience in order to "quell the lower tendencies forever", gives evidence of a divided will⁴⁸ in need of unification. James describes the crisis of the divided-will: the sick souls live on the minus side of life and suffer from a lack of acuteness, a lack of intensity, and a lack of dynamogenic quality.⁴⁹ In other words, storm and stress and inconsistency underlie the unhappiness and anhedonia typical of a

45 W. James, Varieties, p. 143.

46 Ibid., p. 144.

47 Ibid., p. 146.

48 Ibid., p. 148.

49 Ibid.

sick-soul in search of unification.⁵⁰ The acute need of conversion in these individuals leads James to form his theory of the psychology of religious conversion.

Acquaintance with James's theory of the morbid personality is necessary to understand his concept of religion. Let us first note how James's openness to experience made him eager to demonstrate that in spite of all its morbidities, religion is nonetheless mankind's most important function.

James finds no one elementary religious emotion, religious object, or religious act.⁵¹ He leaves aside completely the religion of dogma and institutions and is interested only in the individual's personal religion, his beliefs or "overbeliefs".⁵² It is as though religion were actually divided into two types, the institutional and the personal. For this personal religion James is willing to accept any name:

Religion, therefore, as I now ask you arbitrarily to take it, shall mean for us, the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to the divine.⁵³

50 W. James, Varieties, p. 146.

51 Ibid., p. 40.

52 "Overbeliefs" is James's very original designation of one's faith, beliefs, values, religious experience in general, which remain personal. See Varieties, pp. 397-98.

53 Ibid., p. 42. On p. 40, he defines the divine thus: "The divine shall mean for us only such a primal

This definition seems to highlight James's profound insight into the reality of evil in the life of sick souls. On the one hand, there is the experience of solitude implying aloneness, solemnity, seriousness, awareness, etc. On the other hand, there is that "apprehension of standing before", or in relation to, the divine.⁵⁴ The apprehension evokes attitudes basic to the human condition, i.e., the experience of aloneness, and the feeling of helplessness vis-à-vis the experiences of contingency, of sin and of fear; it also evokes the reality of the unseen. Basic to all of these is what James calls "a helpless and sacrificial attitude" and he concludes that "religion thus makes easy and felicitous what in any case is necessary".⁵⁵

Since the value of religion depends upon its power to regenerate man and not upon its origin, James prefers to view God as finite rather than as sovereign.⁵⁶ He follows

reality as the individual feels impelled to respond to solemnly and gravely, and neither by a curse nor a jest."

54 W. James, Varieties, p. 42.

55 Ibid., p. 57.

56 Ibid., pp. 348-49. James applies his pragmatic principle to the metaphysical and moral attributes of God. See R. Vanden Burgt "William James on Man's Creativity in the Religious Universe", Philosophy Today, 15, 1971, pp. 298-99: "The roots of James's dissatisfactions with God as traditionally understood is that he is a being distinct from his creation, unable to be affected by it. [...] The radical separation of God from man makes impossible any type of reciprocal relationship between the Divine and the human. Thus God can never be affected by our actions. [...] We are left as outsiders to the deepest workings of the universe."

Leuba in maintaining that the end of religion is not to be found in God but in the meaning and the tremendous value it gives to life. Just as the emotions are "as a gift to the organism", so "the religious feeling is an absolute addition to the subject's range of life", another "added dimension of emotion".⁵⁷ Indeed religion gives zest and meaning to life, "a new sphere of power" and "a new reach of freedom".⁵⁸

James quotes Leuba:

Not God but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is in the last analysis the end of religion. The love of life at any and every level of development, or, to use another phraseology, the instinct for preservation and increase, is the religious impulse.⁵⁹

Although James appears engrossed with the happiness procured by religion, he does not overlook the power of religion for dealing with the forces of evil. His own experience of the saving power of religion over evil illustrates this very well.⁶⁰ He finds evil in three principal

57 W. James, Varieties, pp. 54-55.

58 Ibid., p. 391. James adds that the feelings characterizing religion are a biological as well as a psychological condition.

59 Ibid., p. 392.

60 Ibid., p. 138. James relates his own experience: "Suddenly there fell upon me without any warning, just as if it came out of the darkness, a horrible fear of my own existence. [...] After this the universe was changed for me altogether, I awoke morning after morning with a horrible dread at the pit of my stomach, and with a sense of the insecurity of life that I never knew before, and that I have never felt since. It was like a revelation; and although the immediate feelings passed away, the experience has made

areas: the vanity of mortal things, the sense of sin and the fear of the universe.⁶¹

Having posited the value of religion and the innumerable possibilities for life which it offers to the individual,⁶² James shows how religion is not only a momentous option but is indeed a forced option.⁶³ If belief can make the present richer, non-belief entails the loss of a vital good.

This brings James to the problematic aspect of religion: contacting "an unseen order".⁶⁴ The possibility that man may be touching upon a larger life which he neither sees nor understands is real. Faith in this possibility means belief in something concerning which doubt is still

me sympathetic with the morbid feelings of others ever since. It gradually faded, but for months I was unable to go out into the dark alone."

61 W. James, Varieties, p. 139.

62 Ibid., pp. 54-56, 388.

63 W. James, The Will to Believe, p. 26. See A. R. Gini, "William James, Facts, Faith, and Promise", The Thomist, 37, 1973, p. 498, where he states that James "suggested that we call the decision between two hypotheses an option. He stated that options may be of several kinds: living or dead; forced or avoidable; momentous or trivial. In regard to a faith commitment we may call an option genuine when it is forced, living and momentous. A living option is one in which the both alternatives are real possibilities or choices for the individual involved. [...] A forced option is one in which there is no possibility of not choosing. [...] A momentous option is a unique opportunity that happens usually but once in a lifetime."

64 W. James, Varieties, p. 59. James is of the opinion that belief in an "unseen order" is the broadest understanding of religion.

possible.⁶⁵ Like life, belief is a gamble, a risk.⁶⁶ But, notwithstanding this risk, James affirms that the divine, as a primal reality before whom individuals feel impelled to respond solemnly,⁶⁷ is literally a fact the world over.⁶⁸ When all is said and done, James admits this to be his own "over-belief" in religion as a consequence of experiencing a power which solved a personal life-crisis. So that while on the one hand faith appears totally incredible, on the other, it has practical usefulness for James, insofar as it releases, in him, a new will to live.⁶⁹

It should now be clear why James considers his

65 J. J. McDermott, The Writings of William James, a comprehensive edition, New York, Modern Library, 1967, p. xxi, writes: "If it can be said that James assented to 'The Will to Believe', until the end, we must caution that it was a belief always shot through with irresolution and doubt. Behind the consistent cadences of a rich and future-oriented prose, there lurked a well-controlled but omnipresent sense of despair. James was neither an optimist nor a cynic; he was a man of moral courage, who knew, all too well, the ambiguity and precariousness of the human condition."

66 W. James, Varieties, p. 60. James quotes Immanuel Kant's theory of belief in God. He writes: "We can act as if there were a God; feel as if we were free; consider Nature as if she were full of special designs."

67 Ibid., pp. 47-48.

68 Ibid., p. 68: "Probably every religious person has the recollection of particular crisis in which a director vision of the truth, a direct perception, perhaps, of a living God's existence, swept in and overwhelmed the languor of the more ordinary belief."

69 Ibid., p. 45: "Religion, whatever it is, is a man's total reaction upon life." P. 47: "For common man 'religion' whatever more special meanings it may have, signifies always a serious state of mind."

approach to psychology to be a radically empirical one. Within his framework, psychology, to be scientific, has to be faithful to experience, which means avoiding the tendency to reduce man either to physiological or to mechanical levels.⁷⁰ It also means, in particular, accepting man's religious experience as he lives it, i.e., his belief in the supernatural and/or religion because it is a fact of experience (not of dogma), and because it is also verified by fruits. Moreover, insofar as James is committed to examining the adjustment of the total living organism to its environment, his psychology is also primarily functional.

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

Faithfulness to experience also characterizes James's method. But in order that it may have the status of the natural sciences and act as an optional method (replacing theology) in the examination of religious phenomena, it must be physiologically oriented. Though James endorses the working hypothesis underlying the psychology of his "day--" to the entire state of the brain at any moment one unique state of

⁷⁰ James makes use of some clever mechanical analogies such as, the bar of iron, the bell with a crack, a building, a compass needle and a many-sided solid, to prove a point but he never reduces man to the machine.. See Varieties, pp. 61, 121, 167, 191, 219.

mind always corresponds"⁷¹--he points to the insufficiency of this hypothesis in describing experience.⁷² In fact, this hypothesis permits him to gather sufficient evidence to challenge a wholly naturalistic understanding of religious experience.⁷³

In the Varieties, James favors the method of introspection and proceeds inductively by examining individual case studies of religious conversion which, according to him, must bring out the religious dimension. His principal analysis, therefore, consists in probing personal documents and histories to discover the way converts describe their experiences; how and why they attribute meaning to these; and what felt-meanings they convey by applying his "empiricist criterion"--What works on the whole for these converts?⁷⁴

ii) Data-Gathering

James clearly indicates both the origin and the type of data he uses. He acknowledges that Starbuck gave him "his large collection of manuscript material".⁷⁵ Besides, he makes use of autobiographies, biographies, and a

71 W. James, Psychology, p. 403.

72 Ibid., pp. 17-22.

73 Id., Varieties, pp. 21-38.

74 Ibid., pp. 34-35.

75 Ibid., p. 17.

profusion of concrete case histories;⁷⁶ he selects among the exaggerated and "violenter examples";⁷⁷ he boldly announces his intentions of conducting what appears to be a "pathological programme",⁷⁸ and justifies the latter in a three-fold manner:

First I say, irrepressible curiosity imperiously leads me on; and I say, secondly, that it always leads to a better understanding of a thing's significance to consider its exaggerations and perversions, its equivalents and substitutes and nearest relatives elsewhere. [...]

Insane conditions have the advantage, that they isolate special factors of the mental life, and enable us to inspect them unmasked by their more usual surroundings.⁷⁹

In the third instance, James claims that these more violent cases have the required emotionality, the tendency to clear emphasis, and the love of metaphysics and mysticism.⁸⁰ His "empiricist criterion"--testing experience over against its fruits rather than over against its roots--is a further justification of the choice of his cases.

76 See C. H. Grattan, The Three Jameses, p. 174, where he writes that "The look of the book, it must be pointed out, is in large part a series of case histories illustrating each point he makes. In this respect it is immensely erudite, drawing as it does on the whole range of autobiographical literature in the field:"

77 W. James, Varieties, p. 56.

78 Ibid., p. 35.

79 Ibid., pp. 35-36.

80 Ibid., p. 38.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

James's presentation is particularly keen, fascinating, buoyant, and always attentive to a faithful description of experience. The depth of perception he discloses is undoubtedly the best criterion by which to measure his stature as a psychologist.

James begins by defining such major terms as religion, the divine, the unseen, etc., and presents his empirical rule of judging by fruits. He announces his use of unusual data and outlines two main religious personality types. He then delineates the process of conversion and finally elaborates on its fruits as these are manifested outwardly (saintliness) and inwardly (mysticism). This last section is unusually long and original and entirely in accord with his radical-empirical method.

No doubt these contents give the impression that one finds the essence of systematization in James's method; such a view is far too simplistic as we shall see. However, his theory of the healthy-minded religious personality serves as a good indication so far of the complex and anti-systematic quality of James's work.⁸¹

⁸¹ See above, Introduction, footnote 31.

c) The Content

James begins his study of religious conversion with a definition of what it is to be converted. He writes:

To be converted, to be regenerated, to receive grace, to experience religion, to gain an assurance, are so many phrases which denote the process, gradual or sudden, by which a self hitherto divided, and consciously wrong inferior and unhappy, becomes unified and consciously right superior and happy, in consequence of its firmer hold upon religious realities.⁸²

A serious reading of this definition reveals four important facets of conversion. First, conversion is a creative experience of positive value (note the five synonyms used). Second, conversion is inherently processive or historical. James writes tersely that it is gradual or sudden. Third, this creative process implies a detectable shift within the self. And fourthly, it results from a relational-contextual experience with a larger reality than the self. However that may be, let us follow James.

These fundamental features of conversion, for him, seem to revolve around the "shift" or "transformation" within the self. James explains this fact:

Whenever one aim grows so stable as to expel definitively its previous rivals from the individual's life, we tend to speak of the phenomenon and perhaps to wonder at it, as a "transformation".⁸³

While this transformative aim takes hold of the centre of

82 W. James, Varieties, p. 160.

83 Ibid., p. 163.

one's energies and causes a rearrangement of less important or peripheral aims, another process is evolving as

the real self of the man, the centre of his energies, is occupied with an entirely different system. As life goes on, there is a constant change of place in our systems of ideas, from more central to more peripheral, and from more peripheral to more central parts of consciousness.⁸⁴

The fact that an individual is able to shift from one interest to another is a basic postulate of James's theory of the field and the characteristics of consciousness. The process is simple as he explains:

To say that a man is "converted" means in these terms, that religious ideas, previously peripheral in his consciousness, now take a central place, and that religious aims form the habitual centre of his energy.⁸⁵

James accepts E. D. Starbuck's thesis that conversions occurring in adolescents brought up in evangelical circles (persons influenced by suggestion and imitation) are not significantly different from the normal growth into larger spiritual awareness which generally takes place at adolescence. The same elements occur, first, storm and stress (caused by a variety of factors) which eventually lead to more healthful living. James also notes Starbuck's findings that indicate that the conviction of sin (peculiar to the pre-conversion phase) is more intense but of shorter duration than the usual storm and stress period of

84 W. James, Varieties, p. 164.

85 Ibid., p. 165.

adolescence.⁸⁶ Amusingly so, James also enters the established truism of the Clark School that

Conversion is in its essence a normal adolescent phenomenon, incidental to the passage from the child's small universe to the wider intellectual and spiritual life of maturity.⁸⁷

James then proceeds to forget this "essential" fact. He asserts that some people can never be converted, either because they cannot believe in the reality of the unseen (and are therefore not religious in a Jamesian sense), or because they are deficient in sensibility.⁸⁸

James demonstrates that there are only two kinds of mental processes which permit a shift of attitude, e.g., to get rid of anger, worry, etc.: (1) the law of reversed effect by means of which "an opposite affection should overpoweringly break over us", and (2) giving in and breaking down.⁸⁹ These same processes according to James are also both evident in religious conversion.

We have already intimated that James accepts two basic categories of conversion: the gradual and the sudden. His typology is not that simple however. He explains that the gradual variety entails no crisis because it is associated with a conscious and voluntary way of unification;

86 W. James, Varieties, pp. 167-68.

87 Ibid.; p. 167.

88 Ibid., p. 171.

89 Ibid., pp. 176-77.

that it is less interesting than the sudden type;⁹⁰ that it is usually experienced by the healthy-minded or "once-born" individuals; that it resembles any simple growth into new habits, and that it is usually experienced by Roman Catholics and Episcopalians.⁹¹

However, we then find James practically contradicting himself for, notwithstanding the fact that he has just established that this process is gradual and voluntary, with no crisis, he admits that there are some critical points and some self-surrender interposed. He goes on to describe the two preconversion experiences reported by Starbuck, i.e., conviction of sin and search for an ideal, (the former usually predominating).⁹² Moreover, according to James, crisis obtains when the individual is unable either to eradicate the sin or to attain the ideal desired and this emotional struggle eventually brings on exhaustion.⁹³ Meanwhile, an opposite affection maturing in the subconscious forms a double process: "a subconscious ripening of one affection and exhaustion of the other" (on the conscious level).⁹⁴ Ultimately, the individual gives up the struggle

90 W. James, Varieties, pp. 173-75, 188.

91 Ibid., pp. 168, 187.

92 Ibid., p. 174.

93 Ibid., p. 175.

94 Ibid. See also pp. 177-79.

over sin (or the search for an ideal) in desperation, and in so doing yields to the better self. James explains this paradoxical happening:

To exercise the personal will is still to live in the region where the imperfect self is the thing most emphasized. Where, on the contrary, the subconscious forces take the lead, it is more probably the better self in posse which directs the operation. Instead of being clumsily and vaguely aimed at from without, it is then itself the organizing centre.⁹⁵

Obviously, the yielding or self-surrender in conversion is the vital turning-point,⁹⁶ for, at this instance, the person is suddenly unified following a shift in the centre of energies. One may experience automatisms, i.e., see lights, hear voices, etc.;⁹⁷ one enters into a state of assurance, perceives truths not known before, and the world becomes changed in an ecstasy of happiness.⁹⁸ James adds that this type of turning-point experience is typical of that undergone in revivals.⁹⁹

The second type of conversion, the sudden variety appears more simple (when the reader has been able to sort out which is the gradual and which the sudden). For, any

95 W. James, Varieties, p. 175.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid., p. 188.

98 Ibid., pp. 199, 207.

99 Ibid., p. 168.

reading of James's typology defies neat categorization.¹⁰⁰ On the whole, James affirms his belief that the criterion for experiencing sudden conversion is the possession of a rich and active subliminal life.¹⁰¹ Moreover, the person experiencing sudden conversion is not seeking it, a fact which renders the process completely involuntary, i.e., issuing directly from the subconscious, and not from the usual "conviction of sin" or search for an ideal, nor from exhaustion. However, in a most inexplicable manner, a new centre of energy matures, bursts through into consciousness, and the individual is converted suddenly as if by miracle.

James writes:

But beyond all question there are persons in whom, quite independently of any exhaustion in the Subject's capacity for feeling, or even in the absence of any acute previous feeling, the higher condition, having reached the due degree of energy, bursts through all barriers and sweeps in like a sudden flood. These are the most striking and memorable cases, the cases of instantaneous conversion to which the conception of divine grace has been most peculiarly attached.¹⁰²

James finds this type of striking instantaneous conversion where "a complete division is established in the twinkling

100 Because James's description of the voluntary type includes a climactic experience (which is indeed very similar to that experienced in the sudden conversion), the reader is easily led to believe that James is in fact describing two types of sudden conversion and one gradual. However, the opposite is true, as we shall show later.

101 Ibid., pp. 189, 197, 198.

102 Ibid., p. 179.

of an eye between the old and the new",¹⁰³ to be eminently exemplified in Saint Paul.

Among the characteristic feelings which immediately fill the hour of sudden conversion, James records the sense of higher control,¹⁰⁴ the state of assurance,¹⁰⁵ the perception of truths not known previously, the appearance of newness in the world, and the ecstasy of happiness.¹⁰⁶

Besides these immediate fruits James describes the long-range effects of conversion which, for him, are the proofs of its usefulness and truth. In their broad categories, these fruits are saintliness and mysticism. Saintliness does not in itself exclude mysticism; but James prefers to examine each in its particularities, describing it first and then judging it.

Generally speaking, the saintly person is that "for which spiritual emotions are the habitual centre of the personal energy".¹⁰⁷ The characteristics which depict a universal saintliness are fourfold: the conviction of the existence of an Ideal Power, a feeling of being connected with this power, expansiveness and liberation of the self,

103 W. James, Varieties, p. 180.

104 Ibid., p. 199.

105 Ibid., pp. 201-2.

106 Ibid., p. 202.

107 Ibid., p. 220.

and a shift in the emotional centre.¹⁰⁸ James emphasizes anew the role of self-surrender in the saintly life:

The transition from tenseness, self-responsibility, and worry to equanimity, receptivity, and peace, is the most wonderful of all those shiftings of inner equilibrium, those changes of the personal centre of energy, which I have analyzed so often; and the chief wonder of it is that it so often comes about, not by doing, but by simply relaxing and throwing the burden down. This abandonment of self-responsibility seems to be the fundamental act in specifically religious, as distinguished from moral practice.¹⁰⁹

The practical fruits of saintliness (the faith-state, which he also identifies as "a natural psychic complex"¹¹⁰) are, asceticism, strength of soul, purity, and charity.¹¹¹ Although James admits of exaggerations and different forms of fanaticisms in the saintly life, the testing of it by its fruits leaves it "in possession of its towering place in history".¹¹²

The mystical states of consciousness are possibly those which fascinate James the most; for James, "personal religious experience has its roots and centre in mystical states of consciousness".¹¹³ Ineffability, a noetic quality,

108 W. James, Varieties, pp. 220-21.

109 Ibid., p. 233.

110 Ibid., p. 225.

111 Ibid., pp. 221-60.

112 Ibid., p. 297.

113 Ibid., p. 299.

transiency, and passivity are the four typical marks of the mystic state. The first, ineffability, refers to the fact that the state can neither be described adequately nor imparted to others. It also corresponds more to a feeling state than to a knowing one; and James asserts that the "deliciousness of some of these states seems to be beyond anything known in ordinary consciousness".¹¹⁴ The noetic quality of the mystic state refers to unusually deep states of knowledge which are characterized by a curious sense of authority.¹¹⁵ These two properties, ineffability and the noetic quality, form the essence of a mystic state while transiency and passivity are less sharply defined.

Finally, James scans other states of consciousness produced by intoxicants; he examines a variety of mysticisms, and he surveys how to cultivate the mystical state. Although mysticism may appear as pathological to the medical mind,¹¹⁶ James affirms that the fruits of mysticism confirm its truth.¹¹⁷

114 W. James, Varieties, p. 323.

115 Ibid., pp. 300, 322-23.

116 Ibid., p. 324.

117 Ibid., p. 357.

2. The Evaluation of the Theory

From the somewhat meager tradition of his time on the psychology of conversion, James is able to achieve a synthesis and to go beyond it. This major contribution is evident first of all in his approach.

a) The Approach

Use or instrumentality is James's principal means of judging the worth of psychology as critical thinking. He invariably asks one question: Will this enable me to live more productively in my world?¹¹⁸ Admittedly, this stance before meaningful theorizing often leads James squarely into paradox (as Allport has shown);¹¹⁹ it also leads him to dismiss the experimental quantitative approach and to adopt a position that will be more empirical because of its applicability to the whole of experience. In fact, James coins this stance--radical empiricism--a spirit characterized by

118 This stance is basic to James's pragmatic and radical empirical view of experience.

119 G. W. Allport, "The Productive Paradoxes of William James", Psychological Review, 50, 1943, pp. 96-97. Allport shows how the ordinary reader's first enthusiasm with James's writings is eventually tempered "by propositions that contradict one another and do violence to his sense of syllogism". While most psychologists do not attempt to answer the six riddles of psychology: the psychophysical riddle, that of positivism, that of the Self, that of the free will, that of association, and that of individuality, Allport claims that "William James lingered over all six. He agonized over them; he proposed a solution to each, and more often than not he landed squarely in the middle of paradox."

openness to man and to his world,¹²⁰ a spirit which implies going to the phenomena themselves and focusing upon their concreteness. Historians and reviewers agree that this approach is that of a proto-phenomenology,¹²¹ an attitude closely approximating that of the clinic, i.e., defending a pluralistic spirit on the grounds of justifying the diversity and richness of experience. Indeed, if James has one

120 B. W. Wilshire, William James: The Essential Writings, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1971, p. xxxv (hereafter cited as William James: The Essential Writings), writes: "The most obvious feature of James's worldview is its open-ended character." E. Fontinell, Toward a Reconstruction of Religion: A Philosophical Probe, New York, Doubleday & Co. Inc., 1970, p. 40 (hereafter cited as Toward a Reconstruction of Religion), states that if a word had to be chosen to describe the world from the pragmatic point of view, it would be the word "open". J. McDonagh, "The Open-Ended Psychology of William James", Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 13, 1973, p. 50 (hereafter cited as "The Open-Ended Psychology of William James"), notes: "James's ideal for philosophical as well as scientific investigation was to remain radically open to the world, to be wary of our own conceptualizations."

121 E. G. Boring, "Human Nature VS Sensation: William James and the Psychology of the Present", American Journal of Psychology, 55, 1942, pp. 315, 317. The author insists that James had a phenomenological approach to the data of psychology. H. Linschoten, On the Way Toward a Phenomenological Psychology: The Psychology of William James, A. Giorgi, ed., Pittsburg, Duquesne University Press, 1968, p. 59 (hereafter cited as The Psychology of William James), states that: "James had an open eye for that which is the common basis of fact, namely, the everyday world of human experience. He affirmed, as we say, that human subjectivity is at least partly responsible for the way in which the world appears to us, and he recognized the impossibility of going back behind experience. This means that, although James never explicitly developed a phenomenology, he came very near to some of its fundamental notions." B. Wilshire, William James: The Essential Writings, p. xxiii, writes about James's "incipient phenomenology".

bias it is against hasty and narrow generalizations about experience. We find this Jamesian spirit well expressed in the three criteria he establishes to arrive at religious truth: "immediate luminousness" (which is to be found in concrete experience), "philosophical reasonableness" (as exemplified in theorizing from experience), and "moral helpfulness" (that is, theorizing which will favor fruitful living).¹²²

i) A Theory of Personality

We attempted in our exploration to present James's overall theory of personality; we wish now to emphasize what appears most significant for his theory of religious conversion.

His fundamental insight into the realm of human dynamics, we believe, flows from his field theory of how we know and act. This theory has to do, in particular, with his discovery that there are two ways of knowing and getting things done: a conscious and voluntary one and an unconscious and involuntary one. From this basic assumption James situates the psycho-dynamics of the self along a continuum stretching between two poles: that of self-determination (the conscious way) and that of self-surrender (the unconscious way).

¹²² W. James, Varieties, p. 33.

A particularity flowing from this biomodal approach to experience is the fact that James aligns the unconscious field¹²³ with something better than what is usually available to the primary field of consciousness. In other words, he who can trust the unconscious depths and surrender to that field, appears to live more productively than he who doggedly attempts to live only by means of self-determination. Numerous allusions and statements concur to disclose both this creative capacity of the unconscious and intimations as to how these forces can be unleashed. Let us examine a few:

To exercise the personal will is still to live in the region where the imperfect self is the thing most emphasized. Where, on the contrary, the subconscious forces take the lead, it is more probably the better self in posse which directs the operation.¹²⁴

If you have intuitions at all, they come from a deeper level of your nature than the loquacious level which rationalism inhabits. Your whole subconscious life, your impulses, your faiths, your needs, your divinations, have prepared the premises, of which your consciousness now feels the weight of the result; and something in you absolutely knows that that result must be truer than any logic-chopping rationalistic talk, however clever, that may contradict it. [...] The unreasoned and immediate assurance is the deep thing in us; the

¹²³ James writes before the popular usage and understanding of the "unconscious". His preferred terms are the subconscious and/or the subliminal (A. Meyer's term), except when he contrasts the conscious field with this deeper one, when he uses the term unconscious.

¹²⁴ W. James, Varieties, p. 175.

reasoned argument is but a surface exhibition.
Instinct leads, intelligence does but follow.¹²⁵

There is no doubt but that this understanding of the unconscious as something deeper, better, and more complete than the normal waking consciousness differentiates it wholly from Freud's view of the unconscious as the locus of repressive and destructive tendencies. James is aware that some persons tend to have a highly developed unconscious (subliminal) life while others appear bound to the conscious voluntary way. We believe that this insight may have led James to posit his typology of religious personalities (the healthy minded and the sick soul), as the difference between them seems to depend on what use individuals make of the deeper self--the unconscious. We must test this hypothesis over against James's theory.

¹²⁵ W. James, *Varieties*, pp. 74-75. Another intriguing discussion of James's understanding of these two fields of awareness is the following from p. 305: "It is that our normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different. We may go through life without suspecting their existence; but apply the requisite stimulus, and at a touch they are there in their completeness, definite types of mentality which probably somewhere have their field of application and adaptation. No account of the universe in its totality can be final which leaves these other forms of consciousness quite disregarded. How to regard them is the question--for they are so discontinuous with ordinary consciousness. Yet they may determine attitudes though they cannot furnish formulas, and open a region though they fail to give a map. At any rate, they forbid a premature closing of our accounts with reality."

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

It is our opinion that the healthy-minded represent, for James, the persons who have a rich subliminal life and who are able to connect with this deeper self. He points to their incurably happy disposition which he attributes to a more natural and pluralistic stance to life (though this is the fruit of a rich subliminal life, it can also be postulated by the will), and a constant turning away from evil, suffering, and guilt. Surprisingly or not, James informs us that there are two ways of being healthy-minded.¹²⁶ There is the natural involuntary way in which it appears as a habit (trait would no doubt be more exact), and there is

¹²⁶ Lest we be fooled, James's theory of the religious personalities is far from simple but we have no intentions of pointing out the numerous discrepancies, contradictions and/or ambiguities in this particular aspect of his work. Many writers have attempted just this, e.g., A. R. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, 1928, pp. 61-84. Uren particularly sought to systematize James's Varieties and found it was especially an "unsystematic treatment of the religious life", but this fact did not hinder the author from setting up an elaborate classification of James's work. Sv. Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience, 1937, is a running commentary and critique of the Jamesian approach to religious conversion (and other pioneers as well). G. Berguer, La notion de la valeur, 1908, and Traité de psychologie de la religion, 1946, both contain valuable surveys of James's theorizing on the subject of religious experience. These are but a few of the many who have ventured to understand James's work. We believe the difficulties inherent in James's work emanate both from the paradoxical nature of his subject (man experiencing religious conversion) and his method (radical empiricism). However, to return to the subject at hand, it would seem that James found it hard to conceive of a once-born man. Experience also taught him that healthy-mindedness could be cultivated at will.

the way open to those who wish to acquire this tendency. The mind-cure movement represents, for James, a dual way of either being or becoming healthy-minded.

The sick souls, on the contrary, seem doomed to unhappiness. Because of an acute awareness and identification with the reality of evil, suffering, and guilt in their own life and in their world, they seem to live close to the pain-threshold. Their continuous strivings for happiness seem inevitably to lead to frustration due to the inability of the conscious self to attain its end. Eventually, self-determination creates the condition James calls the divided self.

We are thus again presented with the two extremes of a continuum.¹²⁷ On the one hand, there are the healthy-minded individuals whose life is pure naturalism; they are led by an incurable happiness, a disidentification with evil, and a movement towards relaxation and self-surrender. Moreover, since they have no conviction of sin, they do not

127 R. B. Maves, "Conversion: A Behavioral Category", p. 45, notes that "A bimodal typology of this sort may be challenged as representing the extremes of a continuum." W. A. Clebsch, American Religious Thought, p. 154, also notes this fact: "The basic range of emotional religious experience is from the optimistic or healthy-minded to the pessimistic or morbid." J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", in C. Y. Glock & P. E. Hammond, eds., Beyond the Classics? Essays in the Scientific Study of Religion, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1973, p. 299 (hereafter cited as "Beyond William James") adds that these two types are "actual constructive theorizing" on James's part.

need conversion.¹²⁸ On the other hand, there are the sick souls who cannot eradicate the evil in and around them; who become divided selves because of the tension created; and who eventually survive only by giving up their striving tendency and relying upon their deeper selves. In other words, they need conversion; but how can this deeper self save them? -

We have seen that James's view of the subliminal self posits a better self which lets man get in touch with the divine, the "larger Power", the "More", in much the same way as one connects with the subliminal self. James explains this further relationship:

The last aspect of the religious life which remains for me to touch upon is the fact that its manifestations so frequently connect themselves with the subconscious part of our existence.¹²⁹

We cannot, I think, avoid the conclusion that in religion we have a department of human nature with unusually close relations to the transmarginal or subliminal region.¹³⁰

James then outlines the functions of the two regions of consciousness--the A-region and the B-region--i.e., primary waking consciousness and subliminal consciousness. He continues:

¹²⁸ Since conviction of sin had been accepted as the usual cause of conversion by the Clark School (although Starbuck did discover that "search for an ideal" was also an incentive), James could claim that the healthy-minded had no need of conversion.

¹²⁹ W. James, Varieties, p. 371.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 375.

The B-region, then, is obviously, the larger part of each of us, for it is the abode of everything that is latent and the reservoir of everything that passes unrecorded or unobserved. [...] It is also the fountain-head of much that feeds our religion. In persons deep in the religious life, as we have abundantly seen—and this is my conclusion--the door into this region seems unusually wide open; at any rate, experiences making their entrance through that door have had emphatic influence in shaping religious history.¹³¹

We begin to see that it is part of James's genius that he is able to lay the foundations of his theory of religious conversion in such a way that people can understand it either in supernatural or in natural and humanistic terms.¹³² This fact is particularly striking in this classic quotation which is possibly the clearest proposal of his hypothesis:

Whatever it may be on its farther side, the "more" with which in religious experience we feel

¹³¹ W. James, Varieties, p. 376.

¹³² A good example of this aspect of James's work can be seen in the way he speaks of God. We quote a few: On p. 399: "God is the natural appellation, for us Christians at least, for the supreme reality, so I will call this higher part of the universe by the name of God." On p. 406: "At these places at least, I say, it would seem as though transmudane energies, God, if you will, produced immediate effects within the natural world to which the rest of our experience belongs." P. 407: "Beyond each man and in a fashion continuous with him there exists a larger power which is friendly to him and to his ideals. All that the facts require is that the power should be both other and larger than our conscious selves." A few authors note this quality of James's theorizing. Cf. W. E. Oates, The Psychology of Religion, p. 95. F. D. Duncan, The Contribution of William James, p. 184, writes: "One unique and valuable contribution by James to the psychology of religion was a secular, humanistic description of personal religion which reflected an affinity with the Judaeo-Christian concept of man."

ourselves connected is on its hither side the sub-conscious continuation of our conscious life.¹³³

Admittedly, James's careful descriptions of religious experience bring out an absolutely genial vindication of the supernatural and of spiritual powers by way of experience and/or the subconscious self--"the mediating term".¹³⁴ Certain basic criteria emphasizing this reality are interspersed throughout the Varieties as confirmation that the supernatural world "acts as well as exists",¹³⁵ i.e., "produces effects in this world" which make it "literally and objectively true".¹³⁶ That "God is real since he produces real effects"¹³⁷ is a working hypothesis for James,¹³⁸ i.e., he believes he proves the existence of a supernatural

133 W. James, Varieties, p. 396.

134 Ibid. Though James is so adamantly against reducing the religious to the level of mechanisms or that of organs, his own position here could be contested as a further reduction to the unconscious.

135 Ibid., p. 395.

136 Ibid., p. 399.

137 Ibid., p. 400.

138 E. Fontinell, Toward a Reconstruction of Religion, p. 227, notes: "It was James who was most explicit in asserting that faith was a working hypothesis." See also F. D. Funcan, The Contribution of William James, p. 165: "James ascribes the name of God to this higher part of the universe. This means that James accepts the hypothesis that God is the source of the influences on this wider, trans-marginal field which later become conscious motives for thought and action."

order and of God¹³⁹ because he draws on the best criteria: the experiences of men in their solitude.

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

James's method is not analytical, for analysis respects neither the uniqueness nor the integrative aspects of experience for him. Neither is James's method experimental; statistics, quantitative tables, and figures do not impress him (though he may respect what they represent), as do the uniquely real experiences of individual men.¹⁴⁰ But, we can affirm that James's method is physiological insofar as he is passionately concerned with the fields of energy, the subconscious and the feeling dimensions of experience

139 J. K. Roth, "William James, John Dewey, and the 'Death-of-God'", Religious Studies, 7, 1971, p. 61. Writing about James's theism the author states: "Some views of God are compatible with an empirical and naturalistic orientation, and James regards these as playing an important role in the maximum extension of meaning." P. Pruyser, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, p. 3, notes James's belief that "people do not simply have a God but that they use their God and that religion is known by its fruits in behavior." E. Fontinell, Toward a Reconstruction of Religion, pp. 167-208, points to some significant Jamesian arguments for the justification of God.

140 P. Pruyser, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, p. 5. F. D. Duncan, The Contribution of William James, p. 73, writes: "The utilization of autobiographical accounts by James can be viewed both as a reaction against the repetitive methodology of experimental psychology, as well as a creative anticipation of the clinical method employed by Freud and his school of psychoanalysis."

(although this might scandalize those who prefer pigeon-holing religion with the intellect).¹⁴¹ His method is primarily radically empirical, which means "nothing is so important as concrete experience".¹⁴² Moreover, this abiding faithfulness to experience and the tendency to theorize chiefly by way of description,¹⁴³ characterizes his method as phenomenological.¹⁴⁴ It also distinguishes it as the method of participant observation,¹⁴⁵ a clinical method permitting both the discovery of how individuals interpret

141 James never reduces his method to biology as such, but this approach certainly figures in it as one of the paradoxes of his method. See H. Linschoten, The Psychology of William James, pp. 48-54.

142 P. E. Johnson, Psychology of Religion, p. 29.

143 The Varieties are notable for their brilliant descriptions. A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 31, notes that "It was precisely James's adoption, perhaps implicitly, of a descriptive attitude towards experiential phenomena that enabled him to uncover so many important aspects of them and reveal them as they were experienced. [...] James's descriptive studies, we would maintain, contain an implicit vision about the kind of science that is necessary to study human phenomena."

144 H. Linschoten, The Psychology of William James, p. 31, says that "Boring considered him to be a phenomenologist." See footnote 121 above also.

145 J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", p. 339, shows how James made use of this stance in his examinations of experience: "The investigator can use himself in at least three ways: (1) as a fellow subject, responding to a situation in parallel and presumably representatively, along with other subjects; (2) as a controlled stimulus from which he can gauge and interpret subjects' responses; (3) as a kind of living meter, responding to subjects' responses." W. James, Varieties, pp. 138-39. James has left some important data about his personal bout of depression which he reports anonymously.

their own experience and the verification of this interpretation.¹⁴⁶ This, of course, accentuates the functional and/or pragmatic aspect as well as the biographical and/or inductive nature of his method which underlie his principle that "knowledge about" cannot replace "acquaintance with".¹⁴⁷

ii) Data-Gathering

From a negative point of view, James's data have been singled out as representing only one variety of religious experience, exceptions or extreme cases, a fact which can make them a cop-out since they are selected for their peculiarities.¹⁴⁸ They therefore constitute, according to A. R. Uren, "the fundamental defect of James's great book."¹⁴⁹ Positively speaking, Clebsch points out that James was not only "mapping the extremes of the wide terrain of religion", he was as well "drawing the boundaries of religiousness".¹⁵⁰

146 W. Proudfoot & P. Shaver, "Attribution Theory and the Psychology of Religion", Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 14, 1975, p. 318. The authors describe attribution theory as "a theory designed to explain how people perceive and account for their own behavior. Some of the conceptual roots of attribution theory are found in James, and it seems likely that the research stimulated by the theory can illuminate some of the phenomena originally described in the Varieties."

147 W. James, Varieties. See pp. 380 and 387 in particular.

148 J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", p. 346.

149 A. R. Uren, Recent Religious Psychology, p. 72.

150 W. A. Clebsch, American Religious Thought, p. 153.

Dittes reminds us that James is not trying so much to generalize (this is never James's aim) as he is trying to understand conversion since it works in these exceptional cases.¹⁵¹ Moreover, Boisen states that because James's cases appear pathological, they are indeed the best approaches to the understanding of normal instances of the same.¹⁵² Finally, James's data accommodate themselves to his innovative and pluralistic approach to religious conversion; they allow for introspective interpretive work.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

A main characteristic of James's presentation of his theory of religious conversion is his ability to captivate his reader. The lecture approach lent itself to James's skill in developing an empirical theory more like a painter than a scientist,¹⁵³ and to bringing out an aesthetic quality in his works. Surprisingly so, an apologetical aim can be discerned, i.e., having the reader accept that faith is a working hypothesis. Dittes cleverly detects James's expertise at transcending a few golden calves:

151 J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", p. 347.

152 See A. T. Boisen, "The Psychiatric Approach to the Study of Religion", p. 201, "The physician has found that the study of diseased conditions is one of the best approaches to the understanding of normal psychology. [...] The same principle probably applies to the disorders of personality."

153 See J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", p. 324.

those of empiricism, of objectivism, and of generalizability.¹⁵⁴

We believe the most challenging facet of James's model has to do with his unusual grasp of the open-endedness of the processive nature of religious conversion. While he seems to (and does) proceed in a systematic way, throughout this acuity of description and feeling, we find ourselves as though caught in a web, that of a "blooming buzzing confusion" (to use his own words). The only apology James offers for this constant throughout his work is that that is the way the process unfolds--you cannot generalize because reality (religious conversion) is of an infinite variety.¹⁵⁵

c) The Content

We began our exploration of the content with an analysis of James's definition of conversion. We have seen that it raises many issues,¹⁵⁶ and we emphasized four: its

¹⁵⁴ See J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", pp. 328-49.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 321, captures this characteristic of James's work as he finds him "moving from one framework to another, exploring and exploiting each fully and decisively but no more feeling the need to stick with the framework adopted in one chapter while he was in the next than he did the need to integrate all the frameworks into a single systematic whole."

¹⁵⁶ See E. H. Furgeson, "The Definition of Religious Conversion", pp. 8-16. The author argues that James's definition as either gradual or sudden raises issues which

positive value, its processive nature, its embodying of a shift, and its reference to a "more". This definition has generally been accepted as the classic one,¹⁵⁷ in spite of the fact that James's own cases did not always agree with it. We noted that the healthy-minded seem to identify with a gradual conversion while the sick souls are associated with a sudden one. Although this bimodal quality of conversion as either gradual or sudden may appear distinctive, James also indicates that there is really only one kind of process regardless of its gradualness or suddenness, in other words, this aspect is transcended by a more fundamental feature--the inner shift of energies and values. While we do not underestimate this primary insight into the process, we believe that a clarification of James's attempt to describe the moments of the shift are timely. Two critics in particular--Owen Brandon and Geoffrey E. W. Scobie--have succeeded in this endeavor.¹⁵⁸ We propose to refer to their works in

contradict his definition. He shows that a literal adherence to this definition leads to three major errors: (1) that growth is the same as conversion; (2) that the conscious process is the same as the unconscious one; and (3) that the voluntary and the involuntary processes are also similar. He concludes by proposing his own definition of conversion which completely leaves out the gradual experience.

157 W. E. Oates is of this opinion. See his Psychology of Religion, p. 93. F. D. Duncan, The Contribution of William James, p. 43, notes that James's definition "continues to represent one of the more profound statements in both religious and psychological literature."

158 See Chapter I, footnotes 78, 79, and 91.

evaluating James's typology of religious conversion but firstly, we need to return briefly to the healthy-minded way of being religious.

James points out that this category of people do not need conversion, but he also states that they can experience conversion¹⁵⁹ and since healthy-mindedness is likened to a habit, it is a mode of being identified with the unconscious. Consequently, Brandon and Scobie associate this type of conversion with that of Christians born and raised within the Church, with no point of rejection within their experience. Brandon calls this type the "unconscious conversion of the 'once-born' type".¹⁶⁰

By this is meant that the process of spiritual integration which characterizes religious conversion has been an unconscious process. The person has a living faith, but cannot recall any moment of indecision; sometimes he is able to remember a time when he did not believe. [...]

They are the once-born type of Christians, of whom it has been said that they have been children of God from their birth; they have never left the Father's house or wandered into the far country.¹⁶¹

Moreover, Scobie claims this is really a non-conversion group. He continues:

In contrast to the gradual converts there is no point of rejection, here individuals have acquired their religious beliefs from their parents or peer

159 W. James, Varieties, p. 188.

160 O. Brandon, Battle for the Soul, p. 27.

161 Ibid., pp. 27-28.

groups at the same time as other attitudes during the course of their normal childhood socialization.¹⁶²

The gradual process which James describes seems to stem from a person with a "hard rind of a margin",¹⁶³ i.e., a volitional or striving type. This conversion, says James, resembles growth into new habits which is partly conscious and mostly gradual, with some critical points, and some self-surrender interposed.¹⁶⁴ What differentiates the unconscious "once-born" conversion from the gradual one for Brandon is the fact that the latter comprises a moment of decision, a climax, a surrendering, which the once-born person does not experience:

It differs from what we have called unconscious conversion by the fact that the subject passes through a definite, conscious experience which is characterized by a transition from no religion, or a religion that is not vital, to a religion that is both vital and personal. [...] But always the two essential characteristics are mentioned, namely: The gradual process, and the eventual crisis or climax.¹⁶⁵

In other words, Brandon's gradual type greatly resembles James's gradual voluntary conversion in which the person has been striving for resolution of conflict, conviction of sin, or searching for an ideal. Though a climax may appear as

162 G. E. Scobie, "Types", p. 266.

163 W. James, Varieties, p. 198.

164 Ibid., p. 174.

165 O. Brandon, Battle for the Soul, p. 29.

sudden, as though "a corner turned within one",¹⁶⁶ it has been voluntarily and consciously prepared over a period of time.

Scobie undertook an empirical study to investigate the Brandon typology and some of his findings help us to understand James's typology, particularly as regards the gradual conversion. Scobie found that of the 177 respondents, 50% identified their conversion as gradual. Of this number, 38 considered it a "once for all" experience while 40 interpreted it as a continuing process. Scobie reports on the differentiation of the conversion experience in this group:

Perhaps within the general conversion group there are sub-groups, one in which the process is of short duration and perhaps it has now terminated with some sort of climax. If this is the case such experiences show some similarities with the sudden conversion and could explain the high proportion of respondents selecting the once for all response. The experience of the remaining gradual converts could be quite different. The process may be of much longer duration and may not as yet have reached a definite conclusion. Such converts would probably favour the continuing process reply.¹⁶⁷

Because the experience of a climax renders the gradual conversion so similar to the sudden variety, converts have difficulty defining their own conversion experiences as either gradual or sudden. This seems to validate James's assertions that the two processes are not basically different.

166 W. James, Varieties, p. 101.

167 G. E. W. Scobie, "Types", p. 269.

James describes the sudden conversion as happening in an unexpected manner with no exhaustion, no particular conviction of sin, but usually, in a highly emotional moment. The subject is not seeking conversion and when it happens, as in Paul's case, it is often revolutionary.¹⁶⁸ The time, place, and circumstances surrounding it are generally easy to remember. Brandon describes it this way:

Sudden conversion is often a revolutionary experience, changing completely long-standing habits of thought, feeling, and will. In analysing the details of a sudden conversion the preparatory phase must not be ignored. [...] A literally instantaneous conversion never occurs. It would be a psychological impossibility. There is always a certain amount of preparation, even if it is unconscious, to aid the adjustment of the mind to the new idea or orientation.¹⁶⁹

Brandon's typology emphasizes the element of time within the process. The unconscious and the gradual conversions both presuppose "continuing process" and Scobie's respondents report this fact.¹⁷⁰ The sudden conversion is understood as an event or "once for all experience". Scobie's respondents agree to this definition also.

¹⁶⁸ James's novel interpretation of the sudden conversion by means of subconscious incubation caused not a little ripple among theologians and Catholic and/or Christian psychologists. (Jung demonstrated Paul's conversion in a very similar vein in 1920.) This Jamesian hypothesis remained largely misunderstood for several years. See Chapter I, above, footnotes 50 and 64 and the Varieties, pp. 179, 190, 199.

¹⁶⁹ O. Brandon, Battle for the Soul, p. 31.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 27-31. See also G. E. W. Scobie, "Types", p. 269.

Furthermore, Scobie's empirical study reveals that 30% of the subjects identify their experience with the unconscious conversion of the 'once-born' type, 50% with that of the gradual and 20% with the sudden.¹⁷¹

We find no better confirmation of James's typology of conversion (although formulated at the turn of the century), than that which these contemporary efforts offer. Although James's typology is not neatly set before us, its applicability (as Brandon and Scobie demonstrate) greatly enhances its truth.

James's definition presupposes that crisis (as seen in the shift of energies and values) is inherent in the process of conversion, and the majority of James's descriptions (from sick souls) depict this dimension profusely. The Brandon typology agrees with the Jamesian understanding of this element. Brandon shows that the unconscious convert knows no significant crisis; the gradual convert experiences crisis which is usually secondary to process, but for the sudden convert it is the element of crisis which predominates.¹⁷² Besides, Scobie's empirical study confirms the

171 G. E. W. Scobie, "Types", p. 267.

172 O. Brandon, Battle for the Soul, pp. 27-31. W. E. Oates, Psychology of Religion, p. 94, writes about this facet of James's definition: "Another built-in presupposition of James's definition of conversion is conflict within the self. [...] I would amend his words "having a divided self" to "being a divided self", because the words James uses infer, to me at least, that we have a self, when in reality we are--existentially--a self-as-a-whole. [...]"

relevance of Brandon's clarification of James's typology.

In James's theory of conversion, content is secondary to process and crisis, and appears as intellectual, emotional and moral. Although he does not deny the intellectual component, (How could James devalue the mind?¹⁷³) James emphasizes the emotional and moral elements of the content. Indeed, the emotional-volitional component seems central in his theory of the field of energies. Since the process consists in the shifting of energies from the centre to the periphery, only an emotional-volitional impulse can carry the shift over to reality,¹⁷⁴ as he indicates in a

The issue in any event, however, is that of conflict between the self that I am and the self I want to become, the life that is and the better life that can be. The resolution of this conflict is the essence of this conversion experience. In this view, if there is no conflict, there is not likely to be any conversion."

173 W. James, *Varieties*, p. 338. We find the following very Jamesian in its comprehensive view of the individual: "We are thinking beings, and we cannot exclude the intellect from participating in any of our functions. Even in soliloquizing with ourselves, we construe our feelings intellectually. Both our personal ideals and our religious and mystical experiences must be interpreted congruously with the kind of scenery which our thinking mind inhabits." No doubt James would not feel the need to emphasize the rational or intellectual component of conversion; it was well served. E. Fontinell, *Toward a Reconstruction of Religion*, p. 66, expresses the fact that there is no dichotomy in James's theorizing between knowledge and experience. In fact, "experience includes but is wider than knowledge".

174 W. James, "The Energies of Men", in R. B. Perry, *Essays on Faith and Morals*, William James, New York, The World Publishing Co., 1967, p. 222. (hereafter cited as "Energies"), demonstrates that most of us continuously live near the surface of consciousness, energize below our optimum, and use only a small part of our powers. He asks how

later article:

Conversions, whether they be political, scientific, philosophic, or religious, form another way in which bound energies are let loose. [...] Whatever it is, it may be a highwater mark of energy, in which "noes", once impossible, are easy, and in which a new range of "yees" gains the right of way.¹⁷⁵

Moreover, in James's theory, it is at the moment of the shift, the crisis point, that the subconscious plays so vital a role. Pruyser is of the opinion that James committed a stroke of genius when he posited the subconscious as a bridge concept between man and God.¹⁷⁶

There is another element of the crisis that James takes seriously--self-surrender. Though Leuba had delineated its decisiveness, James, we believe, perceives a deeper layer into this component insofar as he links self-surrender with faith in a higher power (be it the deeper self and/or God). You surrender self, i.e., striving, manipulating, directing, in order to rely on something and/or someone else. For James, this experience seems to express what is most fundamentally

this can be changed and writes: "Either some unusual stimulus fills them with emotional excitement, or some unusual idea of necessity induces them to make an extra effort of will. Excitements, ideas, and efforts, in a word, are what carry us over the dam." James evokes the same idea in the Varieties, p. 179. Speaking about the work going on in the subconscious he says: "The higher condition, having reached the due degree of energy bursts through all barriers and sweeps in like a sudden flood."

¹⁷⁵ W. James, "Energies", pp. 233-34.

¹⁷⁶ P. Pruyser, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, p. 334.

religious and what most characterizes conversion--the result of surrendering self.¹⁷⁷

Another element of conversion which appears in his definition is his bias that conversion is an experience of self-unification and self-becoming, i.e., a progressive or regenerative experience. Many psychologists have since shown how James erred in limiting his definition when he was aware that his case studies revealed pathological tendencies

¹⁷⁷ Though James is keenly aware of the role of self-surrender--"the vital turning point of the religious life"--(p. 175), nevertheless, what it is, is not easy to define, but James does struggle to describe it. The following is typical: Varieties, p. 101: "Passivity, not activity; relaxation, not intentness, should be now the rule. Give up the feeling of responsibility, let go your hold, resign the care of your destiny to higher powers, be genuinely indifferent as to what becomes of it all, and you will find not only that you gain a perfect inward relief, but often also, in addition, the particular goods you sincerely thought you were renouncing. This is the salvation through self-despair, the dying to be truly born." See also pp. 108, 175, 256-57, and 393-95. K. H. Wolff, "Toward Understanding the Radicalness of Surrender", Sociological Analysis, 38, 1977, pp. 397-401 (hereafter cited as "Toward Understanding the Radicalness of Surrender"), is an excellent articulation of the "state and relation" of surrender. The author develops it this way: "Seminally it is the state and relation of cognitive love--seminally, because whatever other meanings it may have flow from it. Among them are total involvement, suspension of received notions, pertinence of everything, identification, and risk of being hurt. To surrender means to take as fully, to meet as immediately as possible whatever the occasion may be. It means not to select, not to believe that one can know quickly what one's experience means, hence what is to be understood and acted on: thus it means not to suppose that one can do justice to the experience with one's received notions, with one's received feeling and thinking, even with the received structure of that feeling and thinking: it means to meet, whatever it be, as much as possible in its originariness, its selfness."

and that counter-conversions were possible.¹⁷⁸ No doubt, James was consistent with his view of the unconscious as something better; this hardly accorded with pathological instances.

The aim of conversion, self-unification or greater harmony and joy in faith and/or religious beliefs, is also evident in James's definition. He does not however, belabor the issue of age in conversion. Though he quotes the Clark School tradition and the work of Coe, he is himself wholly pre-occupied with adult conversions, possibly those occurring in the afternoon of life. Even if James says that conversion is a natural psychic complex, he posits no religious instinct or special wellspring of religious phenomena; these are continuous with other phenomena.¹⁷⁹

One important feature of James's theory of conversion which we also discern in his definition is the relational one--a conspicuous concept of his theory of consciousness, his radical empiricism, and his understanding of religiousness. Indeed, James cannot conceive of man without

178 W. James, Varieties, pp. 150, 170, 195, 199.

179 P. Pruyser, A Dynamic Psychology of Religion, p. 4, feels this insight "that religion cannot be relegated to one psychic function--is of major scientific importance". Pruyser stresses that "all the psychological part processes may participate in religious experience", and that James is stressing a holistic approach to conversion. See J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", p. 313, and G. E. W. Scobie, Psychology, p. 30, where he cites: "It is not the behaviour itself which designates it as religious, 'but the object to which it is directed, and the purpose for which it is undertaken'."

relations, i.e., links, connections, conjunctions, as well as discontinuities, disconnections, disjunctions, etc.¹⁸⁰

Moreover, he stresses this relational dimension of conversion with the "more", the experience of the other, the larger power, or God. This insistence again reflects James's openness to the processive-relational aspects of the experiences depicted in his case-studies.¹⁸¹

James was the first to pursue the long-range goals of conversion with the detailed studies of saintliness and mysticism. Not only was he thus developing the view that conversion is usually a continuing process, he was also applying his empirical verification of the same. A sounding out of his theory of mysticism shows to what extent James sees it as related to conversion.¹⁸²

180 This is one of the underlying themes of the Varieties, and of the Essays in Radical Empiricism. On p. xxii (of the latter) he explains his approach to this problem of experience. He speaks about "those who maintain that it is, in principle, possible to simulate completely a human being in a model (such as a digital computer) whereby all aspects of human behavior and experience are resolved into complex patterns and regularities of discrete bits of input and output. There would be nothing in experience that corresponds to the felt continuous transition among experiences except the regularity of discrete units."

181 E. Fontinell, Toward a Reconstruction of Religion, pp. 53, 57, 72. The author points out how James's view of experience as processive and relational undercuts any dualism or reductionism.

182 M. Glenn, "Religious Conversion and the Mystical Experience", pp. 641-42, notes how closely James's four criteria for mysticism compare with the elements of a conversion experience. R. O. Ferm, The Psychology of Christian Conversion, p. 24, shows that it is often "difficult to

Another significant contribution of James to the psychology of conversion is the vocabulary he used to describe it. We note the following words and phrases as typical of his descriptive vocabulary: "once-born", "twice-born",¹⁸³ "healthy-minded",¹⁸⁴ "feeling of continuity with the Infinite Power",¹⁸⁵ "a corner turned within one",¹⁸⁶ "sick soul",¹⁸⁷ "morbid mind", "pain-threshold",¹⁸⁸ "feeling of evil",¹⁸⁹ "a second birth",¹⁹⁰ "religion of deliverance",¹⁹¹ "divided self", "one-storied affair", "double-storied mystery",¹⁹² "divided will",¹⁹³ "to experience

distinguish what is called a Christian experience from the characteristic mystical experience." W. H. Clark, "William James: Contributions to the Psychology of Religious Conversion", pp. 34-46, finds that James's most fruitful suggestion about conversion has to do with its relationship to mystical experience. We believe that the keynote of James's intuitions into the mystical experience, center in "reconciliation", i.e., the ability of "melting into unity" all the opposites of the world. Varieties, p. 306.

183 W. James, Varieties, p. 80.

184 Ibid., p. 85.

185 Ibid., p. 95.

186 Ibid., p. 101.

187 Ibid., p. 114.

188 Ibid., p. 119.

189 Ibid., p. 130.

190 Ibid., p. 135.

191 Ibid., p. 141.

192 Ibid., p. 143.

193 Ibid., p. 148.

religion", "to find grace",¹⁹⁴ "counter-conversion",¹⁹⁵
 "centres of our dynamic energy", "focus of excitement",¹⁹⁶
 "the larger power", "subconscious incubation", "vital turn-
 ing point of religious life",¹⁹⁷ "subconscious ripening",¹⁹⁸
 "an extraneous higher power",¹⁹⁹ "magnetic field", "margin",²⁰⁰
 "fruits for life",²⁰¹ "regenerative change",²⁰² "automa-
 tisms",²⁰³ "subliminal door", "sense of higher control",²⁰⁴
 "state of assurance".²⁰⁵

Typical of James's genius is the fact that although he borrowed a large part of his personal documents from Starbuck, he was significantly more productive than Starbuck.²⁰⁶ His radical empirical psychology enabled him

194 W. James, Varieties, p. 160.

195 Ibid., p. 150.

196 Ibid., p. 165.

197 Ibid., p. 175.

198 Ibid., p. 179.

199 Ibid., p. 188.

200 Ibid., p. 191.

201 Ibid., p. 195.

202 Ibid., p. 196.

203 Ibid., p. 197.

204 Ibid., p. 199.

205 Ibid., p. 202.

206 J. T. Hanford, "A Synoptic Approach", p. 225.

to create a model by which he could justify the examination of the religious phenomenon in its own right.²⁰⁷ Although some of his tenets have been challenged and redefined, James avoided many fallacies, wrote with "an artlike interpretation",²⁰⁸ and was able to "anticipate nearly anything we can say today".²⁰⁹

3. A Synopsis of the Model

a) Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

As a thinking-willing-feeling-acting being man is a centre of dynamic energy at two levels: the conscious and the subliminal or subconscious (later called the unconscious by Freud). The subliminal field is accepted both as deeper and more constructive, as well as more dynamic than the conscious field. The development of the subliminal differs with each person, but those individuals who have a more highly developed subliminal self tend to be more creative.

The person is a self in process (in becoming) and a self that is purposive. As a self in becoming the person experiences tension between self-determination (by means of the appropriation of the conscious purposive self over that of the subliminal purposive self), and self-surrender (by means of the abandoning of the conscious purposive self to the subliminal purposive self in the critical moments of life).

207 J. E. Dittes, "Beyond William James", pp. 311-15.

208 B. Wilshire, William James: The Essential Writings, p. xxxvi.

209 S. Hiltner, "Toward a Theology of Conversion in the Light of Psychology", p. 35.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Religious man is either healthy-minded (once-born) or sick soul (twice-born). Both types seek unification. The once-born do not usually need conversion because of an apparent unification within the self. However, because their view of reality is superficial, (in its non-inclusiveness) they can also experience conversion. "Twice-born" persons need conversion in order to attain peace and meaning because of their identification with the pessimistic realities of life, i.e., evil, sin, suffering, death.

Man's subliminal self can act as a doorway into a wider region, the "More", the larger Power, or God. The subliminal self is the "mediating term" between the conscious field and the larger body (the "More").

Religion is personal and experienceable. There is more to reality than can be seen with the naked eye, call it God, a larger Power, a Beyond, or the More.

God is a processive-relational-functional being. He is useful for life and calls forth seriousness, solemnity, and self-surrender.

b) Method

i) Psychological System

A radical-empirical psychology insofar as it is primarily concerned with concrete experience; it anticipates the clinical method of participant observation; it is attentive to the verification of experience by its fruits for life; it is characterized by its openness to experience; it reflects that the physiological dimension is prepotent to the psychological one; it is biographical and/or inductive; it is descriptive, introspective, not analytical nor experimental in the strict sense, therefore not concerned with the generalizability of experience; and finally, it presents an interpretive framework for experience.

ii) Data-Gathering

On the whole, those experiences which had already proved their mark by their fruits for life.

In particular, Starbuck's personal documents as well as biographical and autobiographical literature.

iii) Presentation

James proceeds as follows: he defines some principal terms--religion, the divine, the reality of the unseen, his empiricist criterion--and he situates his data; he describes the two main religious personalities: the healthy-minded and the sick soul, and adds a section on the state he calls the divided self; he describes conversion and its fruits--saintliness and mysticism; and offers a philosophical summary of his hypothesis that faith works.

This presentation is an intrinsically fascinating, brilliant, artful, and radically empirical exposition of the varieties of religious experience. This subject is the only rationale for the pervading unsystematic system.

c) Content

i) Nature

Conversion is a natural psychic complex continuous with other psychic phenomena, but insofar as it is a shift in the dynamic centre of the self, it is a regeneration, a second birth, i.e., one's priorities, and attitudes are dramatically altered. It is also essentially an experience of relation with a higher power which can be interpreted either mystically, or naturally and humanistically.

ii) Aim

Negatively: a release of bound energy in the subliminal self. Positively: the unification of a divided self or the greater harmony, joy, and energy in one's faith.

iii) Process

If it is unconscious, the person becomes unified imperceptibly and the process does not differ from ordinary growth.

If it is gradual, a conflict or division within the self occurs intangibly, at times more acutely, as a result of the inability of the self to achieve reconciliation of its dynamic centre; however, instances of conversion transpire which render moments of the process unexpected although anticipated.

If it is sudden, the process is unexpected, unsought, and usually comes about in a tumultuous, harmonious flash.

iv) Age

Theoretically speaking, adolescence is the age for conversion because a certain physiological and psychological maturity is usually necessary for the experience. Practically speaking, conversion happens at any age, but on the whole, adulthood presupposes the above maturity plus a continuous spiritual development (which is hardly possible at adolescence).

v) Motivational Forces

In the unconscious conversion, the person does not seem to experience any intrinsic religious crisis.

In the gradual conversion, the person experiences crisis due to the tension which arises between self-determination and self-surrender, i.e., the tension between controlling and directing one's self and that of yielding that control to higher powers than one's own. The subliminal self appears as the mediating term between the self and God.

In the sudden conversion, there is no crisis previous to the actual experiencing of conversion which is wholly unexpected consciously, but which had been maturing in the subliminal reaches of the self and bursts into primary consciousness as though from some exterior force or power. It is truly an experience one undergoes.

vi) Types

(1) The healthy-minded or unconscious type is likened to a habit which does not differ from the ordinary process of growth and is then strictly speaking a non-conversion kind. (2) The gradual type happens like the first except that there can be frequent crises over the inability to achieve unification of the self the religious way. There are usually points of surrender interposed. (3) The sudden type which happens to those blessed with a rich subliminal life, is unprepared for at the conscious level, and usually localizable in time and space.

CHAPTER V

DE SANCTIS'S PSYCHOANALYTICAL MODEL: 1927

Sante De Sanctis (1862-1935), an Italian medical psychiatrist, had a brilliant career as one of Italy's pioneer psychologists in the fields of both psychology and psychiatry.¹ He published research in such areas as experimental psychology, neuropsychiatry, child study, and mental deficiency.²

De Sanctis was subsequently attracted to the study of the psychology of religion and, by 1918, devoted part of an academic course to that subject.³ Meanwhile, a book on religious conversion took shape, a book published in Italian in 1924, and translated into English by Helen Augur in 1927.⁴ We believe it offers the first significant theory of religious conversion (to be published or translated in either

1 H. Misiak & V. M. Staudt. Catholics in Psychology, p. 127.

2 Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, 1950, vol. 12, p. 659, lists the following: I sogni, Torino, 1899; La mimica del pensiero, Palermo, 1903; L'Educazione dei deficienti, Milano, 1915; Trattato di psichiatria forense, Milano, 1920; Die Psychologie des Traumes, Monaco, 1922; Trattato di psicologia sperimentale, Roma, 1930.

3 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 6.

4 See above, Chapter I, footnotes 58 and 59. The original book was published in Bologna. We were unable to obtain the only copy known to exist in North America.

English or French) since James's brilliant study.

De Sanctis acknowledges a number of incentives which set the book going, such as: "neglected or maltreated arguments of men of science",⁵ William James's classic, the Varieties, the Congress of Psychology held at Geneva in 1909,⁶ Flournoy's writings,⁷ and the theories of Freud.

Earlier, we noted the methodological shift which took place in psychology about the time of the First World War. While behaviorism, a distinctly American psychology, arose in protest against the subjective approach of both introspectionism and functionalism,⁸ psychoanalysis, Freud's clinical method, emerged in Europe, also a protest against academic psychology. These new psychologies did not immediately lend themselves to the study of religious phenomena. However, and amazingly so, De Sanctis found in the new Freudian clinical psychology an approach and method which he believed could facilitate research into religious

5 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 5.

6 Let us recall that Leuba participated at this Congress and that T. Flournoy was the president. W. Lutoslawski and R. Assagioli were also present. The psychology of religion was the first topic on the agenda.

7 T. Flournoy was responsible for the articulation of the basic principles of the psychology of religion as early as 1902.

8 P. Homans, Theology after Freud, p. 93, shows how research in America soon became polarized between the two dominant psychologies, behaviorism and psychoanalysis. See also E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, p. 643, where he speaks about the behavioristic protest.

conversion. He thus became the first European psychologist to break into the distinctly American fascination with conversion and to offer as well a new understanding of the phenomenon. But what prompted him to use psychoanalysis as the basis for his theory?

It was Freud's intuition that academic psychology did not sufficiently enable the psychologist to understand man's behavior. He therefore developed, over a number of years, a comprehensive theory⁹ centred about an original view of man--his psyche. Although the subconscious or unconscious dimension was not Freud's invention (we know, for instance, how familiar it was to James), his understanding of this reality was so much more complex, more comprehensive, more subtle, and more biased, that it totally revolutionized self-perception and popularized the new view as well.

No one denies Freud's contribution to an expanding awareness of the self, of interiority, of the moral ideal, or of conflict. But if we should single out one central proposition of his seminal psychological system, it would be the appropriation, once and for all, of the unconscious depths--the psyche--the mysterious forces within the self.

Writing about this aspect of Freud's theorizing, Giorgi states that he "concentrated on the relationship between 'within self' or 'intra-psychic' difficulties and

⁹ E. G. Boring, A History of Experimental Psychology, pp. 706-12.

others";¹⁰ and we have all come to know how anti-religious were these Freudian explanations of both internal conflicts and their repercussions for individuals and society. Yet Freud's own words reveal a depth of perception into religion which is usually missed:

If the application of the psycho-analytic method makes it possible to find a new argument against the truths of religion, tant pis for religion; but defenders of religion will by the same right make use of psycho-analysis in order to give full value to the affective significance of religious doctrines.¹¹
(Underlining is ours.)

Louis Beirnaert focuses, we believe, on the real issues of psychoanalysis in the following:

Why? What was Freud looking for? One must be aware of the fact that Freud's work is self-contained and does not omit relevant issues, and that the understanding of religion is an integral part of Freud's work. The subject matter is always psycho-analysis; when it is applied to knowledge and notably to religious knowledge, it is the study of connections between knowledge and the unconscious. [...] If one admits with Freud, the existence of the unconscious process, an inevitable question is posed: how do these processes operate in religious phenomena? No other response can be given from a single theological, exegetical, ethnological, point of view within the framework which these different discourses elaborate without taking account of the

10 A. Giorgi, "The Meta-Psychology of Merleau-Ponty as a Possible Basis for Unity in Psychology", Journal of Phenomenological Psychology, 5, 1974, p. 66 (hereafter cited as "Meta-Psychology").

11 S. Freud, The Future of an Illusion, in Standard Edition, New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1961, (rev. Anchor Books ed., 1964), p. 60. We realize this work was published after De Sanctis's book, but the thesis it discloses is not new with Freud.

dimension of unconscious from which they cannot possibly escape.¹² (Underlining is ours.)

Beirnaert raises a central issue in psychoanalytical study, i.e., the relationship or connection between knowledge (as awareness) of religion and unconscious processes. As far as we know, De Sanctis is the first to take up systematically Freud's challenge and to defend religion at its most personal level (conversion), by means of psychoanalysis. We turn now to the investigation of this challenge.

1. The Exploration of the Theory

a) The Approach

The reader soon discovers that although De Sanctis has adopted the psychoanalytic method he has not accepted all of its philosophy, basic tenets, or view of man. Indeed, De Sanctis freely reinterprets the Freudian theory concerning man's inner life.¹³

¹² L. Beirnaert, "Introduction to the Reading of Freud's Texts on Religion", in B. B. Wolman, ed., Psychoanalysis and Catholicism, New York, Gardner Press, Inc., 1976, pp. 19-20.

¹³ S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 285. The author states his own distinctions and his intentions of disregarding "the 'topical' point of view of psychoanalysis".

i) A Theory of Personality

Freud's theory of personality (according to De Sanctis) intrinsically focuses upon the unconscious depths of man. Strictly speaking the true unconscious cannot become known unless it is filtered through the preconscious, itself part of the unconscious. It does manifest itself indirectly, however, (to the psychoanalyst and others) in the form of psychic systems, i.e., complexes, transferences, sublimations, and in dreams, free associations, etc. De Sanctis does not agree with Freud's theory that the unconscious cannot become conscious because such a view favors an unconscious personality (which is to be understood as a split personality) having its own existence apart from the conscious one.¹⁴ The main differentiation of De Sanctis's understanding of the unconscious from that of Freud is clearly stated in the following discussion about his use of the construct "subconscious" to replace Freud's term, "unconscious". He writes:

The term subconscious also possesses for us another merit. It implies the idea that the conscious and the subconscious are indissolubly linked together, and are in continuous intercommunication. This conception finds strong support in the anatomy, histology, and physiology of the nervous system.

14 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 286. See also pp. 54-55. He recalls that Freud maintained that the subconscious was dynamic and dominant, while in F. W. Myer's understanding of it, the subliminal had an autonomous existence with its own finality.

The conscious and the subconscious--or as the others call it, the unconscious--are not two separate stores of contents, nor are they two different fields of action.¹⁵

Ultimately for De Sanctis, man possesses two dynamic levels of consciousness, the conscious level nourished by actual energy, and the subconscious level fed by repressed and potential energy. This fact prompts De Sanctis to formulate a law whereby the upward movement is from the subconscious towards the conscious and the rational, while the downward one is from the rational towards the subconscious and its contents.¹⁶

As the latent subconscious energy meets the actual conscious energy, it produces either conflict, if the person proceeds from voluntary (intentional) activity, or accord, if the person proceeds from habit.¹⁷ Besides, all "idea-tional compounds, complex feelings, emotions and volitional processes are the effects of a combination of psychic processes" made up of psychic units of "representational, affective, and motor elements".¹⁸ And since everything in nature is "energized in form and direction by powerful

15 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 285. See also pp. 57, 59, where he states that the term unconscious is especially reserved for such processes as can never become conscious, e.g., the physiological ones.

16 Ibid., p. 58.

17 Ibid., pp. 64-65.

18 Ibid., pp. 98-99.

forces", De Sanctis argues that the elements of the psyche are not reducible to simple autonomous representations.¹⁹ Rather, these psychic components necessarily lead to psychic systematization, unification, conflict, splitting or dissociation,²⁰ a heritage of psychic systems accumulated since early infancy (a veritable résumé of one's life).²¹

De Sanctis emphasizes that these psychic components become systematized because of their inner dynamism, an affective energy capable of displacement, rebirth or new adjustments. A rebirth of a psychic system points to change on both the intellectual and the feeling levels causing infantile complexes to become adult complexes either by means of rebirth or by substitution of complex. In this case, either the whole psychic complex is changed en bloc, or the affective element remains unaltered while the

19 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 99-100.

20 Ibid., p. 100. He defines them as follows: "We shall speak of 'psychic systematization', when we find the formation of one or more psychic systems, more or less linked up by close or distant associations. We shall allude to 'unification'--more or less complete--of the psychic personality, in the sense of the harmonious disposition of the subconscious psychic systems in relation to the systems of conscious actuality or the ego. We shall speak of 'conflict' in the sense of the struggle between the psychic systems and conscious reality; of 'splitting' in regard to the formation of a more or less complete 'secondary personality', the autonomy of certain psychic systems which impose themselves on the consciousness. The 'dissociations' which we shall have to consider further on, will refer to the decomposition of the psychic systems into their elementary components, with the resultant liberation of psychic energy."

21 Ibid., pp. 100-2.

intellectual component is converted.²²

Affective transference (another psychic systematization) is based on the supposition that cumulative affective psychic energy can suffer displacement from one psychic representation to another, a displacement which can be accompanied by a similar dislodgment of vital energy. De Sanctis hypothesizes that ideo-affective dissociability is to be admitted in such cases, i.e., the affective dimension is dissociated from its ideational component. Furthermore, he believes that in such cases "representations are the mobile surfaces of concepts, while stability is given by the feelings."²³ A common example he gives of such displacement is that of getting up in the morning in a bad temper for no apparent reason. While De Sanctis admits that by attending to this feeling the individual may discover, for instance, that it originates in a dream, and thus relax the feeling; it could also intensify the feeling by awakening "associated connections", a fact which proves, so he believes, that feelings are more stable than representations.²⁴

De Sanctis considers other cases of dissociation of a psychic system in which either the image does not return, in spite of effort, or in which it returns vaguely but causes

22 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 106.

23 Ibid., p. 116.

24 Ibid., pp. 117-18.

no breakthrough and further strengthens the affect. The latter can then become so highly charged as to be associated with new ideational representations and new affective components--the surrogate of the affect displaced²⁵--and this is the process of transference.²⁶

Without doubt the most significant psychic process De Sanctis outlines is that of sublimation, a process he estimates to be normal, common, and a move toward something better,²⁷ its excellence depending upon the "moral value of the 'substitute'".²⁸ The author recounts numerous instances of sexual sublimation among saintly individuals, then admits that he was accepting therein the Freudian hypothesis that sublimation has its point of departure in the libido, "the psychic product of the sexual instincts".²⁹ While he admits the truth of this Freudian principle, he attempts to broaden the end of sublimation, e.g., in poverty and power.

De Sanctis believes sublimation begins in the

25 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 118-19.

26 Ibid., p. 126. The affects are not suppressed but only transferred, consciously or not.

27 Ibid., pp. 127-29.

28 Ibid., p. 134.

29 Ibid., p. 141. See also pp. 141-50. In Freud's theory, the dynamics of sublimation originate from the libido--the psychic product of the sexual instincts--which is invariably unconscious as the conflict is between the ego and the libido. Jung, on the contrary, saw the conflict as arising between the task of life and psychic energy.

process of transference, but that its term is not egoism.³⁰ Though he accepts that the process is incited in the unconscious, he disagrees with the Freudian theory that sublimation is invariably a process of the unconscious.³¹ He argues that it must also become a conscious, voluntary process, to be effective in action. For him, "consciousness and will are the profound complement of every psychic phenomenon".³²

Ultimately, De Sanctis discloses four phases in the process of sublimation. The first, initiation, is entirely unconscious. The second, formation, involves the transition from the unconscious process to the level of awareness, a phase connected with the onslaught of conflict. The third phase, that of completion, is that of voluntary acceptance and the fourth, habituation, is conscious but semi-automatic because it has become like a habit. While De Sanctis cannot classify the dynamics of the unconscious phase, he emphasizes that the voluntary phase offsets any simple determination by unconscious forces.³³ Finally, for him, sublimation is primarily a voluntary process connected with intellectual and social elements.³⁴

30 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 144.

31 Ibid., p. 150.

32 Ibid., p. 151.

33 Ibid., p. 152.

34 Ibid., pp. 163-68.

Over and above the delineation of these psychic systems and his reinterpretation of the subconscious role in them, De Sanctis insists that "the human psyche is a form of activity sui generis".³⁵ He admits that while man's voluntary dynamism is hampered by memory losses,³⁶ which limit his understanding of these inner processes, he nevertheless emphasizes the superior effectiveness of the powers of reflection and decision, in spite of the fact that psychic energy is more potent in the feelings and in the subconscious.³⁷

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Throughout this theory we sense the author's preoccupation with and empathy for religious man (regardless of a professed agnostic spirit), particularly as regards the paradoxical nature of faith--its childlike quality on the one hand, and its tremendous power on the other. He accepts God as one of various working hypotheses and since evidence demonstrates both the fact of man's religious complexes, and their higher nature, he accepts religion as both real and problematic. Moreover, he believes that Catholicism offers

35 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 95.

36 Ibid., pp. 27-28, 79.

37 Ibid., p. 95.

the "richest yield of facts" regarding religious conversion.³⁸

Because of his pragmatic belief that the truth of religion must be found in conduct, De Sanctis surmises that religion may belong to ideology, a view he finds confirmed (1) in the fact that uncivilized people often do not know God, and (2) in his own clinical experience that idiots never know God.³⁹ He suspects that religious psychology may be one way of discovering a solution to the problematic aspect of religion. Moreover, as a psychiatrist, he believes he will be able to detect scientifically the reality of religion as it manifests itself in individuals experiencing conversion. Finally, De Sanctis's view of religious man coincides generally with his dynamic view of personality.

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

De Sanctis, a physician and a biopsychologist, argues for the biological viewpoint of psychoanalysis which assures psychology of its place among the natural sciences.⁴⁰ However, he makes it clear that while he supports Freud's method,⁴¹ he does not agree with all of his tenets, for

38 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p.34.

39 Ibid., p. 7.

40 Ibid., pp. 6, 11.

41 Ibid., p. 19.

instance, its one-sided psychic determinism,⁴² and its bent on tracing origins. Psychic connections seem to interest our author much more.

De Sanctis is aware of the twofold method of psychoanalysis. It adopts, on the one hand, the clinical stance of the doctor, i.e., listening, observing, and dialoguing with the patient--a basically existential method--which leads to a very different one, the writing of a case study, a wholly theoretical development of the patient's inner processes by means of a painstaking diagnostic and analytical understanding of the meaning of these processes.⁴³ To this end, De Sanctis uses the subjective methods of introspection and induced-introspection⁴⁴ along with the mechanistic and doctrinaire principles of psychoanalysis.

De Sanctis also reveals a deep concern for the guiding principles of psychology of religion (enunciated by T. Flournoy): exclusion of the Transcendent (God), and biological interpretation of the phenomena. In his words, this implies "that every purely psychological explanation must be found within the subject and not outside".⁴⁵ In this sense, his method is truly agnostic although one of

42 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 21.

43 Ibid., p. 19.

44 Ibid., p. 23.

45 Ibid., p. 14, and footnote 2, p. 263.

his primary aim is to defend religion by making it scientifically acceptable.

ii) Data-Gathering

De Sanctis's data is limited to the "most typical experiences of those converted to Catholicism",⁴⁶ in this instance, to four specific case studies of his own, as well as feedback from several other converts and from the course in religious psychology given in 1918. His research is limited to persons who reveal no signs of insanity or other neuropathic diseases, and who are free from "external influences of too general and too obvious a nature."⁴⁷

The four cases upon which he builds his theory are those of an Anglican (case 1), two atheists or rationalists (cases 2 and 3), and a Jewish lady (case 4).⁴⁸

His extensive notes and bibliography figure as additional important data showing his familiarity with the previous important theorization on the subject.⁴⁹

46 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 34.
(Unless otherwise specified all underlining is the author's.)

47 Ibid., p. 25.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid., pp. 263-318. The author is very familiar with the work of the Clark School, of James, and of Coe.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

De Sanctis's book provides a major theory of religious conversion obtained by means of a psychoanalytical approach. The first part of his study is a report on the relevant research. He then probes the research data on conversion for physiological and psychic causes, its typology, process, fruits, pathology, and its predictability. He concludes with a theoretical application of his investigation--a typical conversional experience.⁵⁰

We easily discern a sense of probity throughout the work and find his self-reflection and introspection as to his true motive in pursuing this research to be striking.⁵¹

c) The Content

By means of a modified psychoanalysis and building on the tradition of the American psychologists, De Sanctis explores "the typical experience of conversion".⁵² This limits his research to inner experience and its connections with outer behavior.⁵³

50 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 244. This model case study is obtained by co-ordinating two of his own case histories.

51 See the Preface of his work.

52 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 26.

53 Ibid., pp. 23, 61.

Because De Sanctis defines conversion as "a mutation of conscience regarding the sentiment and practice of religion" which implies "universal, transcendent, and immortal" values, he excludes philosophico-moral conversions from his study.⁵⁴ He argues for a distinction between conversion and development stating that "conversion by development" is not a true conversion when it refers to "the final phase of the 'typical' evolution of the mind or soul".⁵⁵ He intends to consider only such cases as are "genuine, complete, and lasting" from a religious point of view.

De Sanctis conducts a study of the aetiology of conversion by reviewing its physiological and psychic causes. He disagrees with the usual physiological causes given; for instance, he believes that the factor of old age would be better classified as an issue in regressions and/or returns to the faith,⁵⁶ and he maintains that a psychic cause is always necessary for a true conversion. He considers the

54 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 29-30.

55 Ibid. See pp. 33-34, and 38-40, where he reviews the traditional definitions of conversion as "nothing beyond the moral and religious crisis of adolescence", as treating it "exclusively from the ethical standpoint", and as a "feature of the curve of the normal moral development in those who from youth receive in the American colleges an education influenced by the spirit of religion."

56 Ibid., p. 35. Some of these physiological causes he lists are "cerebral arteriosclerosis accompanied by mental deficiency; toxaeemias accompanied by melancholia or mania; organic exhaustion accompanied by an increase of suggestibility, and so forth". He also lists old age and puberty among these causes.

Clark School definition of the adolescent conversion especially significant since he finds "at the root of the processes of conversion, a mutation of sexual economy".⁵⁷ However, he maintains that adolescence is only an "extrinsic or indirect cause, neither essential nor sufficient"⁵⁸ and he clarifies his own views of conversion at this point:

Conversion is an exceptional process experienced in adolescence or maturity, and representing an intellectual and moral regeneration of the person in whom it occurs. And further, conversion is a process which may be observed in anyone whatsoever; in those who have undergone the so-called ethico-religious conversion of adolescence, as well as in those who have been unbelieving or immoral from childhood, or in those who have remained throughout indifferent to religion.⁵⁹

De Sanctis finds that the external psychic causes of conversion are usually acknowledged by theorists but that the internal ones are not. He shows that while the initial stimulus is ordinarily external, it nevertheless presupposes an internal psychic cause. The external psychic causes he enumerates as:

suggestion, in the form of sermons, missions, and reading; example, such as that found in the testimony of the confessors and martyrs; marvelous happenings, such as prophecies and miracles; occult and mediumistic practices; politico-social propaganda; aesthetic stimulation; the ardours of nationalism; misfortunes and illnesses; the great cosmic or social calamities, from earthquakes to

57 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 37.

58 Ibid., p. 39.

59 Ibid., p. 40. This is different from the view of the Clark School for whom it is a normal moral development.

wars and revolutions--all of which become effective by means of elaboration in the individual consciousness.⁶⁰

Among these external psychic causes, De Sanctis also includes dreams, auto-imitation, and attendance at Catholic Churches.⁶¹ But, according to him, the most effective of all external psychic causes is that of physical and moral suffering.⁶²

The internal psychic causes De Sanctis describes appear as intellectual and emotional states of anxiety. Intellectually, conversion can then resemble "an affirmation after a series of negations", while emotionally, it seems to be a feeling of equilibrium.⁶³ Moreover, though De Sanctis states that an intellectual cause is necessary, he affirms that affective causes always initiate the process.⁶⁴

60 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 41.

61 Ibid., pp. 42-43.

62 Ibid., p. 45. On p. 46 he writes: "Whether it be the experience of illness, mutilation, imprisonment, or hunger, or some domestic misfortune, or moral perturbation, it is indisputable that every true conversion has suffering for its antecedent. It may even be that suffering is the one indispensable factor, although suffering alone is insufficient."

63 Ibid., p. 48.

64 Ibid., p. 49. De Sanctis summarizes the role of these psychic causes on p. 50: "The so-called psychic states preceding conversion seem all to have this in common, that they dissolve the economy of the individual, and excite the soul, but cannot satisfy it or allay its disturbance. They are psychic states which propound questions, but do not answer them; they initiate, but do not complete. They provoke a suspension of the soul in which they are being

De Sanctis does not accept the slow-sudden typology established by the Clark School. For him, there is only one way to be converted--the progressive way--duration being only an accidental aspect of the process.⁶⁵ Although he states that "a psychical regeneration may take place instantaneously", he immediately declares his intention "to ascertain whether the fulminant type of conversion occurs, and if so, how often".⁶⁶ For him, in any case, the coup de foudre, the most aesthetic moment of conversion; is the least significant:

It is not the event itself, but rather the conscious reflection that immediately follows, which determines the change, that is, the conversion, properly so called.⁶⁷

experienced. This is the reason why all converts express themselves as happy after the crisis."

65 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 52. He believes that the psychologists who reported instantaneous conversions invariably attributed them to the unconscious, a biological substitute for grace, and source of the energy experienced.

66 Ibid., p. 53.

67 Ibid., p. 65. On pp.66-67, De Sanctis clarifies the frequent confusion of sudden conversions with such psychic processes as invention, faith and inspiration. He explains that in invention the action of the subconscious is seen as extremely rapid and decisive and that the working out of it on the conscious level involves no personality change. Inspiration, like prophecy, is seen as a gift completely beyond the control of the subject, while faith is a momentary emotion or sense of unification. Conversion, however, is very different from these psychic processes as it presupposes "a stable and lasting condition of the consciousness".

De Sanctis accepts Paul's conversion as the classic example of such instantaneous occurrences; yet he does not situate Paul's conversion as happening on the Damascus road but in the "profound reflection" of the three days following.⁶⁸ He recalls the dramatic conversions of Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Luther, Manzoni, Newman, and others,⁶⁹ and concludes that most converts involuntarily curtail the conscious antecedents of their conversions in their narratives. De Sanctis believes they forget some of the circumstances surrounding their experience because of emotional shock, not a pathological fact, but simply the forgetting of memories "nearest in time and space to the occurrence itself".⁷⁰ He writes:

The same phenomenon may occur in certain exceptional cases, in which the apparent starting-point of the conversion becomes fixed specifically in a vision, a trauma, or a profound grief. The shock acts as the filtre; and the convert, in all good faith, may forget his antecedent mutations, or, at any rate, find the memory of them negligible in his consciousness.⁷¹

De Sanctis is not denying that in one of its phases

68 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 68-69. Although the author refers to many converts, Paul seems to be a favorite. He deals with Paul's conversion at least nineteen times and the sum of these references, although interspersed throughout the study, give an original view of Paul's experience.

69 Ibid., pp. 69-78.

70 Ibid., pp. 78-79.

71 Ibid., pp. 79-80.

conversion may be subconscious (all psychological processes have a subconscious phase); he is positing more. Since the subconscious is in direct relation with the conscious, he states that the true conversional process begins, if ever,

with the consciousness of these apparitions and experiences, and runs its full course by retaining these apparitions and experiences in the consciousness and definitely accepting them by the will.⁷²

Since conversion is not complete until it has become realized in conduct,⁷³ that which is sudden, for De Sanctis, is the awareness of new values. The crisis therefore appears as the beginning of a long process:

The crisis of conversion, when it occurs, need, therefore, be nothing but an episode in a slow psychic process with conscious lacunae; an episode to which we can assign different explanations, [...] but which have only a secondary or purely accidental value in the general process of conversion.⁷⁴

In short, De Sanctis admits the possibility of an instantaneous kind of conversion but stresses that it is not the common type. Besides, it differs from the latter much less than heretofore believed, insofar as consciousness and the will⁷⁵ are involved in both.

In investigating the phenomenon of conversion,

72 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 82. In this sense the author sees the event on the Damascus road as the stage of awareness of a change in Paul.

73 Ibid., p. 81.

74 Ibid., p. 84.

75 Ibid., p. 85.

De Sanctis insists that "whether fulminant or progressive", conversion is simply a mental process. Moreover, for him, "process" itself implies "a continuous alteration in consciousness"⁷⁶ with respect to time and to disposition.

De Sanctis distinguishes between adolescent and adult conversions. The American psychologists, he believes, defined conversion as "a slow individual mutation of progressive value" which they associated with adolescence. De Sanctis argues that the conversion of adults can be a "process now of progressive evolution, now of regressive evolution, and either rapid or slow".⁷⁷ He sees the typical experience of conversion as undoubtedly progressive, both in respect to ethical ideal and instinctual pleasure. Basically, he considers the principal dynamics of the true conversion to be an "integral overturning of consciousness" which gives way to "a fresh psychic systematization".⁷⁸ While each conversion is unique, in general, the change extends "to the profoundest roots of the affective life, though it may seem to involve only the intelligence";⁷⁹ but always, the process resembles the taking on of a new psychic system.

76 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 87.

77 Ibid., pp. 87-91.

78 Ibid., p. 92.

79 Ibid., p. 93.

Conversion can also occur because of the rebirth of a psychic system, or because of the rebirth of religious complexes which had been buried but not destroyed. Because these complexes are affective-motor, they retain their feeling-tone as well as their ideational component;⁸⁰ process explains why adult subjects may utilize old complexes rather than forming new ones.⁸¹

Another dynamic of conversion De Sanctis discloses is that of the substitution of complex which entails the substitution, in whole or in part, of the affective-ideational complex.⁸² De Sanctis insists that the rebirth or the substitution processes are not the characteristic moments of true conversion, since these are mostly unconscious dynamics. The real moment of conversion, for him, occurs in the acceptance of the complex and the solution which this reborn or renewed complex offers to the convert.⁸³ De Sanctis comes to the conclusion that the affective element predominates and this fact points to still another organization of conversion, that of affective transference.

Conversion involving affective transference consists in the displacement of affective energy from one

80 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 103

81 Ibid., p. 105.

82 Ibid., p. 106.

83 Ibid., p. 107.

object to another. It is accompanied by a corresponding displacement of vital energy.⁸⁴

The final method of conversion which De Sanctis describes is that by sublimation. As in other psychic processes, its initial period is unconscious; the second begins with the moment of awareness; the third with acceptance by the will, and the last endures as a period of habituation.⁸⁵ According to De Sanctis, conversion by sublimation profoundly affects the individual's affective system:

Since true conversion profoundly agitates the depths of the individual's affective system, and gives new meanings and new values to the elements it agitates, and since the most important of the elements to feel these vibrations is sensuality, it seems self-evident that the process of conversion consists in a practical revision of love. In other words, conversion implies a new economy of love. But from the theoretical aspect it is artificial to claim that all the ethical values of a conversion represent sublimations of the original libido. Rather the process of sublimation must be understood to include all the old sentimentality or affectivity of the convert, and not his sensual love alone. The fresh ethical revaluation therefore has an exceedingly complex psychogenesis.⁸⁶

In outlining the fruits of conversion De Sanctis speaks of experiences of freedom, of victory, of a sense of presence and of love of God.⁸⁷ He finds it typical of the

84 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 115.

85 Ibid., pp. 151-52.

86 Ibid., p. 143.

87 Ibid., pp. 170-71.

true convert that he undergoes another phase of conflict at this time,⁸⁸ a fact which strengthens the conscious and voluntary dimensions of the experience. Depending upon temperament, the convert adopts either the behavior characteristic of the contemplative life (prayer) or that of the active life (works of charity),⁸⁹ and De Sanctis examines the processes of identification and of projection as these occur either in prayer or in works of charity.⁹⁰

Deliberating over pathology in religious conversion De Sanctis questions if its presence precludes the experience from being accepted as typical and attempts a solution by discussing the following issues: the morbid consciousness and its diagnosis;⁹¹ the normal, impure and morbid mysticism and its relationship to pathological conversions;⁹² visions, voices, revelations and hallucinations in mystics and the insane;⁹³ and mysticism and neurosis in general.⁹⁴ De Sanctis concludes that distinctly morbid conversions can be identified by their excess of mystic practices and

88 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 172-74.

89 Ibid., pp. 175-77.

90 Ibid., pp. 177-92.

91 Ibid., pp. 194-210.

92 Ibid., pp. 210-20.

93 Ibid., pp. 220-33.

94 Ibid., pp. 233-43.

doubtful features, while pseudo-conversions can be identified by their impermanence. For him, transience implies an absence of sublimation, i.e., a failure to complete the process, an inability to translate it into action and/or a lack of renewed purpose in life.⁹⁵

In order to illustrate "the typical experience of conversion" considered specific to Catholicism, De Sanctis invents "Convert X" from two of his actual case studies. We present a brief version of this illustration.

X is born in a traditional Catholic atmosphere in which he forms normal childhood beliefs along with true ideo-affective religious complexes.⁹⁶ Gradually, the infantile religious complex is shifted from consciousness by the "complete religious indifference" occasioned by adolescent sexual conflicts.⁹⁷ The search for knowledge which also pervades this period causes a dissociation of the infantile religious complex. Eventually, a "secondary psychic systematization"⁹⁸ replaces the former and becomes firmly established by the time X reaches his twenties.

95 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 219-20. The author refers to cases of distinctly morbid conversions in persons suffering from manic-depressive psychosis. The pseudo-conversions (pp. 218, 243) are those which are usually arrested in the first phases of sublimation.

96 Ibid., p. 245.

97 Ibid., p. 246.

98 Ibid., p. 247.

In his thirties, X enters a philosophic period resembling "unification of the psychic personality". In reality, this is an unconscious deviation of energy into new systems.⁹⁹ Between the ages of forty and forty-two, X is present at a religious ceremony which reawakens the deeply immersed infantile religious complex and allows its re-emergence to surface. X becomes aware that a change is operating within him.¹⁰⁰ A state of conflict sets in but he eventually appropriates the new religious complex.¹⁰¹ This is not conversion yet, however.

A disillusion in love at this time brings on an intensive period of suffering which ends in "a true inward mutation". X experiences a displacement of psychic energy with its accompanying "transference of affective energy to a more ideal object",¹⁰² and interprets this subconscious force as the workings of Providence. What has transpired is a "transference of love" and sublimation. When X realizes this, he is already a changed man living "a new economy of love".¹⁰³ However, "an incessant renewal of this sublimation" must reinforce and ratify the change.

99 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 248.

100 Ibid., pp. 248-49.

101 Ibid., p. 250.

102 Ibid., p. 251.

103 Ibid., p. 253.

X experiences a period of oscillation, now suffering, now rejoicing, until the sublimation is habitual. (The voluntary acceptance of the change makes it a true conversion.) X then undergoes a sense of happiness and peace, a sense of presence and a new tenderness towards God, the Madonna and the Church. Two new habits, prayer and works of charity, now unfold in X.¹⁰⁴

When De Sanctis outlines this hypothetical illustration of conversion it is fifteen years since the conversion of the two persons (cases 2 and 3) whose case histories he utilizes; and he finds no signs of serious disturbances in their lives.¹⁰⁵

The last aspect of conversion which De Sanctis surveys is that of its predictability. Though he realizes that the act of volition (the most essential factor in conversion for him) can hardly be prognosticated, the foundation of conversion in an historical situation suggests the recognition of certain concomitant conditions.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, the fact that conversion is a normal phenomenon makes its predictability a possibility. De Sanctis offers six indications by which conversion can be announced: a religiosity, a tendency towards absolute convictions, a

104 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 252, 254.

105 Ibid., pp. 254-55.

106 Ibid., pp. 256-57.

contemplative spirit, a rich affectivity, a tendency for temporary transferences and the repetition of painful experiences. Given these situations, "powerful volitional processes" can produce conversion and De Sanctis notes that the probability of this occurring is greater with multitudes than with individuals.¹⁰⁷

2. The Evaluation of the Theory

Although De Sanctis's Religious Conversion was translated into English as early as 1927, there are no critiques known to us. Our own original evaluation from the point of view of approach, method and content, will it is hoped, compensate for this lack.

a) The Approach

De Sanctis's overall approach (and method) are colored by his conceptual framework, psychoanalysis (psychiatry). While he protests that he does not espouse the pervading Freudian focus on the origins of religion as such, we hope to show that the origins of religious conversion are indeed given focal importance throughout his theorizing. A basic presupposition of his work--his attempt to discover why this theorizing was "important" to him--we find significant, as well as his rationalization

107 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 258-61.

that the discrediting of religious experience by scientists generally needed to be altered.

i) A Theory of Personality

We endeavored in our exploration to do justice to the author's view of man. On the whole, we can attest that it is ~~is~~ not primarily a comprehensive view of man. Rather, the view our author presents is a ~~rather~~ partial one, a comprehensive theoretical view of the inner dynamics of the psyche and no more. This thrust has the effect of blurring the flesh-and-blood characteristics of his converts who even lose their identities as cases 1, 2, 3, and 4, because De Sanctis never directly returns to them even in his illustration of the 'ideal convert' case study. We can therefore affirm that De Sanctis reduces man to the fascinating mechanisms of his dynamic psychic systems whether they be ideo-affective dissociations, rebirth of complexes, substitution of complexes, transferences, or the intricate process of sublimation. By tracing these "psychic connections", De Sanctis believes his understanding of them is broadened. He definitely does not want to reduce man to the autonomy of the Freudian unconscious and believes his reinterpretation raises (as it were) man's dynamic level of creativity and change to the conscious, the rational and the volitional.

We note both De Sanctis's dilemma in viewing man along the conscious-unconscious continuum of psychoanalysis

with the psyche constantly oscillating between the two poles, and his desire to reconstruct Freud's theory of the psyche by giving the greater synthesizing role to consciousness. (Basic to this view, of course, is the assumption that man can change.) The author consequently articulates a challenging theory in which there is a bold attempt at integrating¹⁰⁸ the intellectual, affective, and volitional forces.

However, despite the author's protests for the ascendancy of the conscious over the unconscious, we sense that he is bound to the biological affective position of psychoanalysis in which the powers of libido are autonomous and driving.¹⁰⁹ His assertion, e.g., that there is "nothing psychic without some sort of correlative behaviour",¹¹⁰ shows his position about the true intrapsychic connections.

108 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 169. The author states his intentions of articulating a comprehensive theory of personality.

109 According to De Sanctis, Freud's conception of sublimation emphasizes the autonomous power of the unconscious. M. T. L. Penido is of the opinion the author only pays lip-service to consciousness in rationalizing the instinctual urges, and that his theory is truly "an affectivist theory with a sexual basis". See his Conscience religieuse, p. 101. "Mais pour nos psychologues--et bien davantage pour nos psychanalystes--tous ces motifs ne sont que purs camouflages: l'intelligence du converti rationalise, tant bien que mal, les poussées de l'instinct. [...] Malgré quelques concessions, qui semblent de pure forme, De Sanctis se montrait partisan décidé de la théorie affectiviste, à base sexuelle."

110 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 61.

Yet, he believes that man's powers of reflection and decision, like a "determining tendency",¹¹¹ enable him to experience a profound mutation.

Finally, De Sanctis offers a theory of personality in which the voluntary and conscious aspects have the determining role in the conflicts and decisions of life, but a theory in which the functions, and systems of the subconscious (as he calls it), are dealt with in much greater depth.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

De Sanctis's analytic view of man is unfolded at great length, though not always clearly; his view of religious man is, practically speaking, non-existent. We find our basis for this stand in a key phrase which, we believe, sums up an implicit assumption, i.e., "the human psyche is a form of activity sui generis".¹¹² This is a presupposition worth examining. It suggests that the human psyche is sufficient unto itself, affirms a certain naturalism, biologicalism, or immanentism (a necessary postulate of the psychology of religion¹¹³) and permits a purely

111 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 85.

112 Ibid., p. 95.

113 Ibid., pp. 21-24. The author is very familiar with the limits of the psychology of religion, and in wanting his theory to be scientific he states his intention to study conversion from its purely psychological processes.

psychological exploration of conversion. The psychologist is thus dispensed from attending to its God-pole.

So, while De Sanctis insists that the "sense of the infinite is not a virus which kills positive knowledge",¹¹⁴ he does not report on the religious aspect of the experience. We search in vain for its meaning. Indeed, religious conversion for him is not primarily a meaningful experience of the self in God; it is simply a complex mental process to be ingeniously analyzed. An excellent example of this reductionism appears in his development of the convert as one in love; yet he speaks of the loved one (God), only to refer to the theoretical dynamics of conversion, whether it be the appealing subliminal incubation theory of James,¹¹⁵ the process of sublimation in mystics,¹¹⁶ or the psychic aspects of the post-conversional phase.¹¹⁷ His aim is evidently to diagnose, ever so expertly, the "thingifying" mechanics of the psychodynamics involved, and this leads us to his method.

114 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 4.

115 Ibid., p. 83. De Sanctis recognizes that this subliminal incubation theory gives a satisfying explanation of the convert's experience of an exterior force operating on him without having to speak of God's workings or relationship with the convert.

116 Ibid., pp. 132-38.

117 Ibid., pp. 170-71, 184, 187-88.

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

De Sanctis professes a modified psychoanalysis, a method integrally concerned with analysis of the psyche,¹¹⁸ a method in which we find evidence that "individual psychologists of religion have identified the focal objects of their research according to their importance to the researcher."¹¹⁹ In this instance, what is important to our author is not the existential meaning of the experiencing subject; indeed the clinical (existential) aspect of psychoanalysis is totally lacking except for the acknowledgment of his case histories, yet even these (judging from his theory) do not reflect the fact that religious conversion is much more complex than the theoretical analyses he serves so well.

Obviously, the focal term for De Sanctis, is the attainment of scientific meaning (as different from existential meaning) which necessitates diligent attendance to the tracing of the psychic origins and processes of

¹¹⁸ Speaking to this analytical stance, P. Homans, Theology after Freud, p. 105, states that "Analytic distance undercuts the immediacy of the conversion experience and objectifies it."

¹¹⁹ D. E. Capps, "Contemporary Psychology of Religion: The Task of Theoretical Reconstruction", in Current Perspectives in the Psychology of Religion, H. N. Malony, ed., Grand Rapids, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1977, p. 44.

religious conversion. In the words of Herbert Fingarette, securing the scientific meaning of these processes is "part of a process of developing a logical, reliably interpretable, and systematically predictive theory".¹²⁰ Psychoanalysis thus functions as the empirical means whereby De Sanctis can attain sophisticated and systematic knowledge about its "central psycho-spiritual task: self-transformation".¹²¹ In his opinion, such a rigorous method will succeed in defending religion.

ii) Data-Gathering

De Sanctis's data represent a significant departure from the American tradition. On the one hand, they bear "almost exclusively" upon conversions to Catholicism,¹²² and on the other, they pertain to healthy or normal individuals.¹²³

¹²⁰ H. Fingarette, The Self in Transformation, Psychoanalysis, Philosophy, and the Life of the Spirit, New York, Harper & Row, Publ., 1963, p. 65 (hereafter cited as The Self in Transformation).

¹²¹ Ibid., p. 10.

¹²² See his Religious Conversion, p. 34. Sv. Norborg, Varieties of Christian Experience, p. 271, writes that "Methodistic piety and the modern psychology of religion went hand in hand and standardized one and only one model." Might De Sanctis then be able to provide another model since his theory is based on converts to Catholicism? It would seem not since he neither restricts conversion to Catholicism nor reinterprets the methodological agnosticism with respect to the religious dimension of conversion.

¹²³ S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 25. De Sanctis examines regressive conversions but he does not consider these as genuine, and uses only the four cases

Of his own case histories, we note that cases 1 and 4 refer to persons who were religious previous to their conversions, while cases 2 and 3 refer to persons who had been irreligious. Convert X, the hypothetical "double convert" is the result of a longitudinal study of cases 2 and 3.

The author's comprehensive knowledge of the American, French, German, and Italian literature on the psychology of religious conversion is meaningful and impressive to say the least.¹²⁴ We also note the continuation of a Jamesian trend in his wide use of biographical literature.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

Though we have used a translation of De Sanctis's study, we note the style of a master. His "pictorial images"¹²⁵ add another Jamesian touch to this scholarly and

"who have all embraced Catholicism with sincerity and constancy", the last qualifier being an important element of his understanding of conversion as "genuine, complete and lasting".

¹²⁴ S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 263-318. His notes and bibliography are a veritable fund of information on the European and American literature in question. An anonymous reviewer of De Sanctis's book: "Conversion", Expository Times, 33, 1928, p. 250, notes that "it is a careful survey, based on wide knowledge and long reflection. The author is acquainted with the extensive literature of the subject in all languages, and his discussion is on all points well-informed. The book will be found interesting and stimulating even by those who profoundly differ from its points of view."

¹²⁵ B. E. Jones, Conversion, p. 205, refers to some of these "pictorial images"--"an overturning of consciousness", "a displacement of psychic energy", "a new economy of

original work recommended by Freud himself.¹²⁶ His attempt to explicitate his reasons for attending to this research reveal an attitude of openness before religious conversion which abides throughout the study.¹²⁷ We easily discern an enthusiasm for the richness of the mind experiencing a mutation of the spirit. Though a literary style is also noticeable in this work, it is nevertheless characterized by its theoretical nature.¹²⁸ We are left with detailed analyses of the psychic connections in the causes, typology, major processes, behaviour, and predictability as well as a

love". We would add: "the honeymoon of conversion" and "the sense of the infinite is not a virus which kills positive knowledge", as typical. See pp. 139, and 4.

126 S. Freud, "A Religious Experience", p. 246, notes: "I refer the reader to an admirable volume on the subject by Sante De Sanctis (1924) which incidentally takes all the findings of psycho-analysis into account."

127 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 10. We find the following statement characteristic of this spirit: "The pedagogues do not agree, but in any case it is better to become acquainted with those experiences, before cultivating or rejecting them."

128 H. Fingarette, The Self in Transformation, p. 62, sees this quality as typical of the paradox found in psychoanalysis since its beginnings. He writes: "As we know, psychoanalysis has since its inception been considered by some as a new science and by others as a penetratingly new quasi-literary form. Its impact on both the humanities and the psychological sciences of the past generation is profound and unquestionable. On the negative side, it has been rejected as a science by some scientists just by virtue of its being too 'literary' or 'mythic'. And it has been rejected by some in the arts by virtue of its being too 'scientific'. The paradox is acute and the polemics all the more emotionally charged."

hypothetical study of religious conversion.¹²⁹

c) The Content

As a physician-diagnostician, De Sanctis investigates religious conversion in a fashion reminiscent of the natural sciences in its mechanistic, thingifying bent; the effect is a very neat parcelling out of the contents of the experience. In this vein, the nature of conversion involves a complete mutation of consciousness which is or can be a frightening or devastating experience. But the other side of this moment--the taking on of a new psychic system--itself implies growth towards a more actualizing way of life.

The origins of this overturning of the inner self De Sanctis finds emanating from a variety of physiological and psychic causes. Though he gives due attention to the physiological basis of conversion, he is particularly engaged in disclosing the psychic causes and their processes which he breaks down into internal and external motives.

¹²⁹ The anonymous reviewer of De Sanctis's book in the Expository Times, 33, 1928, p. 251, notes: "It is a poor believer who cannot learn from so earnest and so competent an investigator as Professor De Sanctis. And when he deals with religious psychology, with conversion and its causes, with sublimation, and with the features and processes of religious life, we are constantly learning from him."

His identification of these causes is difficult, to say the least. We sense that their interactions are so integrally dynamic as practically to defy breaking them down into either/or categories. We conclude from his analysis that the internal psychic causes originate especially in intellectual and emotional crises (ideo-affective anxieties), while the external ones include all other causes such as dreams, auto-imitation, attendance at Church, all forms of suggestion and example, marvellous happenings, misfortunes, and illnesses, etc. There is obviously ambivalence and/or contradiction in his delineation of these determinants. For instance, he maintains that physical and moral suffering is "the miracle-working external condition", and then he adds "when we allude to sorrowful experiences we reach the most profound of all internal causes".¹³⁰ We understand him to be saying (albeit not clearly), that suffering, whether it be called crisis, conflict, dissonance, or anxiety, and in whatever shape or form, whether arising from intrapsychic difficulties, from interpersonal ones, or from the environment, seems to be the most persistent cause of the conversional process.¹³¹

¹³⁰ S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, pp. 45, 47.

¹³¹ B. E. Jones, Conversion, p. 237, responds to De Sanctis's view of suffering in conversion: "It is usually the antecedent, perhaps the precondition but it does not make saints. It is just as apt to make cynics or neurotics. Saints are saints in spite of suffering, rather than because of it." However, L. Linn and L. W. Schwartz,

This of course concurs with psychoanalytical premises.

Another difficulty we discern in De Sanctis's attempt at breaking down these psychic causes is his separation of the intellectual and emotional dynamics. We have already noted his insistence on the ascendancy of consciousness, yet his fascination with the psyche, we believe, belies this insistence and shifts the ascendancy to the power of the affective elements. Penido believes this ambiguity is clarified in a few instances one of which is the author's comparison of Newman's conversion to a love story.¹³²

De Sanctis admits that there are sudden conversions but affirms that these are much less numerous than heretofore believed. For him, there is only one manner of conversion, whether it be the sudden (and Paul is his

Psychiatry and Religious Experience, p. 74, confirm our author's view: "Whatever touches off the conversion, whether it be something personal or the mass hysteria of an evangelical meeting, the chief psychological component--intense emotional conflict in the convert's mind--is always recognizable." P. Homans, Theology after Freud, p. 77, notes that "religion, binds anxiety at all three points--internal, interpersonal, and sociohistorical".

132 M. T. L. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 102-3. We note one of De Sanctis's own affirmations (Religious Conversion, p. 284), which seems to confirm Penido's insight: "as we ourselves admit--the superiority of the conversio cordis over that of the conversio mentis". P. Homans, Theology after Freud, p. 126, makes a statement which clarifies De Sanctis's unclear position: "It is the religious image that unites the predominant affectivity of the experience of conversion with the predominantly cognitive features of faith and belief."

exemplar of this type), or the progressive, as his analyses and studies demonstrate.

His analysis of the sudden type is original in that he uncovers the long period of preparation going on in the unconscious before the convert is aware that such a process is taking place.¹³³ Besides, as in Paul's case, De Sanctis does not accept that the episode on the Damascus road constitutes the conversion. For him, it is only the initial but momentous moment of awareness¹³⁴ of a process.

¹³³ M. Laski, "Conversion", p. 515, notes the originality of De Sanctis's theory of sudden conversion. B. E. Meland, Fallible Forms and Symbols: Discourses on Method in a Theology of Culture, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1976, p. 28 (hereafter cited as Fallible Forms and Symbols), uses an apt phrase which brings out the role of the unconscious. He writes: "We live more deeply than we can think." And on p. 155: "This means that knowing always occurs within a context of unknowing; but the knowing, however marginal, is a crucial occurrence. It is what provides anchorage to conscious experience, and precludes a mindless immersion in the stream of experience, or a reveling in the fantasies of feeling. On the other hand, when the act of knowing is unmindful of this context of unknowing--this fringe that is not brought into focus--it tends to lose sight of the marginal character of all conscious experience. Being unmindful of or indifferent toward the marginal character of experience, one then tends to inflate the vision of the mind to encompass the whole of experience on the assumption that a generalization of this empirical aperture of meaning yields to total knowledge."

¹³⁴ C. Naranjo, The Healing Journey: New Approaches to Consciousness, New York, Pantheon, 1973, p. 9 (hereafter cited as The Healing Journey), writes about the merits of this position: "Awareness, or consciousness, is, in fact, the single element that most psychotherapists in our day would indicate as the essential motor of transformation. Awareness of our processes is that which may bring them under our control, make them 'ours'. And, paradoxically, in the act of being aware we are not only 'it', but a more

already well-established within; acceptance of this process by the will takes time and reflection.¹³⁵ This is well exemplified in Paul's subsequent three days of fasting (in blindness) as a preparation for the light of baptism. Baptism, in turn, (in Paul's case) is again only the beginning of a process which involves the living out of this "overturning" as conduct--its practical realization, its continuity--which makes it genuine, lasting and complete.¹³⁶ It would seem to us that while De Sanctis accepts Paul's conversion as being particularly a fulminant one, he nevertheless demonstrates that even in this classic case, the

encompassing entity that may continue to exist with or without 'it'."

¹³⁵ M. T. L. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 67, maintains De Sanctis is perfectly right in insisting that conversion is not complete without the appropriation by the will. C. R. Stinnette, "Reflection and Transformation: Knowing and Change in Psychotherapy and in Religious Faith", in The Dialogue Between Theology and Psychology, ed. P. Homans, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968. The whole article emphasizes the power of transformation that can be liberated in reflection. See e.g., p. 106, "The human capacity for reflection is at the same time an expression of man's self-transcending potential for change." P. 109: "Reflection is a mode of action involving transformation."

¹³⁶ S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 81. H. R. Bagwell, "The Abrupt Religious Conversion Experience", p. 167, notes that "De Sanctis appropriately insisted on a total-life perspective of the individual. [...] De Sanctis saw conversion as the end result of a life-long process." E. Malits, Journey into the Unknown: Thomas Merton's Continuing Conversion, doctoral dissertation, Ann Arbor, University Microfilms, 1974, 416 pp. uses conversion understood as a continuing process as the rationale for her whole dissertation.

experience is not as sudden as it is usually made to appear.

De Sanctis agrees, on the whole, with the American psychologists' understanding of adolescent conversions, in spite of his protests, because it fits neatly into his dynamic view of sexuality and the affective powers. He notes, moreover, that many counter-conversions--the passage from belief to disbelief--are "largely determined by the preponderance of the sexual instinct" at this period.¹³⁷ He accepts that adult conversions may evolve either progressively or regressively and that only the former are typical and true because the conversional cycle is not complete in the regressive conversion."¹³⁸

While the "overturning of consciousness" had been examined by Starbuck and ingeniously described by James as the principal issue in conversion, De Sanctis goes beyond them in disclosing a variety of its manifestations. Penido

¹³⁷ B. E. Jones, Conversion, p. 211. In speaking about adolescence as a cause of conversion she notes: "There can no longer be serious discussions of adolescence as a biological or essential cause or condition of any experience of the holy, although it is not impossible as a co-incident factor. [...] De Sanctis recognized this, although he continues to refer to it as an 'indirect cause' 'a provocative stimulus'". S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 37, adds: "It will be easily recognized that the establishment of this fact is not without significance for all who--like ourselves--find at the root of the processes of conversion a mutation of sexual economy."

¹³⁸ This would make it a pseudo-conversion but not necessarily a morbid one.

and Antoine Vergote both agree that De Sanctis's outline of the process is significant whether it be as a rebirth or as a substitution of complex,¹³⁹ and we would add, whether it also be as affective transference (that "primary connection" par excellence, "between surface and depth"),¹⁴⁰ and as sublimation. Examining these processes attentively, we note their close relationships, e.g., the first two are ideo-affective in origin while the latter two appear much more affective than intellectual. Moreover, substitution of complex greatly resembles the process of affective

139 A. Vergote, Psychologie religieuse, p. 234, notes: "De Sanctis a eu le mérite, pensons-nous d'isoler le type de conversion 'par substitution'. Il n'est pas rare, en effet, que des hommes découvrent brusquement dans la religion l'issue de leurs impasses humaines. Elle peut, par exemple, leur assurer définitivement une reconnaissance qu'ils attendaient vainement jusque-là de leur milieu humain." M. T. L. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 74: "Sante De Sanctis a fourni une contribution précieuse à la typologie de la conversion."

140 P. Homans, Theology after Freud, pp. 72-73, shows that "transference 'means' meaning" where there was previously non-meaning. Although Homans maintains that transference is central to Freud's method, De Sanctis does not seem to have made this particular 'process' central to his understanding of conversion. See also P. Homans, "Toward a Psychology of Religion: By Way of Freud and Tillich", in P. Homans, ed., The Dialogue Between Psychology and Theology, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1968, p. 64, for an insightful description of transference as "an intrapsychic or internal phenomenon". He writes: "In this sense transference phenomena are simply the manifestations of depth or unconscious factors into surface awareness and consciousness. Unconscious or depth forces and energies are 'transferred' or carried over into conscious or surface life. Transference understood intrapsychically is simply the perforation of the (repression) barrier between the unconscious and conscious systems."

transference.

The process most meticulously developed, however, is that of sublimation. It particularly illustrates, we believe, De Sanctis's hypothesis that conversion is progressive (though it may appear sudden), and that the upward movement towards awareness and acceptance by the will, is a betterment in itself. There would seem to be no doubt in his mind, but that self-determination is primary in conversion; in fact, he completely ignores the other pole--self-surrender.¹⁴¹

De Sanctis's analyses broaden considerably the knowledge of the factors involved in the prediction of conversion, the first to go beyond the early theory of Coe.¹⁴² At least one author is of the opinion that "X" weakens de Sanctis's study.¹⁴³ In our view, X appears as an additional means by which to defend religion by demonstrating that religion is not an illusion; that conflict is not necessarily destructive; that the unconscious is not

¹⁴¹ We find it surprising indeed that De Sanctis precluded self-surrender or abandonment of a former self (an unconscious one) as the foundations for self-determination, appropriation, or acceptance by the will--the high point, for him, of conversion.

¹⁴² Coe found that pronounced emotional sensibility, a tendency to automatism, and suggestibility of the passive type were signs by which a sudden conversion in particular could be predicted.

¹⁴³ H. R. Bagwell, "Abrupt Religious Conversion", p. 167, refers to his "rather artificially constructed hypothetically typical cases."

autonomous; and that man is guided by more than a will-to-pleasure.

We have seen that we can rely on De Sanctis for very precise and insightful analyses of religious conversion from within a psychoanalytical model. He is the first to develop systematically the dynamics of conversion along an unconscious-conscious continuum. An able technician, he succeeds in reducing conversion to immanent processes, uncovers the vital connections of the subconscious forces, their role in initiating the process of conversion, and he makes a fair attempt, for his time, to bring out a needed synthesis among ideas, affect and conduct.

We have one regret, i.e., that he completely ignores the relational or referential aspect of conversion: on the one hand, its religious component, and on the other, its sociohistorical dimension. To this effect, we believe Penido records a mysterious happening. It would seem that some time after the publication of this book, De Sanctis himself experienced religious conversion and expressed the desire to re-edit his book, but death intervened.¹⁴⁴ Did

144 M. T. L. Penido, *Conscience religieuse*, p. 101. "Un souci élémentaire d'équité me presse d'ajouter que De Sanctis, après avoir écrit sur la conversion, en fit l'expérience personnelle (l'étonnant miracle, la conversion d'un psychanalyste!) et voulut donner une nouvelle édition de son ouvrage, corrigée à la lumière de son expérience. La mort le prévint." This no doubt explains why De Sanctis is included in *The Guide to Catholic Literature, 1888-1940 - 1964-1967*, Detroit, W. Romig, p. 1017.

he perhaps discover that he had overlooked the most important reality for a convert?

We wish to point out another rich contribution of this model--its colorful vocabulary--of which the following words and phrases are the most typical: "afame with faith", "a desire to possess absolute truth",¹⁴⁵ "the typical experience of conversion",¹⁴⁶ "mutation", "philosophico-moral conversions",¹⁴⁷ "fulminant type", "a counter-convert", "conversional process", "intellectual mutation",¹⁴⁸ "moral mutations", "an overturning of values",¹⁴⁹ "a mutation of sexual economy",¹⁵⁰ "the call",¹⁵¹ "a complete alteration of character",¹⁵² "an affective moment",¹⁵³ "psychical regeneration", "transfiguration", "trans-humanization", "a renewal of spirit",¹⁵⁴ "the upward

145 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 18.

146 Ibid., p. 26.

147 Ibid., p. 29.

148 Ibid., p. 31.

149 Ibid., p. 32.

150 Ibid., p. 37.

151 Ibid., p. 42.

152 Ibid., p. 47.

153 Ibid., p. 49.

154 Ibid., p. 53.

movement", "the downward movement",¹⁵⁵ "the point of departure or the point of arrival",¹⁵⁶ "a slow individual mutation of progressive value",¹⁵⁷ "an integral overturning of consciousness which gives way to a fresh psychic systematization",¹⁵⁸ "rebirth of the religious complexes",¹⁵⁹ "substitution of complex", "affective component", "ideational component",¹⁶⁰ "acceptance of the complex",¹⁶¹ "ideo-affective dissociation",¹⁶² "identification",¹⁶³ "sublimation",¹⁶⁴ "a practical revision of love",¹⁶⁵ "a profound mutation of his entire personality",¹⁶⁶ "pseudo-conversion",¹⁶⁷ "unification of the psychic personality",¹⁶⁸

155 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 58.

156 Ibid., p. 65.

157 Ibid., p. 91.

158 Ibid., p. 92.

159 Ibid., p. 103.

160 Ibid., p. 106.

161 Ibid., p. 107.

162 Ibid., p. 117.

163 Ibid., p. 125.

164 Ibid., p. 126.

165 Ibid., p. 143.

166 Ibid., p. 169.

167 Ibid., p. 219.

168 Ibid., p. 248.

"the will at full tension",¹⁶⁹ "a profound affective mutation",¹⁷⁰ "an individual psychic evolution".¹⁷¹

3. A Synopsis of the Model

a) Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

A dynamic psychoanalytical view of man in which "the human psyche is a form of activity sui generis".

As a result of repression man has powerful sub-conscious systems: ideo-affective psychic complexes which can suffer displacement, rebirth or new adjustments. These complexes initiate the major processes of change in the subconscious, e.g., rebirth of a psychic system, substitution of a psychic system, transference, and sublimation.

The subconscious forces are not autonomous but indissolubly linked with those of consciousness which is the higher force in man. Consciousness must recognize insights from the subconscious, appropriate them, and incorporate them as conduct. The processes of reflection and appropriation by the will are essential forces in man's self-determination.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Man has religious complexes which are subject to the same dynamics as other complexes. These religious complexes are essentially immanent. God is accepted as a "working hypothesis", but does not enter into the dynamics of religious conversion.

Religious conversion begins as a psychic complex which breaks into consciousness. Religion is primarily a matter of reflection, decision, and life which implies an affective involvement. Conversion is primarily self-transformation.

169 S. De Sanctis, Religious Conversion, p. 252.

170 Ibid., p. 253.

171 Ibid., p. 257.

b) Method

i) Psychological System

A modified psychoanalysis with its roots in biology; a rigorous, theoretical analysis of the psyche in view of tracing the psychic origins and processes of religious conversion as self-transformation. It is a reductive method which proceeds by means of introspection and induced-introspection.

ii) Data-Gathering

Case studies of four converts to Catholicism including a hypothetical longitudinal study.
 Knowledge of several other converts to Catholicism and wide acquaintance with the American, French, German, and Italian literature on the subject.
 Use of biographical literature.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

A scholarly earnest, systematic treatise of religious conversion (recommended by S. Freud).
 An historical review of the literature and the method of psychology of religion.
 A detailed analysis of the causes, processes, typology, behaviour, predictability, pathology and living out of conversion.

c) Content

i) Nature

Conversion is a normal bio-psychological process which, in its most basic terms, is the overturning of consciousness--a mutation of life.
 Fundamentally, it is a progressive or continuing process which is either creative, regressive or morbid, and either rapid or slow.

ii) Aim

Negatively, it is the overturning of consciousness.
 Positively, it is the taking on of a fresh psychic system leading to unification, change of conduct, and new life.

iii) Process

The dynamics vary but follow certain basic organizational patterns all of which begin in the subconscious, make themselves known to consciousness, where it must be appropriated by the will and be assimilated into one's life in order to be considered a genuine conversional process. The following processes are basic:

- a) A new psychic systematization or complex.
- b) A rebirth of a psychic system or a substitution of a psychic system.
- c) Affective transference.
- d) Sublimation.

iv) Age

Theoretically, adolescence.
Practically, adulthood.

v) Motivational Forces

Ideo-affective energies in which suffering or anxiety play a great role; though always initiated in an affective moment, the intellectual forces must recognize these before the will can appropriate the change and realize it in conduct.

vi) Type

The progressive conversion is understood to be a continuing process which is genuine, complete and lasting. The regressive conversion is one whose process has not been completed.

The morbid conversion is incomplete and has pathological tendencies as well.

CHAPTER VI.

PENIDO'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL MODEL: 1935

Maurilio Teixeira-Leite Penido, a Brazilian, born in Rio de Janeiro in 1895, studied in Fribourg, Switzerland, and taught there as a neo-Thomist philosopher and theologian. During the years 1918-1938, his academic interests were twofold: (1) a theological/philosophical concern expressed in two books on Bergsonian philosophy and its theological implications, and another one on the role of analogy in theology;¹ (2) a psychological/religious concern resulting in the publication of two articles on the psychology of religion and its relation to theology² with a direct focus on religious conversion. In 1935, he published a more comprehensive theory related to his second field of interest in La Conscience religieuse: essai systématique suivi d'illustrations.³ The originality of this publication is to be found in its approach and method of a phenomenologically based psychology.

It would be too lengthy a venture to trace the

1 See above, Chapter I, footnote 65.

2 Ibid., footnote 66.

3 Ibid. All of these publications were written in French and have not been translated.

development of phenomenological psychology here, but we would like briefly to situate the movement before beginning our examination of Penido's theory which is founded largely upon the first generation phenomenological psychology. Though Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) is usually credited with the establishment of phenomenological psychology, many others contributed as well, in particular, Franz Brentano (1838-1917), who was Husserl's prestigious teacher.⁴ Max Scheler (1874-1928) also was "a most important representative and propagator of the phenomenological movement".⁵

H. Spiegelberg writes that Scheler was

the great stimulator of phenomenological psychology, though he was not always its most convincing spokesman. His name occurs more frequently in the psychological and psychopathological literature than that of any of the early phenomenologists, Husserl included. This may also be due to the fact that he paid much more explicit attention to the work of the empirical psychologists than other phenomenologists did.⁶

The most basic prerequisite for phenomenology is "freeing oneself from any preconceptions or presuppositions",⁷

4 H. Misiak & V. S. Sexton, Phenomenological, Existential, and Humanistic Psychologies: A Historical Survey, New York, Grune & Stratton, 1973, p. 3 (hereafter cited as A Historical Survey).

5 Ibid., p. 10.

6 H. Spiegelberg, Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry, p. 18. The author adds that "without the concept of intentionality he would hardly have been able to develop his new theory of emotions."

7 H. Misiak & V. S. Sexton, A Historical Survey, p. 7.

going to "the things themselves".⁸ This approach is usually called the phenomenological attitude because it involves a special presence to the phenomena being investigated.⁹

Although generally speaking contemporary phenomenological psychology is closely associated with that of Husserl, it is nevertheless very different from both Husserl's transcendental method and from empirical or natural scientific psychology. While Husserl's transcendental method led to the bracketing of the existential dimension to arrive at pure consciousness, and natural scientific psychology led to a mechanistic or an ahuman approach to consciousness, today's phenomenological psychology is humanistically or existentially oriented. The fundamental characteristics of this contemporary method are described by Misiak and Sexton as fourfold: it always goes

8 H. Spiegelberg, Phenomenology in Psychology and Psychiatry, p. xli. Husserl's consistent message was to return to "the things themselves", that is, to the experiences which provide our words with meaning in the first place.

9 C. Wilson, New Pathways in Psychology, p. 109, quotes a passage from Jung which he describes as "an exact definition of phenomenology". Jung said: "I try to free myself from all unconscious and therefore uncriticised assumptions as to the world in general". A. Van Kaam, Existential Foundations of Psychology, New York, Doubleday, Image Books, 1969, pp. 28-29 (hereafter cited as Existential Foundations of Psychology), describes this approach as "an attempt to return to the immediate meaning and structure of behavior as it actually presents itself. Phenomenology as a method in psychology thus seeks to disclose and elucidate the phenomena of behavior as they manifest themselves in their perceived immediacy."

to "the things themselves"; it studies the data of consciousness as immediately given; it is guided consistently by "unbiased description of phenomena", and it examines experience without philosophical preconceptions.¹⁰

In the period after the first World War, however, Husserl and Scheler's phenomenological psychologies had not yet joined forces with the existential movement. They were subjective psychologies preoccupied with the study of consciousness but unconcerned with the existential factors of experience. It was Husserl's main tenet that "all consciousness is consciousness of something which is not consciousness itself",¹¹ and Scheler's phenomenology was similarly grounded in this basic premise--the law of intentionality. Although Misiak and Sexton imply that Scheler moved beyond Husserl's view,¹² Penido claimed that Scheler's system also excluded the existential dimension.¹³ It is our intuition that Penido, writing in 1935,¹⁴ wanted

10 H. Misiak & V. S. Sexton, A Historical Survey, p. 40.

11 A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 156.

12 H. Misiak & V. S. Sexton, A Historical Survey, p. 10.

13 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 14. Speaking about Scheler's phenomenology, he notes: "elle décrit les essences; mais elle refuse de s'occuper de l'existence 'a parte rei', de cet objet, de cette essence. C'est là une des caractéristiques de la 'réduction' phénoménologique."

14 Scheler died in 1928 and Husserl in 1938. It is to be expected that Penido (who was in Europe from 1918-1938), would be influenced by these two great European scholars.

to demonstrate, contrary to Scheler, that the law of intentionality could be maintained in the examination of the religious phenomenon.¹⁵ Let us see to what extent this approach and method promoted a new modeling of religious conversion.

1. The Exploration of the Theory

a) The Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

Penido implies a distinct theory of man in which belief in man's intentional thrust flows from his adoption of Scheler's method. He speaks of the role of consciousness as the state of being or the capacity of being "consciousness of", i.e., of being "directly oriented towards an object".¹⁶ Penido also utilizes the concept of attitude which equally brings forth a sense of direction towards or pointedness to an object, and his differentiation

15 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 14. In his introductory chapter Penido reviews Scheler's belief that a psychology of religion was untenable because it did not account for the objective pole of the religious act. Building out from Scheler's method, Penido attempts to show that this drawback can indeed be remedied. He writes: "Nous maintenons, au contraire, que cette intentionnalité peut être sauvegardée par la psychologie."

16 Ibid., p. 8, writes: "A l'entendre, la conscience, loin d'être créatrice de son objet, est essentiellement 'intentionnelle', c'est à dire tout orientée vers un objet. Vouloir une conscience sans objet qui la transcende, c'est vouloir la vision sans les couleurs."

between attitude and sentiment (which he understands as a "subjective affective dimension") further clarifies this particular prerogative of man for self-transcendence, i.e., going out of self.

Penido objects to the "faculty view of man" in which one dimension is maximized to the devaluation of others.¹⁷ He states that "intelligence depends much more on the heart than the heart on intelligence",¹⁸ yet gives greater prominence to the intentional view of consciousness than he does to the affective dimension,¹⁹ and complements his theory of man with borrowings from both De Sanctis and James.

As underpinnings for his theory of the processes of change, Penido adopts De Sanctis's theory of psychical systems, particularly those of the substitution of complex, the rebirth of complex, and transference. However, he hypothesizes that a substitution of complex may occur in either of two ways: either an old complex disintegrates so that a new one may emerge, or one complex dissolves while the new one is being formed. In other words, either the

17 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 92, writes to this issue: "Ce n'est point une intelligence ou une volonté qui se convertissent, mais un homme."

18 Ibid., p. 100.

19 Ibid., p. 173. Penido is of the opinion that an affective phenomenon tends to evoke an idea which justifies it.

two processes of disintegration and organization follow upon one another, or they are simultaneous.²⁰ In due time, crisis is felt at the conscious level over the choice between either repressing one system or liberating another.²¹

From James, Penido borrows the hypothesis of the "habitual centres of energy", but does not subscribe to his theory of subliminal incubation, because it falsely suggests that the religious act flows spontaneously from the subject.²² He rather favors the hypothesis of "repression of a psychic system", the elements of which were originally organized at the conscious level, though possibly in a "flash of intuition". He does not deny the unconscious. Indeed, he recognizes that it is subconscious activity which raises the new complex to the level of consciousness.²³ In point of fact, Penido, like De Sanctis, does not agree that unification of the psyche arises from the subconscious, i.e., "par en bas", as James claimed. For him, "man is not a bundle of instincts, but a spiritual being".²⁴ (Penido

20 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 61, 73. He gives credit to De Sanctis for having recognized these processes.

21 Ibid., pp. 57, 68-71.

22 Ibid., pp. 27-33. The article "Conversion" was addressed to the problems presented by this theory.

23 Ibid., pp. 71-72.

24 Ibid., p. 158. He explains: "Une telle analyse ne pourra réussir pleinement, tant qu'on s'en tiendra à l'exploration de l'inconscient seul; tant qu'on n'aura pas

here reveals his own bias that the unconscious is only instinctual. James went beyond this hypothesis.)

Finally, in referring to the person, Penido draws on such constructs as "the subject", "the self", and "the human being",²⁵ his most frequent concept being that of consciousness.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Just as it is a central characteristic of man to be an intentional being, so it is "la tendance vers un objet dépassant tout le créé"²⁶ which characterizes religious man. The fundamental religious attitude--that of standing before "l'Au-delà",²⁷ God, who is at once personal and other--is the one which best approximates the "awareness of the state of creaturehood".²⁸ Penido quotes Karl Girgensohn's reflections:

reconnu que l'homme n'est pas un faisceau d'instincts, mais un être spirituel; tant qu'on n'aura pas renoncé aux tentatives univocitaires d'unifier la vie psychique par en bas."

²⁵ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse. See e.g., pp. 12, 50, 51, 61, 119.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 8.

²⁷ Penido does not hesitate to name the beyond since it is the prerogative of consciousness (according to his approach) to know the other. The religious object must then be supposed.

²⁸ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 15, 117, 119.

The religious act does not flow spontaneously from within the subject, but is always the result of a contact between the subject and the religious object believed to be living and represented in an idea. Though the religious attitudes be diverse, they are meaningful only because of the rapport with the religious object.²⁹

The phenomenological approach enables the author to account for the fact that the religious man not only believes in a personal God but is wholly oriented towards this personal God. This concrete "I-Thou" ("Toi-et-moi") relationship, is, for him, the essence of religiousness and distinguishes it from mere metaphysical speculation. In such a relationship, God has tremendous value for man; he is not only an object of study or of science, but a "Thou". Indeed:

He permeates the very centre of the self, in personal contact with him. His whole being vibrates at this time and he must necessarily take sides--this decision is the most personal act which one can meet with in natural psychology.³⁰

29 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 11.
 "K. Girgensohn, a montré que l'acte religieux ne jaillit pas spontanément du sujet, mais est toujours le fruit d'un contact du sujet avec l'objet religieux, tenu pour existant et présenté dans une idée. Diverses sont les attitudes du moi religieux mais toutes elles n'ont de sens que par rapport à l'Objet." (K. Girgensohn, Der seelische Aufbau des religiösen Erlebens, 2nd ed., Gütersloh, 1929).

30 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 168.
 "Il est installé au centre même du moi, en contact personnel avec lui. Tout l'être vibre, cette fois; il lui faut de toute nécessité prendre position--et comme en face d'aucune autre réalité. Or, cette prise de position, est l'acte le plus personnel qui se recontre en psychologie 'naturelle'. Le plus personnel, et par suite, le plus complexe."

No intellectual view of God can be compared with this acquaintance with God ("saisie de Dieu"³¹), as experienced in the mystical state, the experience of God par excellence. Religion is then truly "the unification of one's whole life from a divine principle."³²

Penido presupposes that the religious man lives out his relationship with God in phases: its beginning in conversion, its progression in asceticism, and its summit in mysticism.³³ He shows that religious pathologies are due largely to ideo-affective dissociations and/or compensation.³⁴ But he firmly believes, along with Scheler, that the external dimension of behavior does not translate its inner meaning.³⁵

31 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 169.

32 Ibid., pp. 205-6.

33 Ibid., p. vi.

34 Ibid., pp. 77-80.

35 Ibid., p. 149. "Une même manifestation extérieure peut se rattacher aux causes les plus hétérogènes. Max Scheler se plaisait à faire remarquer que ce phénomène assez simple: 'la rougeur de la face', peut être produit par la honte, l'échauffement, la colère, l'alcool, ou, simplement, être le reflet de la rougeur d'une lanterne."

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

Penido, an accomplished philosopher-theologian, proceeds within the general discipline of scientific psychology in his research, and as we have already intimated, his own preferred psychological method is fundamentally phenomenological. He proposes three types of religious psychologies, the empirical, the philosophical, and the theological. He develops the empirical psychology of religion into both a study of religious behavior (an objective psychology such as behaviorism), and a study of religious consciousness (a subjective psychology along the lines of his own phenomenological psychology).³⁶

The phenomenological method, a method favoring "presence to the phenomena", enhances a qualitative description of these phenomena; it also allows for the intentional dimension of the religious consciousness and for the subjective appearances of the religious act which are usually beyond the scope of the psychological method.³⁷ His method can then truly serve as a corrective to the common psychological method without in any way endangering the scientific credibility of his own theory. It allows

³⁶ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 3-7.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 7-8, 12, 15.

the psychologist to account for the objects of consciousness,³⁸ fosters a more reliable examination of reality, and frees the psychologist of presuppositions since he is bound both to attend to and to account for whatever is presented. Penido therefore points to the legitimacy of his method, identifies his research as "an empirical study of religious consciousness",³⁹ and declares his intention of uncovering the meaning of religiousness for the subject experiencing it.

While ensuring that the psychologist will account for the object of religiousness, this method in no way presumes to deal with the existence of God, a task reserved to the theologian and the philosopher. Penido remains convinced that although the psychologist may do serious study on prayer, for example, and observe it as well, he will never understand prayer as a real phenomenon unless he can also take into account its objective pole, that is, the relationship established with an "other".⁴⁰ Moreover, to

38 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 14-16.

39 Ibid., p. 7.

40 Ibid., p. 9. "L'acte de la prière ne peut être étudié qu'à partir du sens de la prière. On nous dit qu'un tel acte est constitué par des matériaux psychologiques: des idées, par exemple. Sans doute, mais ces idées ont précisément un objet que seule la pensée religieuse atteint. Il s'ensuit que la psychologie ne peut, en aucune manière, saisir l'essence de l'acte religieux. Allèguera-t-on que celui-ci a, tout de même, des conditions empiriques et que, sur ce plan, notre science va retrouver sa légitimité?"

account for this relationship is simply good common sense.⁴¹

Penido is not bound then by some of the basic principles set down for the psychology of religion--exclusion of the Transcendent and biological interpretation of the phenomena--as these contradict the basic intention of the religious consciousness.⁴² He emphasizes rather the importance for the psychologist of being open about his own beliefs and presuppositions.⁴³

Penido also points to the limits of his method. Because it is founded on the Schelerian phenomenology, it must necessarily "bracket existence" and look to the appearances--the phenomena.⁴⁴ He does not presume, therefore, to attain the specificity of the religious act, and discusses the difficulty of measuring religious phenomena

Scheler l'accorde pourvu qu'il ne s'agisse point d'une psychologie explicative. Encore enferme-t-il la psychologie en d'étroites limites."

41 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 54, 182.

42 Ibid., pp. 18-19.

43 Ibid., pp. 17-23. Cf. p. 23. "A-cause même de sa déconcertante complexité et du nombre des hypothèses explicatives qui semblent 'sauvegarder les apparences', l'orientation des recherches comme le choix entre les théories, seront fatalement commandés (consciemment, ou, le plus souvent, inconsciemment) par des présupposés philosophiques ou théologiques. Bien plus, non seulement les explications, mais les descriptions psychologiques elles-mêmes dépendent d'opinions extra-psychologiques."

44 Ibid., p. 14. Cf. p. 12. "Celle-ci ne nous livrera pas une connaissance adéquate, cela est certain, mais inadéquat ne veut pas dire nul."

(adding Girgensohn's observation that no true mystic would come to his laboratory⁴⁵).

ii) Data-Gathering

Penido limits his study of the religious consciousness to that experienced within Christianity and focuses upon its manifestations in conversion, asceticism, and mysticism.⁴⁶ He does not detail any new empirical data, except for the innovative biographical materials from Marie de l'Incarnation's life, but examines a wealth of other personal documents from which he develops his theory.

Like the works of both James and De Sanctis, Penido's book is largely composed of extracts from lectures in religious psychology. Also like James and De Sanctis, he is conversant with previous studies, in this instance, the American, French, Italian and German tradition. We have already seen to some extent how he builds from Scheler, Girgensohn, De Sanctis, and James; he also freely refers to Leuba, Starbuck, Pratt, Coe and many others. However, he frankly acknowledges that whenever necessary he will borrow from the Roman Catholic tradition rather than from either the positivistic or the idealistic philosophies.⁴⁷

45 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 21.

46 Ibid., p. vi.

47 Ibid., p. 27. He refers principally to Thomas Aquinas's theology which offers numerous psychological insights.

By means of a reexamination of the existent findings on both the psychology of religious conversion and the Christian literature on conversion, Penido arrives at his own original theoretical conclusions.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

Penido proceeds very systematically--as a professor might--by presenting first the details of his method and approach, the existing tradition, and his personal reasons for publishing these findings. He then devotes a long chapter to an original typology of religious conversion, another to the pathological theories of asceticism and one to the natural intuition of God. He concludes with a very innovative section--an application and a confirmation of his theory in the life of Marie de l'Incarnation, the foundress of the Ursulines of Quebec.

c) The Content

Proceeding on the postulate that the subject's relationship with God radically differentiates religious conversion from any other type of change, Penido argues that the characteristics of religious conversion depend upon three factors: (1) the subject's view of God, (2) the subject's state, that is, whether believer or unbeliever, sinner or just man, etc., and (3) the manner of conversion, that is, whether slow or sudden, alone or with others, etc.

By noting the similarities and differences appearing as constants in religious conversion, Penido discloses a general typology in which two main categories occur, the genetic and the structural. Each is further examined along a continuum. In the case of the genetic type, the inner-outer continuum distinguishes the experience as either endogenous or exogenous. In the case of the structural type the normal-pathological continuum differentiates the experience.

In setting up the internal-external continuum of the genetic typology, Penido is of the opinion that a mark of the authentic conversion is its inner-directedness. External causes, on the other hand, may play a major role in, be absent altogether from, or figure only slightly in conversion.⁴⁸ Furthermore, he stresses the importance of differentiating between causes of conversion and mere occasions of the same as most occasions are mistaken for causes, e.g., becoming a convert because of an impending marriage.⁴⁹ Although he finds it difficult to be conclusive, the author suggests that most external causes may only be occasions of conversion, while the true cause of conversion is a result of inner-direction. He defines the exogenous conversion as follows:

48 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 47.

49 Ibid., p. 48.

In speaking therefore of exogenous conversions we mean that a mental synthesis disintegrates particularly because of an external stimulus. The new synthesis which presents itself to the subject is also from the exterior.⁵⁰

Exogenous conversions are distinguished firstly in their setting, which may be one of gregariousness or one of solitude. The most common previously studied example of the gregarious type is to be found in the revival setting. Penido speaks of these as "psychic epidemics characterized by the fact that they inhibit the subject's rational control and foster a state of receptivity."⁵¹ In his words, once a subject is receptive to this environment, the leader's task of suggesting a new mental state and a new religious need is facilitated. Moreover, the revivalist's control of the subject appears simultaneously with the latter's own inner process so that this revival type of conversion need not be entirely exogenous.⁵²

50 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 49. "En parlant de conversion exogène nous entendons dire simplement qu'une synthèse mentale s'est désagrégée surtout sous le coup d'un choc extérieur et que c'est aussi de l'extérieur, que la nouvelle synthèse est venue s'offrir à l'acceptation du sujet". He adds that the distinction is not invented: "Elle a surgi à nos yeux après l'analyse de cas concrets fort nombreux."

51 Ibid., p. 50. "L'étude des 'Réveils religieux', qu'ils aient été suscité par Edwards ou par Wesley, [...] montre que ces épidémies psychiques ont pour caractéristique, d'inhiber chez le sujet le contrôle rationnel et d'engendrer ainsi un état de réceptivité, grâce à quoi l'on peut lui suggérer un monoïdéisme et surtout un monopathisme religieux, qui le convertit."

52 Ibid., p. 52.

Penido articulates a threefold conversional process employed by revivalists. The first phase is like a psychic erasing technique which removes the barrier of a repressed infantile religious complex; a previous religiosity is therefore implied. The second procedure is the application of psychic pressure by means of the imposition or suggestion of a strong religious system (such as the conviction of sin) in order to stimulate further the infantile religious complex. Finally, an opposite psychic system--the release of pressure--is strongly suggested as e.g., confidence in Christ, and this usually induces conversion. Though this form of conversion is usually gregarious, it can also be solitary if only one person responds to the call of conversion.⁵³

Adolescent Protestant evangelical conversions are also mostly the result of suggestion, according to Penido. If the process of alternating states of depression and exaltation--which the adolescent so frequently experiences--is intensified within a religious context, conversion is apt to occur.⁵⁴

⁵³ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 53. He notes the pathological tendencies which tend to be present in this revival type: "Ce sont des crises nerveuses à remplissage religieux."

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 56. "La doctrine 'évangélique' assure que la conversion consiste en deux crises affectives successives: dépression, suivie d'exaltation. Or, cette dépression et cette exaltation, l'adolescent les éprouve communément; il suffira d'intensifier un peu la crise, de lui donner un caractère dramatique et théologique, pour avoir la conversion."

Another group of exogenous conversions Penido uncovers is that which he typifies as "cataclysmic", i.e., due to earthquakes, epidemics, wars, fires or accidents, external circumstances (whether from nature, civilization, or fate) which engender a return to religiousness. The process is similar to that of the revival type: emotional shock inhibits the actual psychic system; fear of imminent danger or tragedy evokes religious complexes which are mostly infantile; and a "calling on the Lord" and an acceptance of him brings on sudden conversion.

It is to be expected that these exogenous conversions, whether gregarious or solitary, and whether originating from cataclysms or from suggestion, will be experienced either suddenly or slowly, and that the process will usually appear as a result of the reactivation or rebirth of an infantile psychic complex.⁵⁶ Because the conversional process consists in the disintegration of one mental synthesis (a non-religious ego) and its replacement by another (a religious ego), Penido believes that in the pure exogenous conversion the disintegrative process precedes the

55 M. Penido, *Conscience religieuse*, p. 54. Although in this type of cataclysmic conversion the subject is more actively engaged, it is largely the result of an affective crisis originating from external circumstances: "Il s'agit essentiellement d'une crise affective toute dépendante de circonstances extérieures".

56 *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

integrative one.⁵⁷

Endogenous conversions, on the other hand, are largely the fruit of personal research and conquest, in which suggestion plays only a minor role (if any) and serves as a guide by which the subject can measure the progress already made.⁵⁸ Because of the inner direction of this type, its process differs from but may resemble that of the exogenous conversion. Penido finds that the work of transformation is done simultaneously, i.e., the organization of a new synthesis arises because of the disintegration of an old synthesis. In other words, the negative phase exists in virtue of the positive one already in operation. In this case, conversion is the result of the definitive dissolution of the non-religious ego.⁵⁹

Penido reports that the origin of conversion alters both its process and its mode. While he finds that both

57 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 61.

58 Ibid., cf. p. 60. "Nous avons ici la transition entre les conversions exogènes et les conversions endogènes au sens fort. Nous appelons de ce dernier nom celles où l'immanence est accrue. L'événement extérieur, loin d'ouvrir brusquement une âme close [...] sert tout juste à faire mesurer au sujet jusqu'à quel point l'évolution intérieure a progressé."

59 Ibid., p. 64. "En réalité, le double travail est intérieur et ne se fait pas à deux temps, mais simultanément. [...] L'homme de la veille et l'homme de demain ne se succèdent pas, comme tantôt: ils cohabitent et luttent jusqu'à ce que l'un dévore l'autre. Souvent, il est vrai, le converti aperçoit surtout le côté négatif de son évolution. [...] On ne s'aperçoit d'un manque, si ce n'est parce qu'on a entrevu une plénitude."

exogenous and endogenous conversions can be either sudden or slow, the former are usually sudden, and the latter either sudden or gradual, and sometimes both successively.⁶⁰ He believes that the crisis can be the central point of the process in certain instances, and that Paul Claudel's conversion illustrates that it is inexact to consider the crisis

an accidental moment--unless it be in the sense that one can be converted without a Damascus road-- for very often, the crisis is a source of energy from which the rest flows.⁶¹

According to Penido, in the case of sudden conversions, two processes are possible. First, two mental syntheses struggle together over the issue of retaining the present psychic personality rather than accepting a new one. Secondly, there is resistance to the new psychic system;⁶² the subject is aware of resistance to change, but the resistance is accompanied by "affective ambivalence" which creates an "unstable psychic centre". By way of illustration, Penido refers to Jung's theory of fanaticism as overcompensation for secret doubts. Though the subject may want to change, he resists the change and accentuates the

60 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 66. Penido recalls that for the American psychologists, the crisis is the essential aspect of conversion. For De Sanctis, it is only an accidental one.

61 Ibid., p. 68..

62 Ibid., pp. 68-69.

anti-religious synthesis because of diverse pressures.⁶³ Penido does not accept this Jungian view. He believes that each element of the new synthesis has been previously fixed at the conscious level and then repressed. This hypothesis eliminates the need for subliminal incubation as the conversion process follows upon the liberation of the repressed synthesis.⁶⁴

The usual process for exogenous and endogenous conversions is primarily that of "rebirth of complex"; however, the endogenous type also occurs by means of "substitution of complex". Penido does not consider the complete substitution a sublimation for that would imply the transformation of one complex into another.⁶⁵

When he establishes the structural typology, Penido reviews the pathological elements of conversion uncovered in previous theories. From Morton Prince, he borrows the understanding of ideo-affective dissociation.⁶⁶ From Edith Vorwinckel, he derives the understanding of affective ambivalence (a state provoked by constant family conflicts, permitting a "weird pseudo-religiosity") from whence all

63 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 70.

64 Ibid., pp. 70-71.

65 Ibid., p. 77. Cf. p. 111. Penido does not accept that a lower process can be responsible for a higher one.

66 Ibid., p. 78. See also M. Prince, "The Psychology of Sudden Religious Conversion", pp. 42-54.

conflicts are changed in a "harmonious illusion" leading to the pathological phenomenon of compensation.⁶⁷ Penido believes this state is at the basis of the morbid elements in conversion, but he recognizes that compensation also plays an important role in normal conversions.⁶⁸ Another element entering into the structure of pathological conversions is that of a utilitarian emotionalism.⁶⁹

According to Penido, normal conversions can be oriented either objectively or subjectively. The objective orientation for him emanates from certain mental states having a theological content, such as faith and love. The subjective orientation depends entirely upon the psychical function which distinguishes it, i.e., intellect, affect, or will.⁷⁰

Those conversions which can be considered as accessions of faith Penido calls dogmatic. They are further differentiated depending upon the subject's previous faith state, i.e., that of believer or unbeliever. In both instances, the passage--from a former faith to a new one, or from indifference, skepticism, agnosticism or hostility to

67 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 79-80; E. Vorwinckel, "Ein Fall von krankhaftbedingtes Religionswechsel", Zeitschrift für Religionspsychologie, 1932, pp. 97-110.

68 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 80-82.

69 Ibid., p. 82.

70 Ibid., pp. 83, 91.

faith--takes many forms.⁷¹ Those conversions which can be considered as accessions of love, he calls moral. The change from the previous state of morality--whether of sinner or of just man--further characterizes the passage. For both the sinner and the unbeliever, there is a reversal of values in the radical shift of meaning and purpose of life from an anthropocentric to a theocentric attitude. But for the believer and the just man alike, the ultimate purpose in life suffers no structural change; it is rather intensified due to greater awareness.⁷²

Penido remarks that moral conversions vary immensely in keeping with the variety of needs to be satisfied. He finds two categories of moral conversions of the just man: the common or ascetical one which refers to the passage from lukewarmness to fervor,⁷³ and the mystical conversion which is a powerful experience of the divine.

Penido further differentiates the mystical

71 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 86-87.

72 Ibid., pp. 84-85. "Dans la conversion du juste, au contraire, le but ultime ne se modifie pas; avant comme après, l'orientation reste théocentrique, il n'y a donc plus changement de direction; mais, intensification du mouvement, perception plus profonde et plus étendue de la fin et de ses exigences; on va du Dieu lointain au Dieu proche. C'est toute la différence entre la nouvelle naissance et la croissance spirituelle, entre un volte-face et une montée en spirale. [...] La différence gît dans le sens du changement, plutôt que dans sa profondeur." We shall examine this statement later in our evaluation.

73 Ibid., p. 89. This was the classical meaning of conversion for the Catholic spiritual writers.

conversion depending upon whether it happens in a moment only, or whether it is an entrance into the mystical life. In the first instance, conversion of the mystical form, conversion is experienced in a mystical moment only, whether it be objectively dogmatic, or moral or mixed.⁷⁴ But, in the second, which Penido designates as conversion to mysticism, it is an entrance into mysticism as an enduring way of life.⁷⁵

Penido believes that mixed conversions--those involving both dogmatic and moral elements--exhibit a wide variety and defy any attempt at typological reduction. He questions whether social conversions can be accepted as a specific type. He observes that social factors play a great role in the conversions of non-civilized people because of their strong clannish bonds and the connection of religion with the life of the community. But he also notes that usually, the first element in conversion is individual, the social implications arising only secondarily, and he does not include this category in his typology.⁷⁶

74 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 90. This position seems inconsistent since he situates the mystical conversion as being distinctly moral. He is allowing for dogmatic conversions to be mystical as well.

75 Ibid., pp. 90-91. He recalls the classical tripartite division of the spiritual life, purgation, illumination and union (the last two being mystical states), and notes that R. Garrigou-Lagrange refers to these as three conversions. Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Les Trois Conversions et les Trois Voies, Juvisy, Seine-et-Oise, 1933, 194 pp.

76 Ibid., pp. 87-89. Though R. H. Thouless had classified some conversions as social, Penido disagrees with

Finally, Penido discusses the subjective aspect of conversion which depends upon the dominant psychical function, whether it be intellectual, affective, volitional, or intuitive. He insists that this typology is of heuristic value only. Since it is very often difficult if not impossible to disclose any one dominant psychic function in some conversions, Penido believes this is a sign of an integrative or undifferentiated character.⁷⁷

Penido finds the intuitive conversions to be "an indissoluble synthesis of intellect and affect", adding that because of their experiential quality, many consider them to be mystical.⁷⁸ He notes that the volitional type of conversion discovered by Starbuck does exist but more rarely than either Starbuck or James believed. He shows that the opposition they found between the "self-surrender type" and the "volitional type" was rather superficial since most cases of self-surrender conversions are preceded by a phase of the volitional type.⁷⁹

his conclusions. Cf. R. H. Thouless, An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion. Penido used the third edition, published in 1928.

77 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 92-93. An example Penido has recourse to is that of Augustine's: "Sa conversion a été l'objet de bien des analyses, la multiplicité même et l'opposition des interprétations est un signe que nous nous trouvons en face d'une conversion intégrative ou indifférenciée."

78 Ibid., p. 94.

79 Ibid., p. 97.

The most common of all conversions, according to the author, are those of affective dynamism.⁸⁰ He admits that in conversion, the intellectual factor lacks the impact of the affects. The reason for this would be that a religious commitment cannot be assumed with the same detachment as a mathematical problem. To be psychologically effective, a "change of life" has to be charged with affective power. However, Penido believes psychologists have exaggerated this fact and have incorrectly denied the predominance of the intellectual dimension in many conversions, De Sanctis's theory being a case in point.⁸¹ Although Penido does not deny the role of affect in conversion, he affirms the supremacy of the intellect.

In an attempt to establish the directional role of intellect in conversion, to clarify De Sanctis's theory of affective transference, and to devise another theory of the

80 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 98-99.

81 Ibid., pp. 100-1. Penido believes De Sanctis found conversion to issue from "sexually charged affectivity". He quotes the two texts of De Sanctis which can lead to this conclusion, along with his interpretation of Newman's conversion as being characteristically affective. Penido, of course, argues that Newman's case is one in which the intellect is the prime factor. Cf. p. 104. "On ne nie pas que Newman eut l'âme tendre et même passionnée; on maintient que l'intelligence était chez lui première. [...] Répétons-le, nous ne soutenons pas que les conversions intellectuelles excluent toute participation de l'affectivité--on trouvera toujours du sentiment même chez le plus spéculatif des convertis--mais nous maintenons que le drame principal et décisif se noue alors dans la sphère des idées."

affects, Penido details the functions of feelings. By means of analogy,⁸² he posits two levels of love:

In a univocal conception, the so-called spiritual love will be but a simple modification of sensitive love, since it will remain sexual in its roots. In an analogical conception, spiritual love and sexual love are intrinsically diverse. However, the first can transform the latter in spiritualizing it just as the second can cause the ruin of the first.⁸³

Penido is arguing for two forms of feeling energy, one that is qualified, the other undifferentiated--"a specifically sexual energy and a sensible energy not specifically sexual".⁸⁴ From this assumption, he establishes a typology of the affects whereby (1) affective energy can assume religious coloration; (2) transformation can take place without transference, as in the case of two pagan

82 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 105-15. He defines his understanding of analogy (p. 106): "L'analogie, c'est précisément la similitude au sein de la dissemblance. Nous aurons, par exemple, plusieurs amours, profondément diversifiés par les objets (sensibles ou spirituels) qui les spécifient; et pourtant ces amours auront quelque ressemblance qui nous permettra justement, de parler ici et là d'amour, et de concevoir des échanges, une action mutuelle de l'un à l'autre. On voit les différences que tout cela entraîne pour ce qui regarde la notion de sublimation."

83 Ibid., p. 106. "Dans la conception univocitaire, l'amour dit spirituel ne sera qu'une simple modification de l'amour sensible; dans sa racine il demeurera sexuel. Dans la conception analogiste, l'amour spirituel et l'amour sexuel sont intrinsèquement divers, cependant le premier peut transformer le second, en le spiritualisant, tout comme le second peut faire déchoir le premier."

84 Ibid., p. 107. "Nous aurions ainsi, par exemple, une énergie spécifiquement sexuelle et une énergie sensible non spécifiquement sexuelle."

spouses being converted; (3) transference can take place without transformation, e.g., in the artist who only changes the object of his artistic work, and (4) transference can take place with transformation--a sublimation either of sexual or of an undifferentiated energy.⁸⁵

Penido further demonstrates how his theory differs from that of the Freudians. First, he cannot admit that spirituality is sublimated sexuality and that a true conversion can ever be reduced, even psychologically, to a transfer with sublimation of the libido. He maintains that due to the spiritual content of intellect and will, only a spiritual transformation can effect this change. Second, because of man's corporeality, there is sublimation, but of spiritual powers.⁸⁶

Thus, Penido presents an analogical view of religious conversion rather than a definition; he is convinced that no general definition of conversion can be attained since, contrary to the theorists before him, he finds no residue common to all religious conversions. In his opinion, to claim that "a simple reversal of values", "a reversal in the habitual centre of personal energy", "a division of the ego followed

85 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 108.

86 Ibid., p. 112. "En résumé, l'énergie sensible du converti, non seulement se détourne d'objets auxquelles désormais elle ne peut plus s'attacher, non seulement elle épure son attachement à d'anciens objets auxquels elle reste légitimement liée, mais encore elle doit subir, sur certains points, un transfert avec sublimation."

by its unification" define religious conversion, is to miss its essence. These are indeed elements of conversion but they bypass its characteristic quality--its theocentrism. For Penido, "not to give oneself, to be miserly of oneself, is the greatest obstacle to conversion."⁸⁷ Consequently, for him, former definitions of conversion express irreligious attitudes since they focus only on an egocentric polarity, while the essence of conversion is found in its theocentrism:

When there is a question of religious conversion, everything changes, precisely because transcendence is at stake. For the psychologist, it is not a matter of bringing a judgment on its existence, much less on its value; it is for him, simply a question of ascertaining that the subject is oriented towards a beyond, believed to be existent, in a word, that his attitude is theocentric and that Karl Barth's word on the biblical narratives is true also for conversion narratives: their centre is eccentric, that is, these very human stories converge towards a point situated beyond the human. It is this which assures the psychological specificity of religious conversion and posits a fundamental heterogeneity between this change and all others.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 117: "Ne point se donner, être avare de soi, c'est le plus grand obstacle à la conversion".

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 118. "Mais dès qu'il est question de conversion religieuse, tout change, précisément parce qu'une transcendence est en jeu. Il ne s'agit point, pour le psychologue comme tel, de porter un jugement d'existence et encore moins de valeur; il s'agit simplement pour lui de constater que le sujet est orienté vers un au-delà, tenu pour existant, bref, que son attitude est théocentrique et que le mot de Karl Barth sur les récits bibliques est vrai aussi des récits de conversion: leur centre est excentrique, c'est-à-dire que ces histoires très humaines, convergent vers un point qui est situé au-delà de l'humain. C'est cela qui

Moreover, for Penido, the expansion or the unification of the self comes as a consequence of the gift of self. Since the process of conversion is so diverse (as the typology shows) there is analogy rather than "univocal residue". The whole man is converted and experiences the fundamental religious attitude--awareness of the state of creaturehood:

Let us then say, preferably, that the fundamental religious attitude is the awareness of the state of creaturehood.⁸⁹

Penido also remarks that:

Conversion introduces itself smoothly, in the whole of the religious acts. Its characteristic is that in a dramatic way, it situates man in that fundamental religious attitude which many others adopt, spontaneously, since childhood. Its principal interest then is not so much its content as the contrast between the past and the present.⁹⁰

He presents his analogical notion of religious conversion as follows:

assure la spécificité psychologique de la conversion religieuse, et pose une hétérogénéité foncière entre ce changement et les autres."

89 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 119. "Disons-donc, de préférence, que l'attitude religieuse fondamentale est une prise de conscience de l'état de créature."

90 Ibid., p. 122. "La conversion s'insère sans heurts, dans l'ensemble des actes religieux. Ce qui lui est propre c'est que, d'une manière dramatique, elle place un homme dans cette attitude religieuse fondamentale, que beaucoup d'autres hommes adoptent, spontanément, dès l'enfance. Ce qui fait donc son intérêt ce n'est pas autant son contenu, que le contraste entre le passé et le présent."

It thus becomes easy to bring forward the analogical notion of religious conversion: it is a personal relationship with the Beyond, which is established or strengthened following a crisis.⁹¹

Penido explains that this personal relationship with the Beyond will be either established, as in the case of pagans, or strengthened, as in the case of Christians. The fact that it is a relationship shows that elements of friendship are involved. The crisis (differentiating the "twice-born" from the "once-born") which arises from the realization of one's state of creaturehood, i.e., one's inability to cope alone, one's limitations or one's brokenness, revolves around the decision to accept or to reject a relationship with the Beyond.⁹² (Of course, in the Christian conversion, the Beyond is God.) Besides, according to Penido, the crisis need not be sudden or dramatic; it can be a progressive and quiet evolution.

Penido considers the theocentric thrust of religious conversion to be the prime psychological criterion by which to identify a true or a false conversion. But, he admits that due to the intricacies of many conversions, it can be very challenging to distinguish between true and pseudo-conversions. Moreover, Penido remarks that the documents

⁹¹ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 123. "Il devient dès lors aisé de dégager la notion analogique de la conversion religieuse; c'est une relation personnelle établie ou resserrée, à la suite d'une crise, avec l'Au-delà."

⁹² Ibid., p. 124.

disclose numerous pseudo-conversions which can be treated as either "introversions or extroversions with religious coloration".⁹³

Lest he be blamed for having examined only Catholic conversions, Penido recalls the numerous references he has made to Protestant evangelical conversions.⁹⁴ He notes that these center about "self-surrender" or complete self-abandonment to Jesus Christ and are, for him, psychologically authentic conversions.

Penido concludes his study of religious conversion by demonstrating its applicability in the life of Marie de l'Incarnation, which he accepts as typical of a life of conversion to mysticism. He gives her major biographical details, accounts for her mental life, and describes the main stage along her mystical itinerary.⁹⁵ We notice that

93 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 124-25. "Il est indiscutable que les documents nous mettent en face d'une série d'expériences, dénommées 'conversion' par ceux qui les vécurent, mais qui sont, en réalité, soit des introversions, soit des extraversions à coloration religieuse. Psychologiquement, ce sont donc des pseudo-conversions, mais, pour ne heurter personne et surtout pour bien montrer que la conversion n'est pas un phénomène bien découpé, aux arêtes vives, mais au contraire, présente des marges flottantes, nous les nommerons 'conversions au sens faible ou impropre'."

94 Ibid., p. 130.

95 Ibid., pp. 178-244. We present a synopsis of his biography from pp. 178-82. Marie Guyart was born October 28, 1599, at Tours, France. Her father was a master-baker; her mother, of noble lineage, was very pious. Her parents gave her in marriage at the age of seventeen to Claude Martin, master-worker in silks. She had one son--Claude--and became a widow at nineteen. At nineteen years, five

conversion understood as a continuing theocentrism allows for the possibility of many conversions. In Marie's case, Penido shows that she does not follow the usual tripartite pattern of the spiritual life. She writes of thirteen clearly delineated stages of prayer which Penido interprets as thirteen conversions.⁹⁶ Marie's conversion to mysticism characterizes her life as one continuous "deoverion"⁹⁷ from the first dream onwards.⁹⁸ This mysticism, as Penido points out, is essentially intentional. Its "deoverion," lived out as a vital relationship of love, is its most striking

months, she experienced conversion to mysticism. In 1621 or '22 she went to live with her brother-in-law, Paul Buisson. Marie suffered much in this house. It was not long, however, before her brother-in-law recognized Marie's talent and he soon had her managing his business. At this time Marie became an expert at leading a double-life--secular and mystical. While not yet twenty-eight, she attained the state of "mystical marriage". She then nourished a deep desire to enter the convent and after much suffering occasioned by her young son, her brother-in-law and her father, she finally entered the Ursuline monastery at Tours. The year after her profession, she experienced an ardent desire to become a missionary. (This was of course unthinkable for a cloistered nun.) But on May 4, 1639, she left for Canada. The voyage, which lasted three months, was a terrible ordeal. Once in Canada, she underwent many great trials from the climate, the extreme poverty, the lack of communication with the Indians, the Iroquois wars, the burnings of the convent, and all kinds of contradictions. She died April thirtieth, 1672, and her work endures to this day.

96 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 197, 91.

97 Ibid., pp. 202, 205, 206, 209. Penido borrows the term from R. H. Thouless. While he uses the term theocentrism for the basic intentional component of conversion; deoverion is his preferred term for a deepening awareness of this intentional thrust.

98 Ibid., pp. 197-98.

dimension and makes of mystical life "une science expérimentale de l'amour".⁹⁹ Indeed, Marie's friendship with Christ is a very strong and consistent factor. Penido lingers over three elements found in Marie's initial dream: the call, the complete gift of self, and the secret, and he accepts these as major characteristics of her mystical life.

2. The Evaluation of the Theory

Penido's book has never been translated into English and has remained largely unknown in America. Our own evaluation of his model focuses firstly on the original approach of his phenomenologically based psychology.

a) The Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

The central issue in Penido's view of man is that of "consciousness", man's highest or primary dimension, characterized as intentional, i.e., always directed to something other than itself, the other, a capacity which serves in directing the input of psychic information much of which is relegated to the subconscious where it is eventually repressed. The subconscious itself does not know the other; neither is it a "boîte à surprises", for according to Penido, its accumulated syntheses are received or grasped by

99 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 220.

consciousness.¹⁰⁰ It is the nature of the subconscious to allow the co-habitation of these collected and frequently opposing syntheses which generally result in mounting pressure leading to a variety of psychic processes.

Long after the person has "forgotten" a particular synthesis, the subconscious maintains the dynamism of this repressed or "lost" process and brings it back to awareness either in dreams, at times of cataclysms, or at the suggestion of others. While the usual subconscious processes (repression, compensation, resistance or affective ambivalence) are largely responsible for conflict, suffering or crisis, it is the prerogative of consciousness either to accept or to reject the options presented. In Penido's view, man is not dominated by an *instinctual* unconscious (as in psychoanalysis) and thereby locked in immanence; rather, as an intentional being in whom consciousness is supreme, he is empowered with a tendency to self-transcendence or openness to the other.

Though Penido wishes to disfavor the faculty view of man in which there is emphasis on one dimension (such as the intellect) to the detriment of the whole person, we believe he protests too much. Having bracketed the existential

¹⁰⁰ This hypothesis serves to disprove the possibility of autonomous subliminal incubation as advanced by James. While De Sanctis replaced this hypothesis by elaborating the processes of the rebirth of complexes and the substitution of complexes, Penido shows why it is no longer tenable.

dimension (as phenomenologists do), he speaks of consciousness as exercised mainly by the intellect, and only secondarily does he acknowledge its exercise by the affects and the will. Moreover, he insists, in a twofold enjoyment of love: a lower sexual one and a higher spiritual or undifferentiated love.¹⁰¹ Consequently, though Penido means to hold a comprehensive view of man, the bias we discern for man "the intentional knower", weakens his theory. Indeed, the gestaltists have made it clear that the sum of all the parts does not equal the whole organism.¹⁰² Man is always more than his consciousness, his intelligence, his affectivity or his will. As Antoine Vergote maintains, he is the "centre of all of these and is always more than these".¹⁰³

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

In examining biographical documents of religious converts Penido finds one constant element: man's ability

¹⁰¹ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 107-8. Penido here reveals a tendency to elevate man to the spiritual level. Just as he tends to look down upon the subconscious as *instinctual* or as the abode of repressions primarily, so he tends to introduce a hierarchical view of love, a lower sexual love and a higher spiritual one.

¹⁰² See F. Perls, The Gestalt Approach & Eye Witness to Therapy, California, Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1973, pp. 2-3; and his Gestalt Therapy Verbatim, compiled and ed. by J. O. Stevens, California, Real People Press, 1969, pp. 2-3.

¹⁰³ A. Vergote, Psychologie religieuse, p. 247, where he writes: "Il n'est ni sa beauté physique, ni son intelligence, ni même son caractère. Il est le centre de tout cela; mais il est toujours plus."

to be in relationship to the other. He theorizes that this ability flows from man's religious consciousness (the central proposition of his whole book), a fundamental "consciousness of" or "other-directedness", a quality calling for an absence of egocentrism (or anthropocentrism). The term of man's religious consciousness is therefore the antithesis of self-unification when made an end in itself. In point of fact, Penido is of the opinion that self-unification is never the end of religiousness but a by-product. For if to know is to know the other, Penido theorizes that the experience of religiousness is not only eccentric, it is especially theocentric--an attitude which he finds in all converts. More particularly, this attitude is the fundamental experience of man, the creature able to stand in relation to his maker and to know him as personal and as other.¹⁰⁴

While Penido's understanding of "attitude" does not have the comprehensiveness suggested by the contemporary humanistic one signifying all of man's thinking, feeling and

¹⁰⁴ Despite the fact that Vergote's theory of the religious man was written thirty years after that of Penido, we find his description of the religious attitude very similar to that of Penido. See his *Psychologie religieuse*, p. 164. "Fidèle à l'usage traditionnel, nous réservons donc le terme de religieux à l'attitude qui reconnaît Dieu comme Autre et qui s'en approche avec respect, admiration, espoir et reconnaissance. Soulignons-le, il n'y a religion à nos yeux que si l'Autre, fond et source de mon être, n'est pas le monde comme totalité, mais le Tout-Autre, vis-à-vis duquel je me découvre tout à la fois séparé et uni."

doing,¹⁰⁵ his view accords well, nevertheless, with more recent holistic theories of man as a being in becoming or process.¹⁰⁶ Religious growth, then, will necessarily be a continuing experience and not a once-for-all act. Besides, the documents reveal that the religious attitude is not, and cannot be a means of possessing the other. The other is always other--a fact which reinforces Penido's intuition that man's religiousness is in need of constant journeying, of refocusing, and of progressing in conversion.¹⁰⁷ Moreover, Penido declares that he is only accounting for the phenomena before him. To omit this constant feature, for him, would be to attend incorrectly to the phenomena.

105 A. Vergote, Psychologie religieuse, p. 215, gives a typical comprehensive description of this concept: "L'attitude est une manière d'être à l'égard de quelqu'un ou de quelque chose; c'est une disposition, favorable ou défavorable, qui s'exprime par des paroles et un comportement. Au premier regard déjà, elle apparaît constituée de trois éléments: c'est une conduite totale (une manière d'être), en rapport intentionnel à un objet donné (à l'égard de), et elle peut s'observer (elle est un comportement)."

106 Cf. G. W. Allport, Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1955, 196 pp. The author was one of the first to elaborate this view.

107 Penido's intuition into this facet of religious conversion is particularly clear in Marie de l'Incarnation's case. See M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 91.

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

Penido is a strong critic of the established method of the psychology of religion and boldly asserts its inadequacy as reflected in the theorizing on religious conversion, an inadequacy, however, which does not preclude its viability, but which points to an urgent need to re-examine the basic principles of the discipline. Penido demonstrates that the need for a more comprehensive psychological method (one which will be faithful to the religious consciousness in its essential characteristics) can be met in his phenomenological psychology.

Because it stresses going back to the things themselves, i.e., to the phenomena, this method acts as a corrective to the former psychologies; it allows the psychologist to account for the convert's relationship with the divine, an element of the primary data of religiousness.¹⁰⁸ Indeed, the psychologist can and must attend to all the data

¹⁰⁸ M. Penido, *Conscience religieuse*, p. 119. An excellent expression of this element of Penido's method is the following: "Il ne s'agit point pour le psychologue comme tel, de porter un jugement d'existence et encore moins de valeur: il s'agit simplement pour lui de constater que le sujet est orienté vers un au-delà, tenu pour existant, bref, que son attitude est théocentrique." See also A. Giorgi, *Psychology as a Human Science*, pp. 187-88, where he speaks of the necessity for an attitude that is more open in psychology so that fidelity to the phenomena may be maintained "simply because they are there".

(without of course examining God) in their endless varieties, similarities and dissimilarities, if the objective ideal of science is to be upheld. That means accounting for the fundamental theocentric or eccentric characteristics of all genuine religious conversions.¹⁰⁹

To this end, Penido proceeds very much like a clinician, i.e., by participant observation, attending to the phenomena, noting convergences and divergences, describing them, perceiving the patterns which evolve, and identifying them. Eventually, he discloses an original theoretical view of religious conversion which precludes the usual reductive tendencies of the psychology of religion despite the fact that (1) it still tends to pigeonhole religion with one faculty or another, and (2) that it brackets existence.¹¹⁰

ii) Data-Gathering

Though Penido has no personal collection of case studies or other empirical data, he is a master of the American and European traditions of the psychology of religious conversion. His data consist entirely of personal documents of Christians having experienced religious

¹⁰⁹ Penido is among the first to challenge seriously the basic principles of the psychology of religion elaborated in 1902 by T. Flournoy.

¹¹⁰ We must remember that Penido articulates his theory before the breakthrough of existentialism in psychology, i.e., before psychologists began to admit subjective aspects as the primary data of experience.

conversion. While these data had become commonplace since James's use of them, Penido's re-examination of such literature for constants is new. Moreover, he is primarily concerned with attending to and accounting for the intentional characteristics manifested, a facet of the data former theoreticians all but neglected.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

As the title of Penido's book indicates, his essay is systematic and has textbook characteristics due to a rigorous method which can be recognized, e.g., in the summary at the beginning of each chapter and the few short outlines of his lengthy typology. In addition to submitting a new model of religious conversion, Penido also contributes an excellent critique of the relevant literature. While he means to elaborate a more reliable understanding of religious conversion, his theory reveals polemical or theological interests which we interpret as efforts to liberate religious conversion both from the tyranny of the unconscious and from pathological overtones, and also to associate it with self-unification under a divine principle.¹¹¹ There is

¹¹¹ There is a decided apologetical concern throughout Penido's theory. In his opinion, psychologists had not really emphasized what was most specific about the change called religious conversion and he wishes to remedy this fact. At times he writes like a theologian. See his *Conscience religieuse*, pp. 148, 220. He calls himself a "Thomist theologian" (p. 105), calls James "un incroyant", and Leuba "un anti-chrétien" (p. 150). This apologetical

no doubt but that Penido intends to disprove the methodological agnosticism and biological immanential categories of former theorizing.

c) The Content

It is now obvious that in Penido's study, one distinct aspect of religious conversion emerges above all others, namely, the intentional capacity of the subject which permits an original relationship with an object. Religious conversion, for Penido, is primarily a personal relationship with the Beyond, God, as other. Not only does this accord with his phenomenological view of consciousness, but the documents all witness to this relationship,¹¹² its theocentrism, the essential characteristic of religious conversion distinguishing it fundamentally from all other instances of human change. - Moreover, in conversion, this relationship is either established or strengthened, depending upon whether it is an initial or subsequent conversion. The element of growth involved appears to at least one

tendency has the merit of putting one theologian completely at ease with a psychological theory of conversion. See Y. M.-J. Congar, "The Idea of Conversion", p. 7.

112 W. James in particular noted the element of exteriority in both conversion and mysticism, but this element was not developed in his theory. One phenomenologist who would agree completely with Penido's understanding of conversion is G. Van Der Leeuw, La Religion dans son essence et ses manifestations, Paris, Payot, 1955, p. 522.

psychologist as a confusion of change with development.¹¹³

But Penido includes another element which we believe removes possible ambiguity insofar as the establishing or strengthening of conversion is always following a crisis.

In his opinion, the relevance of the crisis is not to be found in its suddenness, nor in its dramatic elements. Its whole import lies rather in a choice¹¹⁴ made either for theocentrism or for egocentrism. In other words, the fundamental dynamics of religious conversion are situated along a specific continuum, that of egocentrism and theocentrism.

This continuum could appear problematic within the context of today's comprehensive phenomenological or existential psychologies. In the gestalt approach to psychotherapy, egocentrism is symbolic of the option for authentic selfhood, and in such a situation, egocentrism is the ultimate choice, the continuum here being that of incompleteness-completeness. According to Claudio Naranjo, the decision for completeness has the effect of healing and should normally precede conversion to prevent the dissipation of deeper spiritual insights. However, Naranjo believes that healing and conversion are just different stages in a "single-change process"¹¹⁵ which are not clear-cut in

113 See E. H. Furgeson, "The Definition of Religious Conversion", pp. 8-16.

114 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 124.

115 C. Naranjo, The One Quest, New York, The Viking Press, 1972, p. 138.

practical life situations.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, Barrie Ryan indicates that as healing results from the choice for authentic selfhood and, by implication, dying to the self-image, so conversion results from the option for theocentrism, and, by implication, dying to the self.¹¹⁷ It would seem that the two goals, "dying to the self-image" and "dying to the self", somehow blur the gulf which appears to exist between egocentrism and theocentrism.

In Penido's theory, though the decision involving the symbolic death of self gives rise to crisis, it can also be a major source of energy. Because the decision is an either/or one for the moment at hand, Penido allows for more than one such option along the itinerary of life. Indeed, the possibility of later decisions arising in the midst of new crises is a fact to be reckoned with. Moreover, if conversion be true, it must necessarily be progressive.

Hervé Carrier is of the opinion that no psychologist has succeeded better than Penido in disclosing a typology of conversion and believes it can be conciliated with a much later one by Charles Baudoin.¹¹⁸ As a matter of fact, Penido's typology does appear as a breakthrough when

116 C. Naranjo, The Healing Journey, p. 15.

117 B. Ryan, "The Lost Self Changes: Gestalt and Christian Concepts of Rebirth", pp. 247-70.

118 H. Carrier, Psycho-sociologie de l'appartenance religieuse, p. 63; C. Baudoin, Psychanalyse du symbole religieux, pp. 57-75.

compared with previous ones; even (William James's view of conversion pales before this precise typology of genetic and structural religious conversions. Though he makes use of De Sanctis's theory of psychic systems, Penido goes far beyond him in tracing a typology of religious conversion.

While we realize that we cannot show all the nuances of the author's theory, we would like, at this point, to offer our own understanding of Penido's typology by presenting a brief summary and an outline detailing our analysis.

Penido's genetic typology accounts for a bimodal nature, the outer-directed and the inner-directed conversions. The exogenous conversions are outlined according to their relevant characteristics: (1) their setting, (2) the cause of the onset, i.e., whether it is the result of occasions, of cataclysms, or of revivals, (3) the modality as to time, and (4) the psychic processes and dynamics involved. The endogenous conversions are similarly traced although they appear slightly different and less complex. Our outline follows.

Genetic Typology

A. Exogenous

B. Endogenous

underlying continuum	outer-directed-----inner-directed	
1. setting	(a) gregarious (b) solitary	solitary
2. causes	(a) external occasion e.g., marriage (b) cataclysms: earthquakes, fires, wars, epidemics, accidents (c) suggestion (revival)	suggestion plays a minor role only
3. historical mode	usually sudden but also gradual	sudden or gradual
4. conversional process	(a) cataclysmic: i) inhibition of normal psychic system due to shock ii) the evocation of a religious complex due to fear iii) calling on the Lord (b) revivalistic: i) psychic erasing technique ii) psychic pressure (conviction of sin) iii) release of pres- sure (calling on Jesus)	

5. psychic processes (a) cycle of change	The cycle begins in consciousness, is relegated to the unconscious, and re-emerges to consciousness	--similar
(b) psychic process	rebirth of infantile religious complex	a) rebirth of infantile religious complex b) substitution of complex
(c) dynamics	disintegration of non-religious ego vs. integration of religious ego	the result of the definitive dissolution of the non-religious ego

Penido's structural typology is also characterized by a bimodal nature, the pathological and the normal conversions. While the former are due to a variety of compensations, the latter appear much more complex and are distinguished both objectively and subjectively in order to account for the theological and the psychical orientations respectively. Our outline of this typology follows.

Structural Typology

A. Normal

B. Pathological

underlying continuum	normality-----pathology					
role of compensation	normal and indispensable	major role in a) ideo-affective dissociation b) affective ambivalence c) utilitarian emotionalism				
1. Objectively: theological orientation	<p>a) dogmatic: accession of faith unbeliever-----believer indifference, atheism, scepticism, hostility, agnosticism, etc.</p> <p>b) moral: accession of charity sinner-----just man</p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-left: 100px;"> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">common or ascetical</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">mystical</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">in a mystical moment</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">to a way of mysticism</td> </tr> </table> </div> <p>c) mixed or total: most varied and cannot be reduced</p>		common or ascetical	mystical	in a mystical moment	to a way of mysticism
common or ascetical	mystical					
in a mystical moment	to a way of mysticism					
2. Subjectively: psychic orientation	<p>a) integrative or undifferentiated</p> <p>b) intuitive (synthesis of intellect and affect, quasi-mystical)</p> <p>c) volitional</p> <p>d) affective (most common type)</p> <p>e) intellectual (less frequent, usually gradual with no break)</p> <p>f) sensibility</p>	<p><u>Exemplar</u> Augustine</p> <p>P. Claudel Marie de l'Incarnation</p> <p>J. H. Newman</p>				

Since the divergences and the convergences evident in the above typology are so vast as practically to defy compilation, Penido proposes an analogical notion of conversion. So, though he claims there can be no reduction of the process, he discloses the sine qua non of conversion, its theocentric thrust leading to a relationship with the divine which is either established or strengthened, following a crisis.

The application of Penido's theory to the great mystic, Marie de l'Incarnation, enlarges upon and confirms James's insight that conversion and mysticism are intimately related. Furthermore, Marie's growth in the mystical life is seen as the outgrowth or the peak of a conversional life which allowed for a series of conversions¹¹⁹ all reflecting "an attraction, an inclination, and a thrust towards the divine".¹²⁰ Penido rightly applies the concept of "deversion" to this state, and this discussion brings us to a difficult issue in his theory.

Penido's understanding of conversion is very different from any former theorizing, to say the least. He admits to holding theological presuppositions; he also admits early

119. The psychologists examining Protestant conversions did not speak of the possibility of repeated conversions. The "once-born" and "twice-born" typology of William James seems to underlie the hypothesis that one is reborn once.

120 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 212.

in his work that he aims to describe the religious consciousness in its three moments: conversion, asceticism and mysticism. While this statement would seem to suggest that these are three separate stages, his delineation of them becomes ambiguous as the following passage reveals:

In the conversion of the just, on the contrary, the ultimate aim is not modified; before as after, the orientation remains theocentric. There is no longer change of direction but an intensification of the movement, a more profound and broader perception of the end and its requirements. One moves from the transcendent God to the immanent God. It is all the difference between a new birth and spiritual growth, between an about-turn and a spiral ascent.¹²¹ (Underlining ours.)

We conclude that Penido seems to propose (1) an initial conversion at the beginning of the Christian life, and (2) subsequent conversions which he identifies with spiritual growth and mysticism. It would seem that for him, the intentional dimension of conversion seems to require the possibility, if not the necessity, of future conversions because the other is known but not possessed. In the conversion to mysticism, however, the other is both sought after and possessed, as it were. Penido therefore seems to introduce another dimension at the theocentric pole of the continuum: a mystical one. Though this mystical dimension is usually understood as spiritual growth, Penido interprets it as conversion and qualifies it accordingly, as his typology shows. The fact that he speaks of Marie's thirteen

¹²¹ M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, pp. 84-85. See footnote 72 above.

conversions, rather than thirteen states of prayer as she herself does, indicates, we believe, that these included all the elements of his analogical notion of conversion, i.e., the appropriate relationship, and the crisis.

The following words and phrases best depict Penido's original approach to the study of religious conversion:

"la xénopathie",¹²² "la relation au Transcendant",¹²³ "la conversion exogène", "la conversion endogène",¹²⁴ "l'état de réceptivité",¹²⁵ "l'aspect négatif de la crise",¹²⁶ "la crise finale", "le moi non-religieux", "le moi religieux",¹²⁷ "l'état de résistance",¹²⁸ "de l'anthropocentrisme au théocentrisme",¹²⁹ "les conversions mixtes", "les conversions de justes", "les conversions communes ou ascétiques",¹³⁰ "la conversion à forme mystique", "la conversion au

122 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 14. The original language is used for this section of the paper.

123 Ibid., p. 45.

124 Ibid., p. 46.

125 Ibid., p. 50.

126 Ibid., p. 51.

127 Ibid., p. 61.

128 Ibid., p. 71.

129 Ibid., p. 84.

130 Ibid., p. 89.

mysticisme",¹³¹ "la conversion dogmatique",¹³² "les conversions intellectuelles, affectives, volitives, intuitives, intégratives, ou indifférenciées",¹³³ "ressemblance dissemblable",¹³⁴ "la dépendance personnelle vis-à-vis de Dieu", "l'exaltation du moi",¹³⁵ "l'acceptation ou le refus de Dieu",¹³⁶ "l'attitude théocentrique", "le centre excentrique",¹³⁷ "une prise de conscience de l'état de créature",¹³⁸ "la Transcendance",¹³⁹ "le contraste entre le passé et le présent",¹⁴⁰ "l'évolution religieuse", "des introversions", "des extraversions à coloration religieuses",¹⁴¹ "les conversions au sens faible ou impropre", "une attitude extravertie colorée de religion",¹⁴² "l'affirmation du moi",¹⁴³

131 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 90.

132 Ibid., p. 91.

133 Ibid., p. 92.

134 Ibid., p. 115.

135 Ibid., p. 116.

136 Ibid., p. 117.

137 Ibid., p. 118.

138 Ibid., p. 119.

139 Ibid., p. 120.

140 Ibid., p. 122.

141 Ibid., p. 124.

142 Ibid., p. 125.

143 Ibid., p. 126.

"la prise de position du sujet en face de l'objet", "le problème du 'Toi-et-moi'",¹⁴⁴ "un caractère essentiellement affectif",¹⁴⁵ "la déversion",¹⁴⁶ "un phénomène essentiellement intentionnel",¹⁴⁷ "l'unification de la vie toute entière sous un principe divin",¹⁴⁸ "un contact amoureux de personne à personne",¹⁴⁹ "un dialogue d'amour",¹⁵⁰ "le don de soi",¹⁵¹ "la tendance",¹⁵² "l'analogie de la grâce de conversion".¹⁵³

In concluding this examination of Penido's original model of religious conversion, let us note firstly, the limits which are still prominent therein. In our view, while the bracketing of the existential factors of this experience is still a serious drawback, nevertheless, we sense that this very bracketing permits the author to be all the more perceptive of the dialectical relationship

144 M. Penido, Conscience religieuse, p. 168.

145 Ibid., p. 201.

146 Ibid., p. 202.

147 Ibid., p. 203.

148 Ibid., p. 205.

149 Ibid., p. 206.

150 Ibid., p. 207.

151 Ibid., p. 208.

152 Ibid., p. 215.

153 Ibid., p. 218.

involved and enables him to articulate it more concretely and to emphasize its myriad of varieties. Furthermore, though we note an intellectual bias because of an incomplete understanding of the affects,¹⁵⁴ we also discern the author's own perceptive insights and his difficulty in separating the two; the mind-body dichotomy implied therein is therefore weakened.

Finally, though Penido proceeds from the framework of a part-psychology,¹⁵⁵ we believe that the applicability of his theory may be its most valuable contribution. He has

154 We believe that Charles Davis articulates a more holistic understanding of the affects and religious feelings in particular, also from a phenomenological approach. See his Body as Spirit: The Nature of Religious Feeling, New York, The Seabury Press, 1976, p. 13. "Briefly, again, 'feelings' refers to a total response, actuating what we are as persons; intellectual activity is a restricted response, engaging neither the total self nor the total reality of the object. But there is no complete or basic distinction between the intellectual and the affective, because an affectivity toward truth underlies and penetrates the intellect as creative or originative in each person. The appropriate distinction needed to locate feeling precisely is not between intelligence and affectivity but between the spontaneous, connatural response of the subject to reality as object and the subsequent appropriation and formulation of that response in conceptualization and judgment. The first, connatural response, is what is rightly called feeling, whether the response is to reality as truth, as beauty, or as goodness."

155 A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, pp. 84-85, discusses the fact that part-psychologies issued from partial interests. He notes the findings of a few psychologists who saw the state of psychology as dealing with "little methods that were adequate only for trivial problems", with "part-functions and with details of analysis" which did not "adequately cope with wholes, frames-of-reference, or syntheses", and were very often "a psychology without a person".

succeeded in constructing a model of religious conversion in which the religious dimension of the experience is taken into account without begging the question; indeed in his view, he could not presume to meet the objective ideal of science otherwise.

3. A Synopsis of the Model

a) Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

A phenomenological view of man as a spiritual being characterized by intentional consciousness, i.e., whose consciousness is always "consciousness of" the other. Man is therefore both outer-directed and inner-directed and essentially a rational being.

Two levels of love can be differentiated in man; a lower sexual love and a higher spiritual one.

The subconscious plays an important role in man's life but it is wholly dependent upon consciousness for its psychic syntheses.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Unification of the whole life flows as a by-product of one's relationship with a divine being. The fundamental religious attitude is the awareness of the state of creaturehood. Man's journeying toward God begins in conversion and proceeds therein progressively.

Religion is primarily and essentially a relationship with God. Therefore, religion cannot be thought of apart from this personal knowledge of God as both the Beyond, or the other, and as a personal being of tremendous power in man's life.

b) Method

i) Psychological System

A phenomenological psychology stressing that man's consciousness is primarily intentional; a subjective psychology which acts as a corrective to natural scientific psychologies in general, because it teaches the psychologist to be objective and to account for whatever is observable.

It is a common-sense method, one of participant-observation, one in which the descriptive method features prominently, one which pays particular attention to patterns and types, one that also makes use of introspection and reflection.

ii) Data-Gathering

No personal case studies or empirical studies of his own. The theory results mostly from a course in religious psychology. A focus on the Christian religious conversion. Major sources of data: (1) personal documents of converts, (2) Catholic tradition in general, as well as (3) a wide knowledge of the American, French, German, and Italian research on the psychology of religious conversion.

iii) Presentation

An extremely methodical general typology of the varieties of religious conversion.

A historical review of the method of psychology of religion and a proposal for a corrective of the natural scientific method.

A detailed presentation of the genetic and structural typologies of the Christian religious conversion.

A psycho-historical study of Marie de l'Incarnation's religious life emphasizing her conversion to mysticism.

c) Content

i) Nature

Analogically, it is a relationship with the divine which is established or strengthened, following a crisis.

A specific instance of human change flowing from a relationship with the divine which unifies a person's whole life. Its nature is such that it allows for subsequent conversions.

ii) Aim

Negatively, the disintegration of one mental synthesis, a non-religious ego, and eccentricism.

Positively, rebirth of an old religious complex, the taking on of a new religious complex, or the substitution of one complex for another, and theocentrism.

iii) Process

A cataclysmic process in which there is (1) inhibition of a normal psychic system due to shock, (2) an evocation of a religious complex due to fear, and (3) a calling on the Lord.

A revivalistic process in which (1) a psychic erasing technique is used by way of suggestion; (2) psychic pressure is used to change the psychic content and a new complex such as conviction of sin is suggested; (3) release of pressure is effected by calling on the Lord:

A psychic cycle of change beginning in consciousness relegated to the unconscious and re-emerging to consciousness either as the rebirth of an infantile psychic complex or as substitution of complex.

The dynamics involve a process of disintegration and one of integration.

iv) Age

Adolescence or adulthood.

v) Motivational Forces

A predominance of intentional consciousness, and of the affects which are wholly effective even in a relegated position. Crisis is the source of energy and also of a new integration.

vi) Typology

(1) Genetic: exogenous and/or endogenous.

(2) Structural: normal and/or pathological. The true conversion is progressive and other-directed, i.e., eccentric. The pseudo-conversion is an introversion or an extroversion with religious coloration and will not endure.

CHAPTER VII

SARGANT'S PHYSIOLOGICAL MODEL: 1951-57

William Walters Sargant, British physician, psychiatrist and author, director of the department of Psychological medicine at St. Thomas's Hospital, London, for many years, was born in London, England, in 1907. His work in the field of physiological psychiatry brought him to the United States on at least three occasions: as a Rockefeller Travelling Fellow for the Harvard Medical School in 1938-39, as a visiting professor of neuropsychiatry at Duke University's Medical School in 1947-48, and as a lecturer for the American Society of Biological Psychiatry and the New York College of Medicine in 1964.¹

Author and co-author of many papers on psychiatry in medical journals, Sargant co-authored Physical Methods of Treatment in Psychiatry in 1944.² Since then, his publications either focus on or retrace the development of a theory of religious conversion which he has always linked with his physiological methods of treatment in psychiatry and which

¹ The International Who's Who, 1977-76, 41st ed., London, Europa Publications Ltd., p. 1526; Who's Who in the World, Chicago, Marquis' Who's Who, 1971-72, p. 804.

² W. Sargant, E. Slater, An Introduction to Physical Methods of Treatment in Psychiatry, Edinburgh, E. & S. Livingstone Ltd., 1944, 171 pp.

he later compared to brain-washing. These include "The Mechanism of Conversion", in 1951; The Battle for the Mind, in 1957; The Unquiet Mind, in 1967; "The Physiology of Faith", in 1969; and The Mind Possessed, in 1974.³ All of these later works are relevant to our study, but the first two treat more specifically of an elaboration of his theory of religious conversion.

Sargant's interest in religious conversion as a particular instance of psychological change began during the second World War when he was treating acute cases of military and civilian neuroses. About this time he was encouraged to read Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry, a newly translated publication of the lectures of the Russian neuro-physiologist Ivan P. Pavlov (1849-1936).⁴ Sargant was amazed to discover that Pavlov had anticipated many of his

³ See above, Chapter 1, footnotes 80 and 81. The Unquiet Mind: The Autobiography of a Physician in Psychological Medicine, London, Heinemann, 1967, 240 pp. (hereafter cited as The Unquiet Mind); "The Physiology of Faith", British Journal of Psychiatry, 115, 1969, pp. 505-18 (hereafter cited as "Faith"); The Mind Possessed: A Physiology of Possession, Mysticism and Faith Healing, Philadelphia, J. B. Lippincott Co., 1974, 212 pp. (hereafter cited as The Mind Possessed).

⁴ I. P. Pavlov, Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes. Vol. 2, Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry, trans. and ed. by W. Horsley Gantt, New York, International Pub., 1941, 199 pp. (hereafter cited as Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry); J. P. Chaplin & T. S. Krawiec, Systems and Theories of Psychology, p. 224, report that until this translation was effected, Pavlov, a Nobel Prize winner in medicine in 1904, was still virtually unknown by British and American psychiatrists. See also W. Sargant, The Unquiet Mind, pp. 110-11.

own discoveries in the treatment of acute war neurosis. In addition, he found therein many suggestions for newer therapeutic methods in psychiatry.⁵

Also about this time, while visiting at his father's house, Sargant happened to pick up John Wesley's Journal for the years 1739-40.⁶ Again he was fascinated to find therein "startingly similar" techniques to those reported by Pavlov, in his experiments on his dogs, and to his own insights with abreaction (an emotional reliving and acting out of traumatic experiences discovered by Freud) in the treatment of acute war neuroses. Thus began his investigations into the correlations between abreaction in neurosis, the technique of brain-washing, and the phenomenon of religious conversion. The Battle for the Mind is the result of this research.

Sargant's theory of brain-washing presents many interesting features to which we can only allude in the present study. A somewhat more detailed treatment of his theory of abreaction in neurosis is however necessary to elucidate his approach to the concept of man.

5 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 15; "Conversion", p. 311.

6 Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 18. See J. Wesley, The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley. Enlarged from Original Mss., with notes from unpublished Diaries, Annotations, Maps, and Illustrations, ed. N. Curnock, assisted by experts, Standard Edition, London, Charles H. Kelly, 1909, vol. 2, 536 pp.

1. The Exploration of the Theory

a) The Approach

It is often believed that neither behaviorism nor physiological psychology is compatible with a theory of man. Chaplin and Krawiec note that "from a strictly logical point of view there can be no behavioristic theory of personality".⁷ Neither could there be a physiological theory of personality, for as in the case of the behavioristic approach, the only legitimate data are behaviors, no account being made of such personality constructs as ego, id, superego, self, proprium or consciousness:

It is however our view that any psychology rests on a view of man, no matter how deficient. In this vein, we have surmised the view of man implicit in Sargant's thought.

i) A Theory of Personality

Sargant's view of man is principally derived from his reflection on Pavlov's discoveries concerning canine neurosis and conditioning.

Pavlov establishes a fundamental law according to which living substances react in a twofold manner to their environment. The first of these reactions consists in a natural and consistent set of neural responses to certain

⁷ J. P. Chaplin & T. S. Krawiec, Systems and Theories of Psychology, p. 631.

circumstances and/or stimuli, while the second involves learning arbitrary responses to stimuli during the course of life. Pavlov calls the first of these nervous activities "unconditioned reflexes" because of their inborn nature and constancy. Pavlov states:

The idea of reflex action as a special elementary function of the nervous system is an old and established truism of physiology. It is the reaction of the organism to the external world, effected through the nervous system, by which an external stimulus is transformed into a nervous process and transmitted along a circuitous route.⁸

The other reactions, which are built upon the first, he calls simply "conditioned reflexes" as they describe the process of learning or adaptation.⁹

Interestingly, Pavlov notes that his dogs react differently to the conditioning process and he eventually postulates that the efficiency of the process varies according to the constitutional types of the dogs. According to Pavlov:

Temperament is the most general peculiarity of every person, the most basic essentiality of his nervous system, and the type of nervous system colours all the activity of the individual.¹⁰

⁸ I. P. Pavlov, Lectures on Conditioned Reflexes, Vol. 1, Twenty-Five Years of Objective Study of the Higher Nervous Activity (Behaviour) of Animals, trans. and ed. by W. H. Gantt, with the collaboration of G. Volborth, and an Introduction by W. B. Cannon, New York, International Publishers (1928) 1963, p. 83 (hereafter cited as Twenty-Five Years of Objective Study).

⁹ Ibid., pp. 85, 372.

¹⁰ W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 23; I. P. Pavlov, Twenty-Five Years of Objective Study, p. 376.

After thirty years of experimental work with his dogs Pavlov comes to identify in them the four basic types of temperaments which the ancient Greek physician Hippocrates had discovered in man, i.e., the melancholic, the phlegmatic, the sanguine and the choleric.¹¹ Pavlov's ability to identify a given dog's temperament follows as a result of his recognition of two basic reactions to the conditioning process and to any and every given life situation, i.e., the excitatory and the inhibitory responses. In addition, Pavlov notes that a continual and delicate balancing of these two opposite responses is necessary in man and in animal, in order to maintain a normal life.¹² Pavlov further discovers that some of his dogs are

specialists, as it were in excitation, but failures in inhibition, while others are specialists in inhibition, but weak in excitation. Between these two extremes there is a central group which can inhibit well, and at the same time easily form positive conditioned reflexes, and both the positive and the negative reflexes remain constant and exact. Consequently, all dogs fall into three chief groups an excitatory group, an inhibitory group, (extreme groups), and a central group.¹³

In studying the four temperaments, Pavlov finds that the members of the extreme group in each of the excitatory

¹¹ I. P. Pavlov, Twenty-Five Years of Objective Study, p. 376.

¹² Ibid., pp. 372-73.

¹³ Ibid., p. 374. (Unless otherwise specified all underlining is the author's.)

and the inhibitory, i.e., the choleric and the melancholic, are more vulnerable to nervous breakdown either from excessive excitation or from excessive inhibition respectively. In the face of great stress, the choleric are aggressive, animated, undisciplined and lack the inhibitory function, whereas the melancholic become so inhibited as to fall into a hypnotic state.¹⁴ Members of the central group, i.e., the sanguine and the phlegmatic, are balanced and strong in both the excitatory and inhibitory processes and usually able to resist breakdown. In fact, Pavlov discovers that it is impossible to produce nervous disturbances in these two types simply by imposing hard tasks.¹⁵ But in experimenting with the extreme groups, i.e., the choleric and the melancholic, he more easily provokes such conditions as stereotypy, negativism, and cyclic manifestations.¹⁶

Furthermore, by taking into account a particular dog's constitutional type and the milieu control, and then by presenting the stimuli in such a way as to produce "a

14 I. P. Pavlov, Twenty-Five Years of Objective Study, p. 105; W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 24.

15 I. P. Pavlov, Twenty-Five Years of Objective Study, p. 92. Even a collision of the excitatory and inhibitory processes does not affect them.

16 Ibid., p. 93. See Introduction by H. Gantt, p. 14. Gantt states that stereotypy is the condition whereby a dog makes "useless, stereotyped movements over and over again". Negativism is shown by a refusal of food when it is offered and a turning toward food as it is taken away. Cyclism is the succession of mania and depression.

collision between the excitatory and the inhibitory processes",¹⁷ Pavlov is able to form hypotheses about the nature of hysteria. He differentiates three phases in the breakdown or hypnotic process. In the first, the equivalent phase, the brain makes no difference between strong and weak stimuli; in the next, the paradoxical phase, the brain responds more actively to weak stimuli than to the stronger ones; finally, in the ultraparadoxical phase, conditioned responses and behavior patterns are reversed. At this point there occurs transmarginal inhibition; a protective state wherein intensive stimulations "produce an effect opposite to the normal stimulation".¹⁸ This process of the induction

17 I. P. Pavlov, Twenty-Five Years of Objective Study, pp. 344, 361, 384-85. On p. 361 he writes: "What are the general characteristics of all the pathological instances? Upon what depends the persistent and marked deviation from the normal brought about by our procedures? We have the right to answer, I believe, that it is a difficult collision, an unusual confronting of the two opposing processes of excitation and inhibition (be it in time or intensity relations or even in both together), which leads to a more or less permanent destruction of the normal balance existing between these two processes." See also Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry, p. 164.

18 Ibid., p. 347, where he classifies the conditions to which the cortex is subjected in a certain consecutive order: "At one pole of this system stands the state of excitation, an extraordinary increase of irritability, when an inhibitory process becomes very difficult or impossible. After this is the normal waking state, the state of normal equilibrium between the processes of excitation and of inhibition. Then follows a long but also consecutive series of states transitory to the inhibition, of which the following are the most characteristic: a state of equalisation, when in contradistinction to the waking state all stimuli, independent of their intensities, act exactly equally; the

of an inverted response by means of a concentration or collision of the excitatory and the inhibitory processes Pavlov calls "the law of induction".¹⁹

Sargant is fond of narrating the incident that occurred when a group of Pavlov's dogs were practically drowned during the Leningrad flood in 1924.²⁰ When the dogs were rescued, some of them were already in a state of transmarginal inhibition. These dogs had attained a state of complete inhibition or collapse and had lost all their conditioned reflexes²¹ as if "the recently printed brain-

paradoxical phase when only weak stimuli act and when strong stimuli either have no action at all or have a barely noticeable effect; and finally the ultra-paradoxical phase, during which only the previously elaborated inhibitory agents have a positive effect. After this follows a state of complete inhibition."

19 I. P. Pavlov, Conditioned Reflexes and Psychiatry, pp. 87, 89. On p. 87 the author writes: "When the excitatory and inhibitory processes concentrate they induce the opposite process (both at the periphery during the action and at the place of the action at its termination)--the law of reciprocal induction."

20 Sargant relates this incident at least four times. See "Conversion", p. 312; Battle for the Mind, p. 32; The Unquiet Mind, p. 113; The Mind Possessed, pp. 8-9.

21 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 32. "In addition to the abnormalities induced, in the equivalent, paradoxical and ultra-paradoxical phases by lesser degrees of protective inhibition, lay a further degree of inhibitory activity on which he had accidentally stumbled, capable, it seemed, of disrupting for the time being all recently implanted conditioned reflexes. Most dogs which had reached this stage could later have their old conditioned behaviour patterns restored, but it might need months of patient work."

slate had been suddenly "wiped clean".²² This substantiates his intuitions that the extreme types, the choleric and even more so the melancholic are quickly brought to transmarginal inhibition. (Pavlov subsequently discovers that new reflexes can then be implanted.)

The others, however, also caught in the flood, did not lose their conditioned reflexes, and this fact validates Pavlov's hypothesis that the central group--the sanguine and the phlegmatic--are much more stable and require more drastic assaults before breakdown. Eventually, Pavlov determines how to alter even the "strong" dogs' conditioned reflexes.²³ Sargant lists four debilitating techniques elaborated by Pavlov which are more difficult for the dogs to withstand and which eventually lead them to transmarginal inhibition: subjecting the dogs to an increasing amount of voltage; permitting an unexpected delay between the signal and the actual reception of food; confusing the dogs by mixing their signals; and tampering with their physical make-up, for

22 W. Sargant, The Mind Possessed, p. 9, and adds: "Those dogs which had been intensely excited but had not collapsed, had not suffered this dramatic wiping clean of the brain-state. But all the dogs had become highly sensitized by their terrifying experience."

23 Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 32. "Pavlov told an American physiologist that the observations made on this occasion had also convinced him that every dog had its 'breaking point'--provided that the appropriate stress was found and properly applied to its brain and nervous system."

example, by castration.²⁴

Though Sargant reminds us frequently enough that "men are not dogs",²⁵ he affirms that his own discoveries among the mentally ill concur with Pavlov's findings with his dogs. In Sargant's frame of reference, thus, man can have his conditioned reflexes, for example, his beliefs, changed in due time, if the proper mechanics are applied.²⁶

Sargant notes that:

Pavlov found that when the higher nervous system of animals was intolerably strained by various kinds of applied stress, of greater or lesser power, transmarginal inhibition of one kind or another (with its accompanying equivalent, paradoxical and ultraparadoxical phases) finally

²⁴ W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 27-28, and on p. 48. "The tendency of physical debilitation to hasten a breakdown under imposed stresses had been noted by Pavlov in his dogs; and the same phenomenon was observed again and again in our patients. Those with previously stable temperaments could often be distinguished from the unstable types by noting whether or not they had lost weight before first reporting sick. [...] The most stable types might collapse only after a loss of thirty pounds in weight, caused by lack of nourishing food, lack of sleep, and similar debilitating factors characteristic of wartime. But patients who reported similar symptoms without any loss of weight, and had therefore put up less fight, were likely to be chronically neurotic types, unlikely to respond to any routine treatment."

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 20, 37, 53, 215.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 49. "Once a state of hysteria has been induced in men or dogs by mounting stresses which the brain can no longer tolerate, protective inhibition is likely to supervene. This will disturb the individual's ordinary conditioned behaviour patterns. In human beings, states of greatly increased suggestibility are also found; and so are their opposite, namely, states in which the patient is deaf to all suggestions, however sensible."

supervened in all temperamental types. In the stronger types this might happen only after a long period of great and sometimes uncontrolled excitement; while in the weak inhibitory it might happen very quickly. It seems, therefore, that there are common final paths which all individual animals, though their initial temperamental responses to imposed stresses vary greatly, must finally take, if only stresses are continued long enough.²⁷

Sargant states, however, that one's temperament cannot be changed, that is, if one be of weak type, a change of beliefs does not alter one's temperament. Before as after, one remains either a weak or a strong type. Sargant notes this in connection with attempts to have patients abreact certain experiences:

Again I must stress that we did not and could not use this method to make a new stable personality out of somebody lacking previous qualities of stamina, drive, stability, or powers of resistance to ordinary stress. We did, however, seem able to restore the status quo, though still modified by a persisting sensitization to the overwhelming experience which had caused the breakdown. You cannot I must repeatedly emphasize, ever make a silk purse out of a sow's ear by so simple a technique.²⁸

Another important hypothesis verified in Pavlov's experiments is Sargant's discovery that one's vulnerability to the conditioning process depends upon one's degree of

²⁷ W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 204, and on p. 139. "Finney's advice that the revivalist preacher should find the point on which 'the mind is trembling alive', stresses again the importance of the reported observation that every dog (and therefore probably every man) has a weakness or sensitivity of the brain which can be exploited once it is discovered."

²⁸ Id., The Mind Possessed, p. 10.

suggestibility.²⁹ The normal healthy extravert who is naturally more suggestible is the one most liable to excessive conditioning and most in danger of being "brain-washed"; i.e., of experiencing a reversal of his beliefs.³⁰ The obsessional neurotic, because he is usually unsuggestible cannot have his beliefs altered,³¹ while the person with

29 W. Sargant, "Conversion", p. 316, admits that: "The most 'normal' persons--using our present concepts of normality--are generally those who condition smoothly and correctly to the changing habits and beliefs around them. Others who do so with difficulty, or are constitutionally unstable in a variety of ways, are more difficult to change or stabilize in later life."; The Mind Possessed, p. 31, and on p. 195. "Suggestibility is, in fact, one of the essential characteristics of being 'normal'."

30 Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 70. "Among the readiest victims of brain-washing or religious conversion may be the simple, healthy extravert." P. 74. "Meanwhile, their methods are much more successful with the healthy-minded majority." See also The Mind Possessed, p. 31. "It is not the mentally ill but ordinary normal people who are most susceptible to 'brainwashing', 'conversion', 'possession', 'the crisis', or whatever you wish to call it, and who in their hundreds or thousands or millions fall readily under the spell of the demagogue or the revivalist, the witch-doctor or the pop group, the priest or the psychiatrist, or even in less extreme ways the propagandist or the advertiser. At the root of this all too common human experience is a state of heightened suggestibility, of openness to ideas and exhortations, which is characteristic of subjects under hypnosis."

31 Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 73. "Obsessional neurotics are also inclined to be excessively careful of their appearance and the tidiness of their houses, to wash their hands unnecessarily often and to be meticulously rigid in their brain patterns, [...] He is, however, likely to plague his spiritual adviser with minor worries and compulsive religious doubts which he cannot dispel. The obsessional neurotic is usually unsuggestible, and the despair of the psychotherapist or stage hypnotist." P. 75. "The stronger the obsessional tendency for instance, the less amenable will

"deficient powers of adaptation and excessive rigidity in behaviour or thought" is most in danger of breaking down and becoming mentally ill.³²

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

While Sargant claims that "man cannot and should not try to exist without some form of religion",³³ it is an arduous task to pick out what he means by religion. All we can discover is that religiousness, for him, depends upon one's "inherited temperament" and the "conditioned behavior patterns" built up to adapt to one's environment.³⁴ Moreover, it would seem that religiousness begins when an individual "awakens" to the knowledge of being in a "miserable condition by nature" (which induces guilt and/or the conviction of sin) and to "the danger of perishing eternally", and thus develops the desire to save oneself.³⁵ Sargant speaks for a "religion of experience", by means of which you

the subject be found to some of the ordinary techniques of conversions; the only hope is to break him down by debilitation and prolonged psychological and physiological measures to increase suggestibility."

32 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 69.

33 Ibid., p. 214, where he writes: "But let us add, that although it is quite possible to indoctrinate people with ideas based on an out-of-date economic or historical tradition, or even on deliberate lies, and keep them fixed in these beliefs, a nation's health and efficiency depends on a close relation between social practice and religious belief."

34 Ibid., p. 79.

35 Ibid., pp. 132, 86.

"know"³⁶ that you are saved or not saved.

Consequently, in Sargant's system, faith is "essentially non-rational"³⁷ since it emanates from a "brain-explosion" leading to "the point of collapse".³⁸ Man is therefore religious because of "faith-creating techniques"³⁹ imposed on him by others and this explains why religion usually has the quality of exteriority and is grounded in "increasing maturity and experience"⁴⁰ only rarely. These techniques include the "softening-up process"⁴¹ which results in "wiping the 'cortical slate' clean"⁴² by means of an assault upon the emotions inflicted upon a normal suggestible individual. Indeed, Sargant insists that just as in the cure for certain neuroses all that is needed is "a sufficiently powerful state of emotion about almost anything", so, the technique of "saving" people at revival meetings "follows the same pattern and depends on the same

36 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 114-15.

37 Id., The Mind Possessed, p. 84.

38 Ibid., p. 130.

39 Ibid., p. 194.

40 Id., "Conversion", p. 311.

41 Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 96. In this instance, Sargant is referring to the use of drums, dance, and snake handling. See also p. 132.

42 Id., "Conversion", p. 315; See also: Battle for the Mind, p. 87; The Mind Possessed, p. 184; The Unquiet Mind, p. 135.

brain mechanisms".⁴³

This no doubt explains why Sargant turns to Wesley's ministerial accounts because his preaching incorporates, so Sargant believes, an approach that has results and gives proof that God is not dead.⁴⁴ But who is God? God is one who appears in powerful tumults,⁴⁵ whom one is induced to fear and yet to cry to for salvation. Sargant's conclusion that religious conversion is having your beliefs turned inside out in a religious context⁴⁶ follows upon his comparison of the common elements found in the conversion experiences of many religions.⁴⁷ Sargant ultimately

43 W. Sargant, The Mind Possessed, p. 194.

44 Ibid., p. 150. "For success religions--those which really grip people's hearts--are those which procure evidence of the actual existence of their gods. The Christian religion, in most of its official forms, rarely now demonstrates the power of its God, and to most worshippers our Christian saints are indeed very dead."

45 See Sargant's Battle for the Mind, pp. 82-83, where he relates that in the eighteenth century the intellect was considered "more important than the emotions, when habits of thought and behaviour needed to be dictated. Wesley's great success was due to his finding that such habits were most easily implanted or eradicated by a tremendous assault on the emotions."

46 In his article "Conversion", p. 311, Sargant asks: "How are people induced to believe what may even be the opposite of the ascertainable facts?" And in the latter one, "Faith", p. 510, he refers to conversions as the acquiring of "new faiths, new beliefs, and totally new outlooks."

47 Sargant's The Mind Possessed, is almost wholly the result of this interest. He compares experiences of faith-healing, mysticism, and possession, (experiences which he closely associates with conversion) in the Near East, in Brazil, in the West Indies, in the United States, and in Europe.

believes that man creates his own gods in his own image.⁴⁸

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

Sargant's view of man is founded upon a fundamental law whereby living substances react in a twofold manner to their environment by means of unconditioned and/or conditioned reflexes. The method he employs to observe, to condition or to disrupt these reflexes is largely Pavlovian. It is an objective psychology relying exclusively on external physiological techniques. Psychoanalytical or other talking-cures⁴⁹ which proceed by participant-observation to reasoned argumentation and dialogue are alien to such a method since the goal is not so much to observe in order to

48 W. Sargant, The Mind Possessed, p. 198.

49 Id., Battle for the Mind, pp. 19-20, 64-68. Though psycho-analysis also works by means of persuasive techniques as seen in the transference phenomenon, Sargant believes it to be much less effective than his own crude mechanics (p. 19). On p. 66, he writes: "A patient under psycho-analytical treatment, for instance, is made to lie on a couch, where daily for months, and perhaps years, he is encouraged to indulge in 'free association of ideas'. He may also then be asked: 'What does "umbrella" mean to you?'--'Uncle Toby'. 'What does "apple" mean to you?'--'The girl next door'." P. 68. Sargant is of the opinion that "even intensive psycho-analysis may achieve very little in such severe psychiatric disturbances as schizophrenia and depressive melancholia, and can be almost equally ineffective in certain settled states of chronic anxiety and obsession."

understand the person, as to observe in order to control the techniques involved. Obviously, the milieu control is of the essence in a method which is literally a struggle for the mind of man, a battle to be won "by whoever becomes most conversant with the normal and abnormal functions of the brain".⁵⁰ The method therefore rests on the assumption that "every dog (and therefore probably every man) has a weakness or sensitivity of the brain which can be exploited once it is discovered."⁵¹

As the fundamental problem is to discover "how people can be switched to arbitrary beliefs altogether opposed to those previously held",⁵² and the solution is to increase suggestibility in the subject, Sargant proposes to show that certain basic techniques are common to the methods underlying such previously unrelated fields as those of psychotherapy, religious conversion and brain-washing.⁵³

50 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 20.

51 Ibid., pp. 139. See also p. 32.

52 Ibid., pp. 20, 32, 34, 74.

53 Id., "Conversion", p. 311; Battle for the Mind, p. 13. "Politicians, Priests and psychiatrists often face the same problem: how to find the most rapid and permanent means of changing a man's beliefs." On pp. 16-17, he writes that "it was the use of drugs in psychotherapy that first prompted the present study of Pavlov's experimental methods of changing the behaviour patterns in animals, and the mechanics behind historical techniques of human indoctrination, religious conversion, brain-washing, and the like." See also The Unquiet Mind, p. 118.

(In so doing, he legitimates his method on three fronts.⁵⁴)
The success of these techniques depends upon their effectiveness in changing behaviour patterns.

The principal ones Sargant uses are those of nervous excitement brought on by the imposition of an emotional overload, physical debilitation, and the use of drugs, electric convulsion therapy, and abreaction⁵⁵ whenever necessary to hasten the surrender to the conditioning process; at this point the subject easily undergoes a shift in his usual way of thinking and doing.⁵⁶ Sargant's method is essentially that of conditioning, breakdown, conversion, and the implanting of new attitudes, beliefs and convictions.

54 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 62. "It is hoped to show that there are remarkable basic similarities between, first, the behaviour of many neurotic patients during and after abreaction; next, the behaviour of ordinary people subjected to fear-provoking sermons by a powerful preacher; and lastly, the behaviour of political suspects in police stations and prisons where confessions are elicited and habits of 'right thinking' implanted."

55 Sargant delights in enumerating a variety of drugs and techniques with which he experimented in order to provoke suggestibility to new beliefs and attitudes. With the severe neurotic particularly, he had recourse to drugs, electric convulsion therapy and abreaction in order to render them vulnerable to suggestion. In The Unquiet Mind, he chiefly describes his discoveries in this area. See also Battle for the Mind, pp. 64-78.

56 This is one of the major discoveries Pavlov made in his experiments on dogs. When he submitted them to intolerable stress, they went into a state of transmarginal inhibition at which point they became very malleable.

ii) Data-Gathering

One will not find relevant statistics on religious conversions in Sargant's works; his theory of conversion is largely intuitive and analogical and stems mostly from his clinical experiences with the mentally-ill, particularly Second World War victims of neuroses.

In addition, Sargant examined John Wesley's accounts of his preaching and ministry and deemed that Wesley had conducted an abreactive type of preaching which resulted in many conversions. He was prompted to try to verify this with first-hand observations of religious experiences in the course of trips in the United States and elsewhere,⁵⁷ during which he collected many photographs depicting religious meetings.⁵⁸

Sargant also imitates James in quoting from a variety of sources, in this case, historians, evangelists (Wesley, in particular), biographers, and psychotherapists.⁵⁹

57 While in the United States in 1947-48, Sargant attended revival services in Durham, Cincinnati, Tennessee, Clay County, Kentucky, Los Angeles, and New York. See The Unquiet Mind, pp. 133-39, and The Mind Possessed, pp. 182-93.

58 Though Sargant was at times permitted to take photographs at these meetings, the illustrations between pp. 114-15 in Battle for the Mind are not his own. However, those between pp. 182-93 in The Mind Possessed are his.

59 In the Battle for the Mind, Sargant quotes James four times and Leuba once (as quoted by James). See p. 126. In The Mind Possessed, he quotes Starbuck once. See p. 82. Some of Sargant's examples come from such diverse sources

But, unlike James and our other theoreticians, Sargant does not appear to be very familiar with the literature specifically on the psychology of religious conversion.⁶⁰

His more recent works do not contain much new research data on religious conversion. They simply extend the application of his theory of conversion to instances of religious conversion and mysticism in religions other than Christianity. This is clearly indicated in Battle for the Mind, and is strongly reinforced through some additional data in The Mind Possessed.⁶¹

iii) Presentation of the Theory

Sargant's theory appears to be systematically developed. First, he presents the findings of Pavlov with his dogs. Then he adds his own application of these discoveries (as well as the innovative use of drugs, shock treatments and leucotomy) in his treatment of battle-neuroses and the mentally-ill in general. He then proceeds

as the following: Aldous Huxley, John Knox, St. Ignatius Loyola, C. G. Finney, Billy Graham, and the Acts of the Apostles.

⁶⁰ Obviously, Sargant relies more heavily upon Pavlov, Wesley, and the Chinese brain-washers, than upon the previous research done in the field.

⁶¹ To this end, his research trips around the world prove that his theory is equally applicable to the Voodoo religion in Haiti, to Macumba, in Brazil, as to the primitive religions in Africa, to name but a few.

by analogy to elaborate on the techniques of religious conversion and their application. This is followed by a discussion of brain-washing in religion and politics and the eliciting of confessions. Finally, he enlarges upon further techniques either to consolidate or to prevent religious conversion.

Sargant's works are sensational, a fact reinforced by the inclusion of striking photographs.⁶² He claims

Battle for the Mind

correctly anticipated the recently ever-increasing interest in matters mystical and how life can be given--if so desired--a more philosophical and less materialistic purpose.⁶³

The boldness of his works does indeed stand out.

c) The Content

Because of the external (behavioural) nature of his approach and method Sargant does not deal with the gradual, inner conversion usually associated with an ever-increasing maturity. His whole concern is with the sudden type of conversion⁶⁴ brought about by circumstantial stress on a

⁶² See Sargant's Battle for the Mind and The Mind Possessed for these truly authentic pictures of personal religious experience.

⁶³ Id., The Mind Possessed, p. xi.

⁶⁴ Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 87, writes that Wesley on re-reading his New Testament after his own conversion found "that the effective conversions reported in it had, in fact, been sudden ones".

vulnerable subject, i.e., "the simple, healthy extravert", "the healthy-minded", "the more ordinary and suggestible majority".⁶⁵

Sargant indicates that a sudden reversal of attitudes is common and fundamental to each of the processes inherent in psychotherapy, brain-washing and religious conversion, a point he supports with a case from two psychotherapists, Grinker and Spiegel, and one from the Journal of John Wesley. He points out, however, a dissimilarity in the interpretation of the phenomena, e.g., while the psychotherapists attribute their patients' cures to their theory, Wesley attributes his listeners' conversions to the Holy Ghost.⁶⁶

But Sargant suggests that religious leaders have always resorted to well-known techniques to guide their subjects into conversion and he enumerates some of these.

Fasting, chastening of the flesh by scourging and physical discomfort, regulation of breathing, disclosing of awesome mysteries, drumming, dancing, singing, inducement of panic fear, weird or glorious lighting, incense, intoxicant drugs--these are only some of the many methods used to modify normal brain functions for religious purposes. Some sects pay more attention than others to a direct stirring of emotions as a means of affecting the higher nervous system; but few wholly neglect it.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 70, 74, 78.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 81.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 79.

Sargant believes that the mechanistic techniques of his theory are founded on the knowledge that behaviour changes in individuals ultimately depend upon temperament and milieu control. It is therefore imperative to capture a person's attention, to induce nervous stress either through feelings of anger or anxiety, by impairing judgment, or by means of physical debilitation, in order to increase suggestibility.⁶⁸ Indeed, the need for increased suggestibility--and thereby vulnerability--underlies all such physiological processes of change whether in psychotherapy, in brain-washing, or in religion.

Eventually, when the tension is removed and suggestibility decreased, the ideas or convictions implanted during the time of emotional stress may remain. But, according to Sargant, if the stress is prolonged one step further, any of the following may happen: the recently acquired patterns may be ruptured and replaced by new ones; patterns previously suppressed may be released; patterns may be contradicted; or former patterns may suffer no disruption if the individual is of unsuggestible temperament.⁶⁹

Sargant believes that it is because of Wesley's own conversion (following his acceptance that faith is the primary vehicle for salvation rather than works), that the

68 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 79-80.

69 Ibid.

latter is able to evoke a tremendous response in his listeners.⁷⁰ Wesley's brother Charles is soon converted to the same belief, becomes his ally, and composes many hymns "addressed to the religious emotions rather than the intelligence".⁷¹ It is not long, according to Sargant, before Wesley realizes that he has discovered "an extremely effective technique of conversion", which consists in creating "high emotional tension in his potential converts".⁷² This Wesleyan technique, Sargant believes, consists in convincing the hearers that to lack salvation is to be condemned to everlasting hellfire, a message which is translated into a fear of imminent death much the same as the Leningrad flood caused in Pavlov's dogs.⁷³ Thus, Sargant finds Wesley successful at bringing people to an acute emotional state by means of a technique inducing fear and/or conviction of sin. He particularly notes Wesley's accounts of people who "dropped on every side as thunderstruck" while others cried aloud.⁷⁴

Sargant explains that the conditioned behaviour patterns of these converts are obviously reversed and the

70 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 83.

71 Ibid., p. 84.

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid., p. 85.

cortical slate cleaned suddenly and dramatically.⁷⁵ He also emphasizes that the emotions aroused in such instances, need not even be directly related to the new belief as long as they are sufficiently disruptive.⁷⁶

According to Sargant, sudden conversion and mystical experiences do not always issue from religious beliefs. In fact, he maintains that they can be induced by such chemicals as mescaline, ether and laughing gas.⁷⁷ Moreover, a wide range of physiological stimuli also lead to high emotional stress:

It should be more widely known that electrical recordings of the human brain show that it is particularly sensitive to rhythmic stimulation by percussion and bright light among other things and certain rates of rhythm can build up recordable abnormalities of brain function and explosive states

75 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 87; The Mind Possessed, p. 9. Sargant refers to Pavlov's excitement when he discovered that after the frightening experience of the Leningrad flood, the dogs who had experienced a collapse had lost their conditioned reflexes. "It was as if the recently printed brain-slate had been suddenly wiped clean, and Pavlov was able to imprint on it new conditioned patterns of behavior."

76 Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 89. This is an application of the discovery that in abreaction the emotional arousal need not pertain to the patient's experience. In The Unquiet Mind, p. 113, Sargant writes: "What surprised us was finding that an implanted suggestion might sometimes produce a greater emotional discharge and be even more effective than the memory of the real event; and that we should, if possible not lessen the emotional stress, but heighten it to exhaustion point."

77 Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 91; The Unquiet Mind, pp. 107-8. "Ether produced far greater excitement in the patient, and we found that the intenseness of emotion was more important in a cure than a recovery of the experience itself." See also The Mind Possessed, p. 9.

of tension sufficient even to produce convulsive fits in predisposed subjects. Some people can be persuaded to dance in time with such rhythms until they collapse in exhaustion. Furthermore, it is easier to disorganize the normal function of the brain by attacking it simultaneously with several strong rhythms played in different tempos. This leads on to protective inhibition either rapidly in the weak inhibitory temperament or after a prolonged period of excitement in the strong excitatory one.⁷⁸

A number of examples are cited to confirm these findings: initiation rites such as those reported by James Fraser;⁷⁹ the methods of the Quakers;⁸⁰ and phenomena of traditional Christianity. Sargant mentions two pivotal events from the beginnings of Christianity (both of which are reported in the Acts of the Apostles), i.e., Peter's sermon on Pentecost and Paul's conversion on the Damascus road.

Sargant argues that it is the effectiveness of Peter's preaching which leads to glossolalia, and creates the needed emotional response from the crowd; ultimately, Peter's preaching results in having three thousand Jews baptised in one day.⁸¹

78 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 92; "Conversion", pp. 315-16; "Faith", p. 510.

79 Id., Battle for the Mind, pp. 98-99.

80 Ibid., p. 101.

81 Ibid., pp. 104-5; The Mind Possessed, p. 63. "The gift of tongues is still present and observable in various religious movements. All cases, when carefully examined, seem to be typical hysterical and dissociative phenomena, and there is really nothing to suggest that the

Paul's conversion on the Damascus road is no less striking, and of no less consequence; arrested there, he responds to the voice and humbly asks what he is to do.

Sargant suggests that:-

A state of transmarginal inhibition seems to have followed his acute stage of nervous excitement. Total collapse, hallucinations and an increased state of suggestibility appear to have supervened.⁸²

Following this momentous episode on the road, Paul spends three days fasting in Damascus. According to Sargant, this debilitates Paul and serves to augment his emotional state and his suggestibility. Only after these three days does Ananias relieve Paul by baptizing him. A period of indoctrination then follows.⁸³

Sargant is of the opinion that the examples of Peter and Paul from the very beginnings of Christianity are prototypes of the striking results that physiological techniques obtain in the reversal of beliefs. He reiterates his conviction that reaction to stress is physiologically determined and that physiological procedures can most effectively rid

early Christian speaking in tongues was anything different."

⁸² W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 106; The Mind Possessed, p. 63. "St. Paul himself, however, had experienced a severe attack of dissociative mental collapse on the road to Damascus, in which he had been converted to Christianity and had suddenly and uncritically embraced beliefs which he had previously been busy attacking."

⁸³ Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 105. The author is quick to add "that anger may be no less powerful an emotion than fear in bringing about sudden conversion to beliefs which exactly contradict beliefs previously held."

"ordinary brains of previous patterns of behaviour and thought".⁸⁴ Moreover, he observes that

in abnormal persons and in the overmeticulous, particularly violent treatments may be needed if firmly fixed delusions and obsessional habits are really to be changed at all.⁸⁵

Sargant is not unaware of the dangerous consequences of such techniques in those suffering from schizophrenia or depressive melancholia.⁸⁶ He is also acquainted with the aftermath of such procedures throughout the history of the Christian Church. Along this line, he examines such typical instances as the vivid accounts of the horrible deaths of the early Christians,⁸⁷ the missions of the Crusaders,⁸⁸ and

84 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 108.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid., pp. 110-14. On p. 111 he notes: "It is also important to note in other types of nervous illness, such as anxiety states or obsessional neuroses, that this same powerful treatment can make patients worse rather than better."

87 Ibid., pp. 116-17. The author cites P. F. Kirby: "The palace of the Escorial in Spain is laid out in the form of a gridiron, because the convent was built in consequence of a vow to St. Lawrence, who was broiled to death like a barbecued pig."

88 Ibid., p. 116. Quoting the Rev. George Salmon, Sargant writes: "The Roman Catholic Church has nothing to learn from anything which the most enthusiastic sects of Protestants have invented. The most violent and extensive religious excitement that history recalls took place in one of the darkest periods of the Church's history. I mean that which led to the Crusades; when millions of Christians believing what they exclaimed--'it is the will of God'--deserted their homes only to perish in heaps in a foreign land."

the dancing mania of the Middle Ages.⁸⁹

A more recent gripping example Sargant reviews is that of Hitler's power to convert the German people to the Nazi faith. Sargant believes this faith was promoted by

meetings where rhythmic chanting, torchlight processions, and the like, could arouse them to states of hysterical suggestibility even before he rose to speak, so it was with the Flagellants, who anticipated his anti-Semitic fury. In Mainz alone, twelve thousand Jews were killed or committed suicide; the arrival of a procession of Flagellants would often be the signal for a massacre.⁹⁰

In these and other examples of brain-washing in religion Sargant indicates that people are converted "after brain function has been sufficiently disturbed by accidentally or deliberately induced fear, anger or excitement",⁹¹ which conjures up temporary impairment of judgment and heightened suggestibility. To this purpose, Sargant speaks about the building up in the individual of

⁸⁹ W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 118-20. This Dance of St. John or St. Vitus, as it was called, occurred in Europe during the fourteenth century.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 121. See also p. 142. "It is still considered a mystery how Hitler persuaded many intelligent people in Germany to regard him as little short of a god; yet Hitler never concealed his method, which included deliberately producing such phenomena by organized excitement and mass hypnotism, and even boasted how easy it was to impose 'the lie of genius' on his victims." See also The Mind Possessed, pp. 116, 161, 195.

⁹¹ Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 128. In "Faith", p. 510, Sargant clearly enunciates two ways of inducing conversion: overexcitement of the emotions and sensory deprivation.

anxiety, of a sense of real or imaginary guilt, and of a conflict of loyalties, strong and prolonged enough to bring about the desired collapse.⁹²

Following upon this state, the phases of equivalent, paradoxical and ultra-paradoxical processes of abnormal brain functioning lead to the reversal of normal patterns of behaviour.

Sargant claims that Jonathan Edwards⁹³ and Charles G. Finney⁹⁴ both made use of such physiological techniques in their revival work. He also discerns them in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius.⁹⁵

As previously mentioned, Sargant sees identical techniques as his effective for brain-washing. He notes that in a special training course set up by Soviet scientists, he discovers phases of conditioning resting upon a forced milieu. Some of these techniques consist in the imposition of prolonged isolation from friends and family, of great physical and mental fatigue, of constant tension, of uncertainty, and of vicious language. Besides, the whole ordeal is coloured

92 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 130.

93 Ibid., pp. 130-34. According to Sargant, Edwards described very well such phases of conversion as "the awakening", "the softening-up phase". He also knew how to induce guilt in his listeners.

94 Ibid., pp. 134-39. He notes that Finney was aware the preacher should not relax the pressure on a willing listener, and that he should discover the sensitive areas where "the mind is trembling alive".

95 Ibid., pp. 140-41.

by a tone of seriousness.⁹⁶

According to Sargant's intuitions, conversion also encompasses a phase of consolidation which is a practical program to reinforce the process.⁹⁷ Indeed, follow-up conditioning is imperative.⁹⁸ Sargant does not believe that Billy Graham's evangelism will reap the success Wesley's did for the simple reason that Dr. Graham does not seem to have an efficient follow-up program.⁹⁹

Sargant admits that more research is needed to discover appropriate means for the conversion of those whose temperaments are resistant to the conditioning process. He is well aware that, while the usual mechanistic procedures are effective with normal healthy extraverts, as well as

⁹⁶ W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 148-49. Sargant states that "Soviet psychologists have held that, given the proper conditioning, the human being could be turned into the ideal new Soviet man. Pavlovian psychology holds that the human physique cannot resist the conditioning, and Soviet scientists have since been attempting to perfect Pavlovian techniques so that any focus of resistance in the individual can be overcome."

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 200.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 201. See "Conversion", p. 136, for a detailed description of Wesley's follow-up method.

⁹⁹ Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 127. However that may be, Sargant does not minimize Dr. Graham's effectiveness as a preacher. Although he does not flay his hearers with threats of hellfire, he is able to stir emotion. Sargant quotes him: "The greatest sin in America is our disregard for God...God may allow Russia to destroy America. ... When I see a beautiful city such as New York, I also have a vision of crumbling buildings and dust. I keep having this feeling that God will allow something to fall on us in a way I don't anticipate unless we return to him."

with tense and anxious people, these same techniques are inadequate with obsessed, intraverted and psychopathic temperaments.¹⁰⁰

In fact, there is an efficient way even for the normal healthy extraverts to avoid conversion by the conditioning process: it is "not to co-operate with the experimenter",¹⁰¹ to refuse to face the problem presented.

Sargant states:

Human beings, like dogs, do not break down if they simply refuse to face a problem or task presented to them, or take evasive action before giving it a chance to upset their emotional equilibrium. Whoever refuses to co-operate in any technique of conversion or brain-washing and, instead of paying attention to the interrogator or preacher, manages to concentrate mentally on some quite different problem, should last out the longest.¹⁰²

The best safeguard against the conditioning process of anyone, whether priest, politician or psychotherapist, is a "burning and obsessive belief in some other creed or way of life".¹⁰³ For, in essence, it is Sargant's conviction that any person who is roused to fear, anger or a fighting mood by a preacher becomes easy bait for his creed. Anger is as "potent a means of increasing suggestibility as fear

100 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 202.

101 Ibid., p. 206.

102 Ibid., p. 207.

103 Ibid., p. 209.

and guilt".¹⁰⁴

2. The Evaluation of the Theory

Sargant has raised a new issue in the study of conversion, namely that the process of conversion is the same whether the contextual ground is psychotherapeutic, religious or political. The extent to which this insight directs his theorizing will be disclosed in modeling his theory.

a) The Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

It is imperative to remember that Sargant's understanding of man is principally derived from Pavlov's findings with his dogs. He thus presents man as being basically and exclusively the subject of conditioning forces whose efficiency varies in degree only according to the individual's basic constitution or temperament.

The temperaments are situated along a passive-aggressive range, varying from the melancholic through the phlegmatic and the sanguine, to the choleric. The extreme temperaments of this range are most vulnerable to stress and to breakdown, while the central ones are very strong temperaments able to withstand much stress without giving in to

¹⁰⁴ W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 210. Paul's conversion is a case in point.

hysteria unless more extensive measures are taken to confuse and/or debilitate them.¹⁰⁵ When hysteria supervenes, it also follows a certain trajectory proceeding from the equivalent, through the paradoxical, to the ultraparadoxical phase of transmarginal inhibition, at which point the subject experiences a reversal of his behaviour or beliefs (according to the law of induction).

Sargant presents nothing but the crude mechanics of the brain and nervous system.¹⁰⁶ His obvious uneasiness with the tenets of psychoanalysis probably reinforces his eagerness to adopt this restrictive theory of man.¹⁰⁷ We maintain that this view of man is partial at best.¹⁰⁸ Dogs

105 G. W. Allport, Pattern and Growth in Personality, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961, p. 191, reports that an intense and simultaneous imposition of debility, dependency and dread (the "DDD theory") will sooner or later break down all resistances to the suggestions of the operator.

106 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, p. 31, indicates that Sargant's working diagram of man proceeds from a "onesided emphasis on brain mechanics" from which he draws sweeping conclusions concerning the whole of man. See also D. M. Lloyd Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual, p. 10, where he states that the thesis of the whole book deals with the normal and abnormal functions of the brain.

107 L. I. Granberg, "Some Issues in the Psychology of Christian Conversion", p. 21, notes that Sargant "does not seem to consider, for instance, the long incubation period which ordinarily precedes conversions. I. Skottowe, Book Review: The Unquiet Mind, The British Journal of Psychiatry, 1968, p. 247 (hereafter cited as "Book Review"), notices the same tendency in Sargant's autobiographical book. He notes "the impression of condemnation and intolerance of psychodynamic theory, and the somewhat tenuous and seemingly almost exclusive adoption of Pavlovian principles in their stead".

108 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, p. 88. While referring to Sargant's mechanistic view of man, he states

cannot discuss their problems and Sargant seems to forget that he himself speaks with his patients.¹⁰⁹ Engrossed as he is with the physiological dimension of personality, Sargant entirely neglects its specifically human aspects. There is no reference to man's spiritual nature, his symbolic system and his need for meaning, nor to his powers of awareness, experiencing and reflection. There is no discussion of personal freedom, values, decision, intellectual convictions or beliefs, nor of the need for actualization and self-transcendence. Neither is there any understanding or presentation of man's capacity for and need of feelings.¹¹⁰ Sargant in essence spells out a theory of personality in

that such an approach "decides beforehand to ignore certain facts, or to explain them away as unimportant or illusory". R. M. Boyer, Sudden Human Change, p. 4, implies that many studies of conversion focus on a peripheral type of change "while conversion goes to the very core of one's beliefs and attitude system".

109 The treatment of abreaction, for instance, suggests that the psychiatrist helps his patient relive a particular situation. See W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 57-61.

110 Several authors note the lack of discussion of these important dimensions of a theory of personality. See D. M. Lloyd Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual, pp. 13-14; I. Skottowe, "Book Review", p. 248; R. Bastide, "Recension: Physiologie de la conversion religieuse", Archives de sociologie des religions, 25, 1968, p. 225 (hereafter cited as: "Recension"), "Le chien réagit à des signes, l'homme à des symboles. C'est certainement le plus important apport de l'anthropologie, qu'elle soit culturelle ou sociale, que d'avoir défini l'homme par son activité symbolique, c'est à dire sa capacité d'ajouter au monde des stimuli un monde de signification." I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, p. 25.

which man is but his brain, whose data can be computed anew under appropriate conditions, so only the emotions can figure in such a strong naturalistic or physicalistic system.

As a result, we are given a truncated view of man which could be called "manipulated man", easily conditioned, eminently vulnerable to stress, neurotic breakdown and milieu control (unless he happens to be severely neurotic, or psychotic). This is but one extreme of a continuum. At its other end is man as specifically free, whose most human characteristic is to be always conscious of something or someone other than self. Such a view, in which man is self-transcendent, capable of symbolic meaning, always accountable for his attitudes, his meanings, his values, and his encounters is lacking in Sargant's theory.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious

Since Sargant's theory of man is exclusively physiological, an understanding of man as religious really can not figure in his theory except by inference or negatively. His limited view of the person does not authorize him to reflect upon or to touch the heart of religiousness. He believes that he has found the key which opens the "switch" faculty in man and that his clinical experience has proven that if you work on the emotions and nervous system long enough and well enough, you can make anyone believe whatsoever you wish. His conclusion that "there is no need

for there to be a god to do the healing"¹¹¹ is consistent with his view that faith is not a matter of decision. As he puts it:

There is no question of man choosing at all, when he can so readily be induced to adopt beliefs diametrically opposed to those he previously held, due to the creation by emotional arousal of paradoxical and ultraparadoxical phases of brain activity.¹¹²

Sargant's view of the message and the evangelizing mission of the revivalists is further evidence that he ignores the religious dimension. Because he molds religion into a Pavlovian framework, faith and/or conversion do indeed appear non-rational:

Faith is a profound and non-rational conviction of the truth of propositions to which the unaided intellect can at best accord only a temperate allegiance. The recognition of this fact explains the Christian emphasis on divine grace, the contribution which God makes to the conversion process, the gift of faith which seems to come from a source outside the believer because it does not come from his normal conscious, reasoning and critical self. And the converted find that the difficulty of explaining their acquisition of faith in plain language is insuperable.¹¹³

Religion, then, in Sargant's system, appears in strictly manipulative surroundings. Its manifestations are notoriously sudden, loud, and at times fearful, if not grotesque. Sargant dwells unduly upon what appears to him to be the terrorizing fact of hellfire preaching in Christianity

¹¹¹ W. Sargant, The Mind Possessed, p. 198.

¹¹² Ibid., p. 196.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 84.

(as he believes it to be present in Wesley's work). That religion is the result of "faith-creating techniques" is indeed his conclusion. Moreover, he claims that this type of religious experience is almost universal, crossing national and religious boundaries. It is unfortunate that he has not at any time been curious enough to inquire into the other type which he at least suspects exists: that type found along with increasing maturity and experience. Had he done so, he might have come up with wholly different arguments for discerning the marks of "a successful religion".¹¹⁴

b) The Method

i) The Psychological System

Sargant's theory consists solely in the capacity to manoeuvre conversion whether in religion, psychotherapy or politics. The method is essentially a process during which an individual is subjected to conditioning, crisis, breakdown, conversion, new indoctrination, i.e., is "switched to arbitrary beliefs altogether opposed to those previously held".¹¹⁵

Insofar as it is founded on the principle that what is true is what works, it is an applied functionalistic

¹¹⁴ W. Sargant, The Mind Possessed, p. 150.

¹¹⁵ Id., Battle for the Mind, p. 55.

method in the field of psychiatry. Sargant realizes the great risks involved in such a method in which the end justifies the means, but he sees no deterrent in using this coercive method as long as the manipulator is employing it for a good cause. But this method ignores man's ability to be inner-directed, i.e., to be decisive about any matter of ultimate importance. According to Ramage, Sargant also ignores the fact that the changes of brain activity caused by conditioning are as yet only matters of hypothesis.¹¹⁶

Sargant rejects the psychodynamic theory of Freud and formal psychotherapy, using only Pavlov's findings with his dogs as the major underpinnings of his theory. But, in order to justify the method of extrapolation of animal to human behavior, Adrian van Kaam maintains that

the principle of similarity in extrapolation must be built on an observable comparability between animal and human behavior.¹¹⁷

Moreover, animal experiments do not prove anything about human behavior, but they may serve as

a "pointing to" which enables the psychologist to focus on facets of human behavior which he would not have noticed without the aid of animal experimentation. Secondly, animal experiments may point to assumptions that the psychologist has not made explicit. And finally, animal experimentations may suggest a new principle of human behavior.¹¹⁸

116 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, p. 41.

117 A. Van Kaam, Existential Foundations of Psychology, p. 351.

118 Ibid., p. 362.

In our view, Sargant is taking a theory which is adequate for animals, and is applying it without any reservation to human behavior.¹¹⁹ Obviously, he does not take into account the fact that dogs can neither talk, make free associations, nor experience abreaction.

A further methodological limitation is that pointed out by Marq de Villiers that coercion is not the only conversion technique. There are also those of exhortation, therapy and realization.¹²⁰

ii) Data-Gathering

Sargant is the first to conduct a comparative examination of the conversion process as it applies to the fields of religion, politics and psychotherapy. In this sense, he proposes a new issue: the similarity of the conversion process along a sociopsychophysiological continuum.¹²¹ However, in this new perspective on an old problem, he does betray a lack of familiarity with previous theorization on the subject of religious conversion in particular, the only

119 A. Van Kaam, Existential Foundations of Psychology, p. 349.

120 M. de Villiers, "The Brainwashers: Implanting New Beliefs in Well-Scrubbed Minds", Weekend Magazine, March 27, 1976, p. 10.

121 J. R. Scroggs and W. G. T. Douglas, "Issues in the Psychology of Religious Conversion", p. 207. The authors argue that "few, with the exception of theological conservatives, have taken the trouble to try to refute this thesis in print."

previous psychological work in the field to be mentioned being that of William James.¹²² It is not surprising that Sargant's data led him to a very narrow view of religious conversion restricted to the conversion milieu, whether the deprived milieu or the suffocating one.¹²³

Sargant's method of gathering data has the merit of proceeding from first-hand observations of some cross-cultural forms of conversion. However, the unusual character of these experiences (as his photos demonstrate) makes them quite inapplicable to the majority of Anglo-Saxon Christians.¹²⁴

Sargant's theorizing is based only on these sparse real data and on inferences and intuitions drawn from personal experiences in psychotherapy or made on the basis of a few readings.

122 Though Sargant quotes from James, he bypasses entirely James's understanding of the process of religious conversion which, for James, is wholly an inner-directed process. Sargant refers to James to reinforce his own peripheral issues, such as mechanical equilibrium, and the power of emotions.

123 Both sensory deprivation and thought control interfere "with the variety and balance of environmental stimuli required for optimal psychological function". See R. J. Lifton, Thought Reform and the Psychology of Totalism. A Study of "Brainwashing" in China, New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1961, p. 452 (hereafter cited as Thought Reform).

124 See his pictures of a snake handling service in Tennessee, of Voodoo possession in Brazil, monkey possession in Bali, and African rhythmic drumming collapse in Battle for the Mind, between pp. 114-15.

iii) Presentation of the Theory

Sargant's theory is presented fairly methodically: he quotes and comments extensively on Pavlov's findings with his dogs which he then relates to his own innovative techniques in physiological psychiatry and to the so-called physiological techniques of John Wesley. We point out first that the findings on animals are given an exaggerated, privileged position in a theory that purports to apply to humans.

Moreover, generally speaking, we find Sargant's works very repetitious. The first relevant one, the article "Conversion", already contains the underpinnings of his theory, which are enlarged in Battle for the Mind, repeated in The Unquiet Mind and in The Mind Possessed, as well as in the article "Faith". Admittedly, this repetitiousness is offset by an enduring liveliness which betrays, according to Ian Skottowe, a deep personal commitment, if not a certain tendency to dogmatism, overeagerness and to sweeping statements.¹²⁵ D. M. Lloyd-Jones is of the opinion that Sargant "really answers his own case by proving too much."¹²⁶ Battle for the Mind has also been labelled as a "rather mixed-up sort of book" which raises "hackles as well as

¹²⁵ I. Skottowe, "Book Review", pp. 247-48. These comments apply to all of Sargant's works.

¹²⁶ D. M. Lloyd-Jones, Conversions: Psychological and Spiritual, p. 14.

eyebrows".¹²⁷

Finally, insofar as the religion depicted in word and in picture is applicable to a very distinct and narrow type of religiosity, (which is evidently not to be equated with that of the Judaeo-Christian tradition in general), we discern an overall lack of feeling for religion in general and for religious conversion in particular.

c) The Content

The nature of religious conversion in Sargant's model is a very particular type of experience which is sudden, dramatic, based upon the induction of guilt and fear and the overt manipulation of suggestibility. These lead to hysteria and breakdown and eventually free one from the suppression of what can be called an ego-constricting phase and lead to a reversed phase in which re-education predominates. Sargant refers to the first phase as that of the "switch". We could use Kurt Wolff's category and call the subsequent phase the "catch".¹²⁸

Let us re-examine the three major exemplars forming

127 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, p. 16, believes this is the reason "why so little has been published by way of Christian comment on Battle for the Mind, although it is a book that surely deserves such notice." See also L. I. Granberg, "Some Issues", p. 19.

128 K. H. Wolff, "Toward Understanding the Radicalness of Surrender", pp. 397-401.

the ground of Sargant's conversion-paradigm. The first is Pavlov's physiological techniques of conditioning and breakdown with his dogs and Sargant's equation of it to his own psychiatric techniques; the second is a method inferred from Wesley's preaching career, and the last is deduced from brain-washing.

The Pavlov-Sargant hypothesis, which is the primary exemplar in this model, is founded upon the method of extrapolation of animal to human behavior. We find three main arguments for the incongruency of applying this hypothesis in the instance of religious conversion: (1) Essentially, a dog exists solely at the physiological level of the brain and nervous system. Man also has a brain and nervous system but in addition he has the use of reason and imagination: mind, in a broad sense, by which we here designate his spiritual dimension. (2) A dog learns exclusively by responding to stimuli; man also learns this way but knows primarily by means of intentional-functional behavior. (3) Under extraordinary stress a dog will give in to breakdown; man may also experience breakdown under comparable stress but has the additional privilege of experiencing abreaction, paradoxical intention or conversion. We wish to indicate briefly how these inferences from dogs are not congruent when applied to specifically human categories.

Our first argument deals with the mind-brain problem, an issue with which Sargant is unwilling and possibly unable

to handle as a pure physiologist. He states that he is not concerned with "the mind in the broadest sense of the word" nor with "purely intellectual arguments", but rather with "the brain and nervous system, which man shares with the dog and other animals", with "brain mechanics", "mechanistic methods", and "physical or psychological stimuli",¹²⁹ and that it is his intention to demonstrate three comparable instances of conversion in man.

Sargant admits of some embarrassment at connecting Pavlov's experiments on dogs with his theory of conversion, yet believes that the comparison is justified.¹³⁰ A noted brain chemist's theory of the human brain clearly expresses a contrary belief. Robert S. de Ropp claims that three brains are combined in man's brain: the lowest is at about the level of a crocodile and can be considered an instinctive brain, the next one is not much above that of a horse and is an emotional brain, while the two much larger sections of the human brain are the seat of man's specifically human, i.e., spiritual dimension.¹³¹

Sargant could not reconcile such apparently irreconcilable faculties in man, so he chose to identify man's

129 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 9-10.

130 Id., The Unquiet Mind, p. 117.

131 R. S. de Ropp, "Drugs, Yoga, and Psychotransformism", in J. Needleman and D. Lewis, On the Way to Self Knowledge, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1976, p. 149 (hereafter cited as "Psychotransformism").

converting abilities with a narrow understanding of the brain and nervous system which obviously does not encompass man's spiritual dimension. It is this fact, so Ramage believes, that is "the most serious cause of the confusion" running through Battle for the Mind.¹³² Paradoxically, Sargant's three books treating of religious conversion all imply a direct involvement with the mind rather than with a narrow understanding of the brain and nervous system.

Our second argument concerns the two main avenues of behavior open to man and dog in a comparably controlled milieu. It is psychological fact that both man and dog respond according to temperament and learned reflexes. It is also psychological fact that man has the additional need and prerogative for intentional-functional behavior which raises his learning above the mere mechanical process nature provides for and looks after in the dog. The dog is locked at the "pleasure-pain dyad"¹³³ of instinctual life. Man is always essentially able to will his own meaning in any given situation and is indeed always responsible for his attitude. Frankl's observations about this human prerogative focus on the essence of intentional-functional behavior:

Social environment, hereditary endowment, and instinctual drives can limit the scope of man's freedom, but in themselves they can never totally blur the human capacity to take a stand toward all

132 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, pp. 21, 45.

133 R. S. de Ropp, "Psychotransformism", p. 152.

these conditions. [...] The conditions do not determine me, but I determine whether I yield to them or brave them. There is nothing conceivable that would condition a man wholly, i.e., without leaving to him the slightest freedom. Man is never fully conditioned in the sense of being determined by any facts or forces. [...] Instead of being fully conditioned by any conditions, he is constructing himself. [...] One of the main features of human existence is the capacity to emerge from and rise above all such conditions--to transcend them.¹³⁴

Therefore, man's response in any given situation, even in the totalist milieu of brain-washing, cannot be interpreted realistically without considering his will to meaning which allows for "the last of the human freedoms--to choose one's own attitude in any set of given circumstances".¹³⁵

Another way of presenting the divergent responses of man and dog and to account for observable behavioural data is the fact that the dog responds solely to signs or stimuli while man responds both to signs and to elaborate symbol systems. Consequently, the comparison of man's response with that of dog in a conditioning context is most incongruent.¹³⁶

Our third argument focuses on the issues of break-

¹³⁴ V. Frankl, Psychotherapy and Existentialism, (Selected Papers on Logotherapy), New York, Washington Square Press, Inc., 1967, pp. 60-61.

¹³⁵ Id., Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy, New York, Washington Square Press, Inc., 1963, p. 104.

¹³⁶ R. Bastide, "Recension", p. 225.

down and abreaction. Ramage, particularly, demonstrates this inconsistency in Sargant's work.

Breakdown, as it appears in dogs, is simply breakdown. It is the result of an intolerable collision of the excitatory and the inhibitory processes following unbearable stress due to an overpowering fear of (or anger towards) a hostile environment. It eventually causes debilitating symptoms, patterns of abnormal behavior, and ultimately, transmarginal inhibition, at which point, neurotic breakdown sets in. At this stage, Pavlov's dogs suffered a complete loss of their conditioned reflexes and had to be sedated and allowed to recover for some months depending on temperament and amount of debilitation. He was able to recondition them only after sufficient rest.¹³⁷

Similarly, many of Sargant's patients suffered from breakdown as a reaction to intolerable stress in a war situation, for instance. However, their breakdown is not simply breakdown as in the case of Pavlov's dogs. Sargant's patients repress the unbearableness of a particular meaningful situation to the level of the unconscious. This disturbing experience is buried alive, as it were, for it does not lose its terror. Such patients seem to forget what has happened to them but, in reality, meaning has been shifted to another level of awareness and is still dynamically active

137 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, pp. 47-67.

in the form of debilitating symptoms such as compulsive behaviour.

Sargant discovered that if he could encourage patients suffering from the results of repression (with the help of drugs, the reassurance of a doctor and the friendly environment of a hospital) to relive a violent emotional experience similar to the one having caused the breakdown in the first place, they subsequently recovered. Although the simulated experience, if successful, usually brought the patients to a point of collapse, it was only a temporary one and not another breakdown. It was, in fact, recovery from breakdown. These patients recovered because they were able to act out consciously the traumatic situation which had been repressed. The emotional stimulus given by Sargant served as a trigger to unleash all the repressed emotions of terror of the original experience.¹³⁸

Obviously, this is a very different experience from that lived by Pavlov's dogs. Sargant's patients do not simply experience the Pavlovian "stress-breakdown" syndrome. In fact, they experience a true abreaction which can be understood fully only in terms of psychodynamic theory. But since Sargant cannot interpret this phenomenon from the approach of depth psychology, we believe, as does Ramage, that Sargant's parallel of breakdown in Pavlov's dogs with

138 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, pp. 47-67.

abreaction in his own patients is not a comparable situation.¹³⁹

We conclude, therefore, that these three arguments confirm the incongruency of Sargant's inferential adoption of animal discoveries as applied to man, and that the Pavlov - Sargant hypothesis is a too hasty application of the method of extrapolation of animal to human behavior.

The second exemplar given a prominent position in Sargant's model is that of Wesley's preaching techniques, which according to Sargant, are physiological in nature and resemble the simple Pavlovian stress-breakdown pattern.

Duane Windemiller has made an analytical study of the dynamics of the conversions which characterized Wesley's revivals by examining the journals of eight converts born in the 1730-39 decade.¹⁴⁰ He notes first of all, a confrontation with the Methodist message (which often brought persecution from the family). This was followed by three detectable phases. The first, conviction of sin, denotes the awareness of sinfulness, of a lack of dependence on God, and of a need for support. This state initiates the phase of surrender or submission to the Lord. Thereupon, rebirth-- an experience of self totally different from one's previous

¹³⁹ We simply do not know what Pavlov's dogs experience because they can not tell us.

¹⁴⁰ D. Windemiller, Psycho-Dynamics of Change, pp. 48-100.

state of unworthiness--follows.

Unfortunately, Sargant misrepresents the dynamics of these conversions insofar as he infers merely the stress-breakdown sequence and suggests that Wesley's preaching produced effects strikingly similar to his own therapeutic abreactive techniques. He detects a fear-inducing technique in Wesley's work by way of hellfire preaching. Ramage makes it a point to demonstrate that Wesley delivered only one sermon on the question of hell and thousands on that of love.¹⁴¹ This makes Sargant's interpretation of a hellfire approach grossly unfounded. Sargant appears wholly unaware that Wesley's principal message was a call to believe in the goodness of the Lord, in spite of one's unworthiness, sinfulness and guilt, indeed because of them.¹⁴²

Moreover, the people who came to hear Wesley were

141 I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, p. 133, states that at least two psychiatrists (J. Frank and J. A. C. Brown) who recently accepted Sargant's view of Wesley as a hellfire preacher "can hardly be blamed for assuming that he has at least got his facts right". Ramage believes that Sargant's "very widely read book" "has done a great deal of disservice by presenting to a large number of readers a picture of Wesley the preacher which has no historical foundation, and is all the more seriously misleading because it will seem to many intelligent lay readers to be backed by the authority of both scholarship and science."

142 Cf., ibid., p. 209. "In the gospel which the Wesleys preached and sang, it was not the fear of hell but the love of God which broke men's hearts and cracked their repressions, often letting loose a pent up flood of buried emotion--in those paroxysms of cleansing and relief that must have been very unpleasant to behold, but sometimes had to occur if these people were ever to find the splendid sanity and joyous love of new men in Christ."

poor, caught up in the degradation and hopelessness of their poverty and knew what it was to be convicted of sin, to be guilty and to suffer the consequences. In essence, this was their Christian heritage and it was all they could hope for.¹⁴³ It is Wesley's merit that he called forth in these people the faith to trust and to believe they were forgiven,¹⁴⁴ a response which literally saved thousands of people (and the face of England) in the eighteenth century.

Sargant interprets these conversions in terms of his stress-breakdown dynamics. Ramage interprets them in terms of psychodynamic theory and believes they are genuine abreactions, i.e., a freeing of much repressed fear or terror, hopelessness and despair. He finds the same atmosphere of trust as that between Sargant and his patients before abreactive therapy, that is, arousal of suggestibility, a friendly environment, a desire to risk believing in a person and the freeing of the floodgates of repression which, in a dramatic and sometimes emotional struggle, led not to breakdown but to recovery from breakdown into conversion. Besides, there were no depth psychologists

143 J. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, pp. 200-2.

144 D. Windemiller, Psycho-Dynamics of Change, p. 62. "Wesley, of course, so thoroughly believed what he preached that without shouting or much moving about he transmitted to the crowd an overwhelming sense of the prophetic validity of his message. People who went to the meeting to ridicule felt they heard the very voice of God and left converted."

available in the eighteenth century to help people understand their plight. It was only right, therefore, that in the interests of both sanity and salvation, many would experience such a dramatic release of repressed hopelessness.¹⁴⁵ This reinforces Ramage's thesis that abreaction is not simply the wiping out of conditioned behavior patterns.¹⁴⁶ These people experienced guilt reduction and attitude change, which means they also experienced some integration of personality¹⁴⁷ in a milieu that was neither permissive nor coercive, but open and meaningful.

We have not undertaken a full discussion of Sargant's theory of brain-washing--his third exemplar--but wish to emphasize two points: (1) Sargant presents this process as falling within the same stress-breakdown dynamics as the conditioning process. (2) He believes religious conversion and brain-washing are similar processes. While others agree that religious conversion and brain-washing may involve similar processes, they point to significant differences overlooked by Sargant. Windemiller stresses that the two processes vary from the point of view of content,

145. I. Ramage, Battle for the Free Mind, p. 209.

146 Ibid., p. 154.

147 J. E. Dittes, "Psychology of Religion", in The Handbook of Social Psychology, second ed., edited by Gardner Lindzey and Elliot Aronson, vol. 5, Don Mills, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969, p. 648 (hereafter cited as "Psychology of Religion"); J. D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing, p. 80.

purpose, goals, motivations, and in their theory of man and of society. Frank's findings that the three main characteristics of brain-washing are "extreme emotional arousal, total milieu control, and the interrogation",¹⁴⁸ also focus on significant variations. But Lifton uncovers twelve steps in the psychodynamics of brain-washing (which he calls the "totalist vision of change"), and finds three main phases in that of religious conversion: confrontation, reordering, and renewal.¹⁴⁹ We find these arguments adequately emphasize the divergences involved in the two processes.

We have argued that Sargant's method of extrapolation of animal to human behavior is incongruent because it blurs fundamental differences in man and dog: mind is not just brain; neurotic breakdown is not the same process as abreaction; stimulus response conditioning is only one dimension of meaningful knowing. We have also shown that conversion is not a coercive change and that it is similar to abreaction. In addition, we find Sargant's approach makes a travesty of means and ends by implying that if the end is honourable any means are justifiable. Since he does not stress the specifically human dimensions of man, we question whether he can truly differentiate between neurosis and healthful religious change.

148 D. Windemiller, Psycho-Dynamics of Change, pp. 157-61; J. D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing, p. 81.

149 R. J. Lifton, Thought Reform, p. 463.

We single out one glaring contradiction in Sargant's theory concerning suggestions for resistance to change. While he insists that emotional involvement, either positive or negative,¹⁵⁰ such as anger or fear,¹⁵¹ can contribute to hasten conversion, as it did in the case of Paul, and that only a policy of "total non-co-operation" can permit one to remain free of subtle or overt converting techniques, he contradicts this evidence by stating that "a burning and obsessive belief in some other creed or way of life" will be a safeguard.¹⁵² Lifton warns of "the psychological illusion that a strong tradition is a bulwark against modern ideological totalism".¹⁵³

Sargant's work has already sparked off some worthwhile theoretical and empirical studies. Windemiller, Frank and Boyer have extended his theory of conversion across contextual fields. Boyer has added the scientific context itself.

Sargant's theorizing has strikingly reinforced an early interest in the role of suggestibility in conversion.¹⁵⁴

150 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, pp. 86, 95, 209.

151 Ibid., pp. 105, 210.

152 Ibid., p. 105. We know that in the case of Paul this was his downfall.

153 R. J. Lifton, Thought Reform, p. 470.

154 This was hypothesized by E. D. Starbuck as early as 1897 and by G. A. Coe in 1900.

In this line, he has made it abundantly clear that the normal healthy person is most vulnerable to conversion because most suggestible. Various attempts have been made to correct, invalidate or confirm certain aspects of his proposal such as the existence of the convertible personality (extra-version),¹⁵⁵ and the correlation of hysteria with sudden conversion.¹⁵⁶ It has, besides, ushered in new findings proving that the open, free milieu may foster conversion more readily than the coercive one,¹⁵⁷ and suggestions offered for resisting change have been rectified and extended.¹⁵⁸

155 At least three studies focus on the empirical testing of this factor. G. Stanley, "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Religious Conversion", p. 60, finds a positive correlation between extraversion and conversion; F. J. Roberts, "Some Psychological Factors in Religious Conversion", p. 186, does not find a significant correlation; R.W. Wilson, A Social-Psychological Study of Religious Experience, pp. 318,22, reports his findings of a negative correlation (contrary to Sargant) between extraversion and Christian conversion.

156 While Frank and Kildahl confirm Sargant's hypothesis about hysteria, Stanley, Roberts and Boyer disprove it. See J. D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing, p. 83; J. P. Kildahl, "The Personalities of Sudden Religious Converts", p. 41; G. Stanley, "Personality and Attitude Correlates of Religious Conversion", p. 349; F. J. Roberts, "Some Psychological Factors in Religious Conversion", p. 186; R. Boyer, Sudden Human Change, p. 108.

157 T. C. Brock, "Implications of Conversion and Magnitude of Cognitive Dissonance", pp. 201-3, report on his empirical study showing that the perception of the freedom of choice may be more effective in leading to conversion than the pressure exerted in the brain-washing milieu.

158 J. D. Frank, Persuasion and Healing, pp. 101, 105, states that only the emotionally detached are immune from brainwashing techniques. R. J. Lifton, Thought Reform, pp. 145-47, proposes four techniques by which to resist

Sargant's works also confirm James's intuitions that conversion and mysticism are closely related. He has made it extraordinarily clear that physiological factors play an important role in breakdown and conversion and that it is possible to influence the mind.

With a few exceptions, we find that Sargant's conversion vocabulary focuses uniquely on the physiological techniques surrounding the process. The following expressions are typical of his theory: "abreaction", "states of emotional excitement, often leading to temporary emotional collapse",¹⁵⁹ being "switched to arbitrary beliefs",¹⁶⁰ "transmarginal inhibition",¹⁶¹ "breaking point", "the switch",¹⁶² "an abnormal condition of anger, fear or exaltation",¹⁶³ "frequent switching on or off",¹⁶⁴ "fanatics with one-track minds",¹⁶⁵ "equilibrium between excitation

reform: an awareness of what is going on, the avoidance of emotional involvement, the adoption of a neutralizing attitude, and the most effective one, that of identity reinforcement.

159 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 18.

160 Ibid., p. 20.

161 Ibid., p. 25.

162 Ibid., p. 32.

163 Ibid., p. 33.

164 Ibid., p. 34.

165 Ibid., p. 36.

and inhibition",¹⁶⁶ "physical debilitation", "the development of hysterical responses",¹⁶⁷ "states of greatly increased suggestibility",¹⁶⁸ "a sudden reversal of one's positive and negative conditioning",¹⁶⁹ "sudden states of collapse", "the necessary point of collapse",¹⁷⁰ "seeing things in a new light",¹⁷¹ "the simple healthy extravert",¹⁷² "physiological mechanisms",¹⁷³ "a mechanistic principle",¹⁷⁴ "a tremendous assault on the emotions",¹⁷⁵ "disrupt previous patterns of behaviour",¹⁷⁶ "wipe the cortical slate clean",¹⁷⁷ "a period of intense anxiety", "softening-up processes",¹⁷⁸ "emotional collapse",¹⁷⁹

166 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 41.

167 Ibid., p. 48.

168 Ibid., p. 49.

169 Ibid., p. 51.

170 Ibid., p. 56.

171 Ibid., p. 65.

172 Ibid., p. 70.

173 Ibid., p. 80.

174 Ibid., p. 82.

175 Ibid., p. 83.

176 Ibid., p. 85.

177 Ibid., p. 87.

178 Ibid., p. 88.

179 Ibid., p. 98.

"religiously-toned emotion",¹⁸⁰ "emotional thunderbolt",¹⁸¹
"total collapse", "period of indoctrination",¹⁸² "stress
techniques",¹⁸³ "follow-up conditioning".¹⁸⁴

3. A. Synopsis of the Model

a) Approach

i) A Theory of Personality

A functional view of man wherein man is his "brain" --the data of which can be wholly reconditioned. Man is constituted of a basic temperament ranging along a passive-aggressive continuum from the melancholic, through the phlegmatic, to the sanguine, to the choleric. More or less time is needed, depending upon the vulnerability and normality of the individual, for complete thought reform and stability in the new belief.

Man is at the mercy of his environment and there is little he can do to remain indifferent to the pressures surrounding him. Only his emotions figure in this naturalistic, physicalistic view.

ii) A Theory of Man as Religious.

Man's religiousness depends entirely on his inherited temperament and milieu control. There is no need for a god to do the converting or the healing as man is religious because of faith-creating techniques. All that is needed is a sufficiently powerful state of emotion.

Religiousness is thus the fruit of unusually manipulative surroundings and its manifestations can be sudden, loud, and fearful.

180 W. Sargant, Battle for the Mind, p. 99.

181 Ibid., p. 104.

182 Ibid., p. 106.

183 Ibid., p. 151.

184 Ibid., p. 201.

b) Method

i) Psychological System

A physiological, functionalistic, psychiatric method which proceeds by means of extrapolation of animal to human behavior, permitting the operator to coerce anyone into accepting a new belief even against his will, by means of conditioning, breakdown, conversion, and the implanting of new attitudes or beliefs.

ii) Data-Gathering

An intuitive and descriptive comparison of conversion along a sociopsychophysiological continuum, i.e., in psychotherapy, in religion and in brain-washing, by means of three basic exemplars: Pavlov's findings with his dogs, Wesley's preaching techniques, and brain-washing techniques.

Reports from his own psychiatric cases, biographical data. Reports and photos from cross-cultural religious conversion ceremonies which are not applicable to the majority of Anglo-Saxon Christians.

No familiarity with previous theorization.

iii) Presentation

A methodical, startling, innovative, popular presentation highlighted by astonishing photos which reveal a lack of feeling for religion in general.

An exposé of the physiological foundations of his theory, the techniques of religious conversion, applications of these techniques, brain-washing in religion and politics, consolidation and prevention.

c) Content

i) Nature

Conversion is a psychophysiological process experienced suddenly and wrought upon a person by someone else's conditioning techniques.

A sudden reversal of one's former beliefs caused by the "switch" phenomenon.

ii) Aim

To change one's beliefs and way of life.

iii) Process

Disruptive excitation, fasting and other debilitating techniques to increase suggestibility. Mental dissociation and impairment of judgment.

Sudden total collapse; an abreactive type of jargon (gift of tongues) can supervene.

Follow-up conditioning for consolidation.

iv) Age

Not stressed, but data all pertain to adults.

v) Type

A highly emotional experience characterized by collapse, breakdown or abreaction. Moralistic, insofar as guilt and fear figure prominently. Behavioristic.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.

From the discussion of the foregoing data on the psychology of religious conversion, three questions necessarily arise: (1) To what extent has our historical method generally, and the application of our triad particularly, contributed to probing the data? (2) What difference, if any, has been made in our self-understanding--the centre of all psychological theorizing--by nearly a century of theorizing on religious conversion? and (3) What stands out from the "models" view of religious conversion? We will endeavor to answer each question in turn.

Our search began, on the one hand, with the collating of a considerable amount of research on the psychology of religious conversion, which is our primary data, and, on the other hand, with the articulation of a method whereby we would examine this literature. With our discovery that no research had as yet been carried out in this area from the perspective of models, a conceptual scheme toward which contemporary scholars have been leaning generally, we decided to adopt this means to arrive at a better knowledge of these specific data. The basic criterion for our selection was that the theory must imply an original approach and method.

Our survey of the extensive literature for theories embodying an original approach and method led to the discovery of interesting patterns and trends which we presented as justification for our selective process. This survey proceeded chronologically according to three historical periods, those of 1891-1918, 1919-1946, and 1947-1977 respectively. The first three major theories appeared within the first decade of this research which began in America and appeared as an applied psychology, an offshoot of the new scientific psychology pioneered by G. Stanley Hall and William James. Moreover, these pioneers themselves turned to the study of religious conversion as the paradigm of the newer discipline, psychology of religion; but a further consideration of this historical fact lies outside the scope of the present study.

In the first historical period, 1891-1918, the three major theories which evolved were those of Hall, Leuba, and James. These were first attempts at scientific articulation of religious conversion, whether from a genetical, an inductive or a radically empirical approach and method. Moreover, the works of Hall, Leuba and James initiated certain trends. Once a major theory was formulated, additional research was conducted and varying issues arose stimulating further investigation. The following is a list of elements connected with the major trends of the period: a search for genetic implications; experimentation;

study of personality variables; introduction of "psychologies of religion" in which conversion is examined as a major phenomenon; popular studies modeled on the scientific theories; interest in psychiatric implications; imitations of James's study particularly and the American studies generally; apologetical studies; and, lastly, studies on sociological implications of religious conversion. It is à propos to mention, at this time, that the type of conversion experience these psychologists examined generally, was the pietistic experience reminiscent of the revivals, except of course for that found in older autobiographies.

Other than the addition of comparative studies, much the same trends continued to unfold in the second historical period, 1919-1946, until the emergence of two more original theories, which we found related to James's seminal one, that of De Sanctis in 1927, and that of Penido in 1935. These incorporated two fundamentally new approaches to man, the psychoanalytical and the phenomenological ones, and reflected a continuing and progressive understanding of man's conversional experience. The reason for this, we believe, is no doubt the fact that these two model-theories arose in Europe. On the one hand, they broke into the distinctly American fascination with the study of religious conversion and, on the other hand, they began their theorizing from a very different perspective; the First World War had greatly affected their

sociopsychophysiological horizons.

Finally, in the third historical period, 1947-1977, the basic trends continued and we noted another significant theory formulated in the years 1951-1957 by Sargant, also from Europe. It was founded upon a physiological view of man and his religious needs which the author felt incorporated a practical theory whereby man would attain these needs surely and reliably, if not freely. While we found no new theory until 1970, we did discover three in the 70's, that of Sagne in 1974, from France, that of Billette in 1975, from Canada (both of which were in French), and that of Doran in 1977, from the United States. However, we left these outside our scope because we may lack the proper perspective to study them now, while their authors may still modify them, and also because we had in any case to limit our study for obvious reasons.

We may now ask how the exploration and evaluation of the first six major theories of religious conversion by means of our triad, approach, method, and content, benefits our understanding of them as original models.

Perhaps the most obvious discovery issuing from our specific method is the fact that the models together reveal a certain view of man and a certain method of theorizing, more or less explicit, which serve as a basis for a corresponding perspectival approach to man experiencing religious conversion. This overall model of the models embodies

several main characteristics which are worthy of note as we come to the conclusion of our work. We list these peculiarities derived as a gestalt, from the double application of our triad.

(1) An extensive use of personal documents, both from other historical periods and from personal case histories, drawn up by the researchers or by others, recurs as the special basis of these theories, grounding them in concrete experience. Indeed, the case history or story approach within a scientific context is an early characteristic of psychology, one noted from the very beginnings of this research as a fundamentally humanistic concern on the part of the theorists.

(2) These theories all emphasize the prepotency of the physiological dimension over the psychological and religious ones. This basic characteristic also issues from the desire to emulate the successful science of physiology. But generally, from this physiological basis, the theorists conclude that the religious dimension is isomorphic with the psychophysiological ones.

(3) These theories are functionally oriented, a concern revealed in an abiding interest in the subject's dynamic history, in usefulness for living, and in a special emphasis on the quality of life. This orientation reinforces the underlying humanistic concern despite an over-eagerness on the part of the theorists to base their

theories on the natural scientific method.

(4) The adoption of a processive view of religious conversion follows from the functional orientation. It emphasizes three moments of experience, however extended or compressed: a past, a present historical moment, and a future. This issue has the result of patterning conversion as something one goes through, and as something which endures.

(5) All of these theories accord a privileged status to the so-called objective ideal of science, a status most ill-suited for the study of personal case histories dealing with religious conversion. This kind of scientific objectivity leads to at least one main contradiction: the disregarding of the religious dimension on the supposition that one cannot theorize about God. It also fosters false assumptions, e.g., that psychologists can be absolutely free from prejudices and a priori positions. In some cases, it conceals the psychologist's own agnosticism and allows him to argue consistently from a methodological agnostic stance. This leads either to the adoption of a rigid immanentism formally enunciated by Flournoy in 1902, or to the rejection of such a position and to the search for approaches and methods which allow the originality of the conversion experience to appear.

(6) Another characteristic appearing to a more or less marked degree in these six model-theories is the

tendency to reduce the experience of conversion to its common denominators, its constitutive elements. This, of course, is a further result of an over-riding concern with objectivity and leads most surely to the reification of these elements--reductionism at its best. However, and paradoxically so, it leads as well to the uncovering of basic exemplars, models within the larger overall model. So that although the overall model changes according to its specific approach and method, we find that the content is indeed crystallized. The exemplars or elements of the experience do not change but are only more or less concretely disclosed or understood.

These major characteristics appearing as structural components of the overall view presented by our models, i.e., a basis in personal documents, in physiology, in functionalism, in process, in the objective ideal of science, and in reductionism, obviously issue from the first element of our triad, approach. Moreover, Giorgi has noted a very close association between his use of approach and Kuhn's use of model or paradigm. The difference is that approach, for Giorgi, allows for both the implicit and the explicit aspects of a model-theory, while he understands Kuhn's use of paradigm to allow only for the explicitated elements therein.¹ We are therefore justified in noting

1 A. Giorgi, Psychology as a Human Science, p. 176.

that the approach of these specific theories gives the general tone to the whole model. Not only does it underlie the method employed, it also circumscribes the horizon of the model and directs the perception of the primary data. We can now illustrate this fact very briefly by examining what particularly stands out in each view of religious man, and how this view bears upon the understanding of religious conversion itself in these models.

With G. Stanley Hall, we find religion understood concretely as the awareness of altruism particularly, and a sense of God generally. Hall is the first to postulate isomorphism between religious and psychophysiological growth, a fact reinforced in his developmental approach to psychology and in his search for a good system of education which would foster healthy growth. Though Hall's model appears simplistic today, it nevertheless captures an essential characteristic of religious conversion, its processive nature. By means of his genetic thrust Hall attempts to polarize the experience as a developmental issue of adolescence, a fact which explains his belief that conversion is the chief event of genetic psychology.

With Leuba, religion loses its sense of distance or transcendence and is experienced primarily as the transcendence of dualism within the self. Grounded in an inductive approach, Leuba's model strikingly emphasizes this dualism as it is experienced between "the way down" and "the way up"

which is so much a part of conversion when seen as a process. Leuba is without doubt the clearest spokesman for demythologizing the experience, and we have already implied earlier that this probably stems from his personal agnosticism rather than from a strictly methodological one. This presupposition is expressed most clearly in his delineation of religious conversion as nothing but the psychic correspondent of a physiological growth.

More than any other theorist possibly, James is truly faithful to his approach, the radical-empirical one. For him, it means being open or present to the experience and rejecting any bias to the contrary. His greatest intuition, we believe, is that he realizes that naturalism and immanentism do not sufficiently highlight the specificity of religiousness. Moreover, the documents point out that to be religious, is to stand before the other. Therefore, not only does it involve the transcendence of intrapsychic dualism, it is also a question of going beyond the self. One must break out of the realms of consciousness and lived-body. James is a real pioneer in showing the "hectic 'to-and-fro'"² which occurs between consciousness

² R. Gelwick, The Way of Discovery: An Introduction to the Thought of Michael Polanyi, New York, Oxford University Press, 1977, p. 118, borrows the expression to show how Sartre exemplifies the modern impasse. He writes: "Sartre's dichotomy of the 'in-itself' and the 'for-itself' shows that we are a negation, a disintegration if we begin from the Cartesian separation of knowing and being. [...]. The solution to Sartre's predicament is to replace the

and unconsciousness in conversion, and he genially points out that religious conversion implies breaking out of the immanence of the psychic continuum and reaching "something more"--God. Furthermore, being religious is always unfinished business and must express itself in saintliness which involves the interpersonal or sociohistorical dimension. Admittedly, James presents no real theory of the socio-historical dimension but he points to it. Moreover, he is very explicit about his own presuppositions; we sense no dichotomy between his works and his being.

With De Sanctis, we note again what we might call the locked-in approach, for De Sanctis does not really explain what constitutes religiousness. Since, in his view, the psyche is "a form of activity sui generis" religiousness is natural to man and can be the object of scientific study. He understands religious conversion solely from the perspective of its dynamics, and he brilliantly spells out these inner processes having to do with self-transformation. His own later experience of conversion and his desire to re-edit his book, show to what an extent theoreticians are influenced by their own presuppositions about the separation of knowing and being,

Penido's phenomenological approach, like that of James, lends itself very well to uncovering what is most

hectic 'to-and-fro' with Polanyi's 'from-to' relation of tacit knowing."

specific to religious conversion--its theocentrism. Indeed, Penido makes the relationship with the divine the sine qua non of religiousness. To be religious calls for eccentricism, a breaking out of the self because of a relationship with God primarily, and secondarily, a going out to others by way of charity. Penido reiterates and extends James's understanding of the underlying dynamics and argues especially for his own approach and method because it accounts for the religious dimension without begging the question.

With Sargant, religiousness again loses its distinctiveness to become nothing but a psychophysiological process. Sargant is concerned not so much with the dynamics of religious conversion as with its mechanics. He calls for the best conditioning methods since religious conversion, in his mind, is a justifiable end. All that is needed is a sufficiently strong state of emotion usually incited by the skillful techniques of a leader. From this perspective then, religion is something one endures as the result of a successful conditioning process. Sargant's approach, moreover, points to the possible horrendous effects of such a mechanistic view of man's religious life in particular, and the far-reaching consequences of such manipulative approaches in other contextual fields as well.

If we now turn to the second element of our triad, i.e., method, we perceive some interesting conclusions. First of all, our models represent six major psychologies:

the genetic, inductive-differential, radical-empirical, psychoanalytical, phenomenological, and physiological or behavioural. Moreover, two of these had been previously considered anti-religious, i.e., the psychoanalytical and the behavioural. Another interesting matter to note is that five of these major psychologies are subjective and focus on inner experience. Only Sargant's theory is modeled upon an objective psychology with a focus on behaviour. The methodological horizon implied in his theory is therefore significantly different from that of the other five. Conversion, from this view, is not so much an interior process as it is an environmental "happening". Take away the leader and his manipulative process and there is no conversion, since the religious group setting is the sine qua non of religious conversion according to this model.

We discover also that the main characteristics of the general view of man equally apply to these six methods. Each is clearly based on personal documents or concrete experience. Each accepts the physiological dimension as a working hypothesis. Each is functionally oriented, i.e., concerned with what is vital to man's life. Each in some way reveals the processive nature of experience and of science itself. Each is grounded in empiricism and its consequent reductive tendency. Indeed, this last characteristic, empiricism and its consequent, enjoys the privileged position over the others and we wish to develop

this aspect further.

It is a fact that our psychological models are the result of major scholarly endeavors to examine a religious phenomenon sui generis. They represent an effort in demythologizing, an effort to arrive at theory--the objective ideal of science. Empiricism thus runs through and underlies these attempts as the "golden calf" of psychology. No doubt the most debatable and debated issue of empiricism, when understood as the objective ideal of science, is the fact that in the beginning it fostered a lack of personal involvement in or responsibility for one's science, being itself a secure cover-up for any and all assumptions. Among the most obvious effects of empiricism in our models are the issues of agnosticism, the lack of real involvement with the phenomena and, paradoxically, a lack of real objectivity in many instances. Let us now see how these effects issue from the empiricism implicit in each of our models.

Hall's theory embraces what has been called an aspiring empiricism and serves mainly to bridge the gap between former revival accounts of religious conversion and the newer scientific theories. While his theory tends toward naturalism generally, it is never strictly so.

By means of his inductive method, Leuba truly delineates the immediate process of religious conversion as compressed in the sudden experience, and offers a sound

theory thereof. While he cloaks his theory with seeming objectivity, he goes beyond the empirical ideal and beyond Hall in reducing religious conversion to immanent categories, naturalism pure and simple. In effect, he lacks objectivity and concludes too quickly by overlooking much of his data as we have already shown. He is without doubt the strongest voice calling for biological interpretation of the phenomena in the name of his own narrow empiricism.

James's method is truly significant. Its very appellative, radical-empiricism, points to what the author considers the only ideal empiricism. Not only does he argue for an authentic scientific objectivity, he argues as well for the involvement of the scientist in his own science. Moreover, objectivity, for James, means accounting for all the data of experience simply because they are data of experience. One doesn't pick and choose among the data. Therefore, in dealing with concrete experience, the scientist must be aware of both his own explicit presuppositions and his more nebulous ones. Such a method is always serious and unfinished business, and, in a sense, becomes an exercise in conversion because it constantly demands such far-reaching objectivity both with one's data and with one's very subjectivity. The result of such an empirical method is translated in James's perception of religious conversion as an experience which is both paradoxical and which "fits". Indeed, most converted or on-the-way-to-conversion-

individuals still derive much meaning from his theory.

De Sanctis's method reveals a much narrower empiricism. Like Leuba, the latter analyzes so meticulously, in this case, the inner psychic processes involved in religious conversion, that he neglects the psychological meaning of these processes for the persons concerned. While it remains brilliant, his theory becomes a case in point showing the extent of meaninglessness that can result from a narrow understanding of empiricism.

Penido's method like that of James, is an exercise in the broadening of empiricism. Theoretically speaking, he also succeeds in setting up a seminal typology of religious conversion on the one hand and, on the other, in spelling out the meaning of the experience for the subject. Penido's method leads to a theoretical-practical or comprehensive view of religious conversion.

With Sargant, we note again a very narrow understanding of empiricism. Sargant looks only to the behavioural phenomena, to the factors that work in achieving conversion. Since the mechanics of the experience are for him primordial, it matters little either to what one is converted, or how one is converted, as long as conversion in itself is good.

To complete these brief reconsiderations of the role of our triad, we proceed now with the third element, i.e., content, which leads us to a significant finding.

We mentioned earlier that our most obvious conclusion about the models in general was the fact that they embody an overall view or model of man experiencing conversion. We also noted that since the approach gives the tone to each model, it also specifies the method and that both of these change to some extent depending upon the perspective chosen. But the content, in this research, does not seem to enjoy these variations. Indeed, the phenomena of religious conversion tend to be reduced to the same basic elements or models within the overall model. We cannot fail to note, moreover, that these exemplars lack specificity and are generally very indistinct for the simple reason that a view of the whole, the model, cannot simultaneously allow a focus on its particular elements. However, since Ernest Becker maintains that "the totality of the human condition is the thing that is so hard for man to capture",³ so it may very well be that capturing the model as a whole is a necessary prelude to understanding its exemplars.

Generally speaking, we have noted that certain exemplars are fundamental or constant. Basic to them all is an implicit assumption that the human personality is capable of change because of a religious motive. This is the element of "shift", whether in identity, in attitudes,

³ E. Becker, The Denial of Death, New York, The Free Press, 1973, p. 65 (hereafter cited as The Denial of Death).

in beliefs, etc. No doubt it is the most readily thought of issue when religious conversion is mentioned, as the term itself immediately refers to some sort of change within a religious orientation. But this change can take on so many variations as Penido has ably pointed out, that it tends to be simplified and not really spelled out. To say that change occurs in conversion does not greatly help us to understand this fundamental element.

James and Penido particularly demonstrate how basic relatedness is to religiousness generally, and to conversion particularly. Not only is this the raison d'être of the shift in the first place, it also calls for a three-fold expanding awareness: with the self, in intrapsychic awareness; with the other or with God, in interpersonal relationships; and with the world in sociohistorical relationships. But the models, generally, have been greatly remiss in this area of sociohistorical relationships particularly. Moreover, the early theorists understood religious conversion as having to do with inner psychic demands mostly. There remains a tendency to be unwary of the fact that "no man is an island", not even a psychologist.

The shift or new awareness in one's world appears as a constant element of the models. Converts report that the world appears new, that it takes on an aura, as it were. This factor is usually presented as something happening "out-there". In reality, theorists argue that the change

takes place within the self. Lawrence LeShan, for example, demonstrates how we are all experts at inventing and discovering reality which is not really "out-there" but "in-here".⁴ No doubt this phenomenon is intimately related with the sense of joy which is so often, but not infallibly, a part of the conversion process. This element has been unusually patterned and crystallized in the model and to a large extent taken for granted.

Another dimly understood component of conversion is that of crisis, conviction of sin, dissonance, suffering, or conflict. Whatever we name this factor, it must be there according to the theorists. Indeed, how else could the overall symbols of "death and rebirth", so much a part of conversion language, be applicable otherwise? It is no doubt trite to say that the experience of "death and rebirth" is so much more complex than the meager reflections about it by our theorists.

Two other elements of the experience of conversion which are highly important and probably least understood are those Becker calls the "twin ontological motives",⁵ i.e., self-surrender and self-determination. The theorists invariably report the first of the two. James, in particular, emphasizes the conflict which arises because of these opposite needs in conversion. But, data about these is

4 L. LeShan, Alternate Realities, pp. 40-41.


5 E. Becker, The Denial of Death, pp. 150-55.

practically non-existent. We found only one specific study on self-surrender.

Finally, the element of content enables us to discern the primary exemplars of the experience generally appearing as constants. Research is so sparse on these that little is really understood about their ramifications. It appears to us, as a conclusion to our work, that there is urgent need for theorizing on these exemplars.

Our second question is related to the difference in self-understanding effected by nearly a century of psychological research on religious conversion. We mention in particular three areas specifically emphasized by this theorizing.

The first effect, generally, has been an adventure in demythologizing and in psychologizing, but one which now points to re-symbolizing. Admittedly, our theorists attempted to understand religious conversion and succeeded in doing so, insofar as they looked to the dynamics of the experience which are strictly psychological phenomena. Possibly the most prominent conclusion they came to is that religious conversion follows upon the psychophysiological dimensions. In other words, they discovered that these dimensions are prepotent and isomorphic to the religious dimension. Sargant's words to the effect that you cannot



"never make a silk purse out of a sow's ear"⁶ points to the evidence of the theorists that if your biopsychocultural life is distorted or sick, you can expect your religious conversion to be of the same form.

Secondly, the importance of the right type of psychology cannot be overestimated, not as a framework into which to pigeonhole religion, but as a help to understanding man's dynamic life. The humanistic and transpersonal psychologies are now changing the endeavors of psychologists who can no longer be concerned simply with the objective ideal of science, but must act as responsible persons. Moreover, scientific agnosticism is no longer defensible. Psychology must account for the religious dimension simply because it is inherent to religious conversion. The fact that psychologists attending the "care of the soul" are becoming aware that healing is often a first moment of religious conversion, shows to what an extent psychology has become the handmaid of religion. Becker goes so far as to say that "the fusion of psychology and religion is thus not only logical, it is necessary if the religion is to work."⁷ This presupposes, of course, that we recognize the close associations which obtain between religion and psychology.

6 W. Sargant, The Mind Possessed, p. 10.

7 E. Becker, The Denial of Death, p. 275.

Thirdly, as a consequence of this research, we believe that we understand better what it is to be religious. Religiousness has taken on concreteness. To some extent, it has been removed from the indistinct and the vague, and has become a much needed part of man's wholeness. Indeed, the humanistic psychologists are now reclaiming religiousness, although in a very broad sense, and are recognizing that they discarded too much when they dissociated themselves from the Christian Churches in general.⁸ Moreover, religion, more than any other single human phenomenon, has been man's primordial road to "meaning", and one that can vitalize all of life. Although the models leave much unsaid, if we believe that "we live more deeply than we can think,"⁹ these efforts at explicating man's religiousness at its core--conversion--has been an effort in conversion itself. Doran's model of conversion is a good example of the depths of self-understanding that have been reached as a result of this research.

Finally, what stands out from the "models" view of religious conversion? Has the model been an appropriate tool for ordering experience?

Firstly, we remark the fact that the six models we examined were strictly speaking psychological ones. We

⁸ A. Maslow, Religions, Values, and Peak-Experiences, pp. 46-47.

⁹ B. E. Meland, Fallible Forms and Symbols, p. 28.

note however, that two of the more recent ones, those of Sagne and of Billette, emanate from a larger framework, the psychosociological. These two models could very well be the beginnings of another series of models within this larger paradigm.

Secondly, the "models" approach to the study of religious conversion has highlighted the fact that there is still so very much that remains tacit about the experience and that much further research is needed to explicitate this area of life. Because of this lack, it is hoped that the dynamic exemplars of the experience will receive the greater emphasis in the future.

Thirdly, should the need arise, we hope we have given future model-builders some good leads as to what a good model should embody. We have no doubt that any researcher keeping the elements of approach, method, and content constantly in mind along with his own more implicit knowledge will contribute much to the future understanding of the experience.

On the whole, we can say that history has already encapsulated these models into a specific picture of reality and has crystallized them into a particular myth. However, as Barbara Jones has demonstrated, the myth is real;¹⁰ and these model-theories remain viable frameworks

¹⁰ B. E. Jones, Conversion, p. 403.

applicable to man's concrete-lived-reality and man's concrete attempts at self-understanding. And to that extent, modern man has already used these models as steppingstones to a developing interiority.

Does it matter then that these models embodied a very specific and limited view of man's religiousness, or that they were at times inadequate, narrow or doctrinaire? If "the meaning of what is new lies in knowing exactly its relation to what is old",¹¹ then our work may provide a useful synthesis of nearly a century of vital theorizing, and we are no longer doomed simply to repeat it.

¹¹ P. Homans, Theology after Freud, p. 231.

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ABSTRACT OF

A Study of Some Basic Theoretical Models of Religious Conversion

Our research begins on the one hand with the collating of nearly a century of psychological theorizing on religious conversion, both in English and in French, and amounting to more than a hundred and seventy books and essays. Following our discovery that no research has as yet been carried out in this area from the perspective of models, a conceptual scheme toward which contemporary scholars have been leaning generally, we adopt this means to arrive at a better understanding of these specific data.

In order to arrive at reliable criteria for our selective process we articulate our method in the Introduction. Briefly, we select a triad singled by Amedeo Giorgi that of approach, method, and content as the basic components of our models. We further specify that only those theories incorporating an original approach and method in theorizing upon religious conversion are accepted here as representing basic theoretical models.

In Chapter One, we outline our survey of the literature. The examination for major theories proceeds chronologically according to three historical periods, those of 1891-1918, 1919-1946, and 1947-1977 respectively.

We discuss our classification process and proceed to uncover nine major theories of religious conversion, three in the first period, two in the second, and four in the third. But of this last group, only one original theory appears during the years 1947-1970. In order to delimit our work and also because we may lack the necessary perspective to study those theories found in the 70's, we examine only the first six. Our proper study thus covers the literature spanning the years 1891-1970. Finally, our aim is: (1) to reveal the trends that evolve in this theorizing; (2) to explore and evaluate six major theories constituting models by means of our triad; and (3) to point to significant conclusions for future research.

Chapters Two to Seven of this thesis consist of an examination in chronological order of these six theoretical models of religious conversion. Each is submitted to the twofold process of exploration and evaluation. The exploration of each model consists in the methodical examination of the three elements: approach, method and content. Investigating the approach reveals a particular theory of personality as well as a theory of man as a religious being. Probing for the method manifests the psychological system employed, the data-gathering techniques and the procedure used in theorizing. The examination of the content, which as a matter of fact is very similar in all the models, discloses the specific structure of religious conversion. At

the end of each chapter, we present the conclusions of the double application of our triad in a synopsis, as a means of recapitulating the respective model-theory.

Chapter Two is a presentation of Granville Stanley Hall's genetic model of religious conversion which is based on two of his works: the essay printed in 1891 as "The Moral and Religious Training of Children and Adolescents", and the longer version of the same entitled, "The Adolescent Psychology of Conversion", appearing as a chapter in his two-volume work on adolescence. Hall's interest in religious conversion coincides with his own genetic psychology, a functional psychology emphasizing stages of growth.

Chapter Three introduces James H. Leuba's inductive model of religious conversion published in 1896 as "A Study in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena". Leuba constructs a theory almost entirely upon individual concrete experiences of conversion by means of a questionnaire case-study. His method is rigorous, his documentation notable, and he is the first to outline the phases of conversion as a process. He is likewise one of the first both to postulate that religious growth is of the same form as psychophysiological growth, and to reduce the religious phenomenon to naturalism.

Chapter Four examines William James's seminal radical-empirical model of religious conversion published in 1902 in the Varieties of Religious Experience. James's

radical commitment to experience makes his functional psychology an eminently practical one and one suited to examine religious conversion. James is the first to create a model which justifies the examination of the religious phenomenon in its own right. Moreover, his model bears the test of time. He genially demonstrates that religious conversion involves not only the transcending of intrapsychic conflict but also the reaching out to "something more" than the self.

Chapter Five is a presentation of Sante De Sanctis's psychoanalytical model published in 1927 as Religious Conversion: a Bio-psychological Study. De Sanctis is the first European psychologist to publish a significant work on religious conversion. He develops a complete theory of conversion by means of psychoanalysis, a method supposedly alien to religion. His work is notable for its brilliant analyses of the inner psychic processes at work in conversion but it neglects to interpret its usefulness for the subject.

Chapter Six is the examination of Maurilio T.-L. Penido's phenomenological model of religious conversion which appears in 1935 as La Conscience religieuse; essai systématique. Penido's phenomenological psychology stresses that man's consciousness is primarily intentional. It also acts as a corrective to natural scientific psychology generally because it teaches the psychologist to be objective and to account for whatever is observable. He presents

exhaustive genetic and structural typologies of religious conversion, an analogy of the experience emphasizing its originality, and an application of his theory.

Chapter Seven is a presentation of William W. Sargant's physiological model of religious conversion found particularly in his Battle for the Mind published in 1957. His theory is the only one to be based in an objective psychology and is startling because it focuses primarily on the mechanics of the conversion process. Since what counts in his theory is what works in achieving conversion, it matters little to what one is converted or how one is converted as long as conversion in itself is good.

In our conclusion we show how our specific method contributes to probing the data; we point to the difference in self-understanding permitted by this theorizing, and we show what particularly emerges from the "models" view of religious conversion.