Patterns of Thinking

1. A Pattern and Its Parts

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OUTLINE

Introduction: A Pattern and Its Parts:
- I. Knowledge-view.
- II. World-view.
- III. Value-view.

I. Knowledge-view (the process)
Knowledge-views are beliefs about the ways of **getting, testing** and **regarding** ideas.
The processes may be:
- a. **external,** which we shall call Authoritarianism,
- b. **internal,** which we shall call Subjectivism, or
- c. **situational,** which we shall call Contexualism.

II. World-views (the product)
World-views are beliefs about the "totality" of existence, including **nature, culture** and **human nature.**
The descriptions may be:
- a. **deterministic,** which we shall call Formalism,
- b. **atomistic,** which we shall call Casualism, or
- c. **developmental,** which we shall call Functionalism.

III. Value-views (the application)
Value-views are beliefs about ways of **seeking, evaluating** and **achieving** human values.
The affirmations may be corrolaries of world-views and knowledge-views that are:
- a. **authoritarian and formal,** which we shall call Collectivism,
- b. **subjective and casual,** which we shall call Individualism, or
- c. **contextual and functional,** which we shall call Interpersonalism.

Conclusion: Types of Thinking:
a. **hierarchic,** b. **anarchic**—Closed.
c. **democratic**—Open.

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PREFACE

Thirty years ago I entered theological school seeking some pattern of thinking that would give meaning to life. As I continued in this quest it became evident that, rather than being a personal and private pursuit, it was the quest of contemporary man. After two graduate degrees at The Iliff School of Theology and post-doctoral study at Northwestern University in the field of education, I became first a part-time and finally a full-time professor. For the last twenty years I have been trying to teach philosophy, or perhaps more precisely, to expose students to some aspects of a synoptic philosophy in order that they might discover for themselves certain personal and professional values.

During these two decades I have been defining and re-defining both the contribution that the discipline of philosophy might make to the quest of a meaningful life and also my own role as a teacher. A word about the latter first. As I see it there are in our society at least four levels of leadership. Simply stated they are those of the **scholar,** the **interpreter,** the **intellectual** and the **translator.** The role of the scholar is to extend the frontiers of theoretical knowledge; usually in some selected aspect of a highly specialized field. The role of the interpreter is to state in

simplified terms the findings and theories of scholars, and if he is of the "synoptic" type to work out an integration or synthesization of related ideas in specialized fields. The role of the intellectual is to comprehend a synoptic view of some or many fields of knowledge and to create a social climate in which ideas may be tried out. The role of the translator is to get ideas into action in the lives of his followers. While few, if any, individuals function exclusively at a single level of leadership an individual is wise to choose, in his professional life at least, one to which he devotes the greatest amount of his attention.

As students become "intellectuals," to that extent are they prepared to influence directly and/or indirectly the "translators," who operate primarily at the action level of leadership. In so far then as the "interpreter" can enable the "intellectual" to achieve perspective in his personal life and professional pursuits he can with the aid of the "translators" create a social climate that will both further the work of the "scholar" and strengthen those aspects of the society that will mold the individuals of today and tomorrow. My approach to Patterns of Ideas reflects the conscious acceptance of the role of "interpreter," that of the synthetizer and simplifier—a middle man between the scholars on the one hand and the intellectuals on the other.

The primary task of the liberal arts college is the education of the total person by means of those disciplines that furnish perspective for the whole life of man. While the graduate school is usually dedicated to the addition of significant and meaningful learnings in specialized areas there is a continuing need for synoptic interpretation even on this level. That is to say that teachers, preachers and others need to be educated in such a way that they become increasingly aware of their responsibilities to become both first rate professional specialists and to function as intellectuals in their total society.

Patterns of Thinking has been used during the last ten years in both undergraduate and graduate courses in an attempt to achieve or to strengthen these points of view. I submit it now to a wider audience in order that those who agree with these general objectives may, if they are teachers, have another aid to teaching synoptic philosophy; if they are preachers, find some assistance in interpreting religion to at least their most intelligent parishioners; or if their approach is personal rather than professional that as "intellectuals" they may find it helpful in their own quest for understanding.

The present purpose, then, is to state in non-technical terminology, what I consider to be theoretically sound theories or suggestive hypotheses in such a way that without doing violence to these scholarly ideas intellectuals can understand and translators can use them.

The average man of yesterday and of today lives with a set of unconsciously accepted and/or culturally conditioned beliefs and behaviors on the basis of which he achieves some understanding of himself and his surroundings. In homogeneous cultures conflicts of beliefs presented no serious problem. Insights of status persons were formulated into concepts which slowly became a part of the culture. The child accepted the patterns as natural—as part of the normal order of things—because there was no reason in his limted experience to question them. Such change as might have crept in was limited and restricted as the culture developed differentiated institutions and the leadership sought consciously and deliberately to train up the child in the accepted ways of the group. Although such restrictions worked fairly well for an immobile and stable society the changing character of the western world challenged traditional patterns and offered

new directions for the evolution of new cultural forms.

Three periods of marked change were the Age of Pericles in Greece, the Renaissance period in Europe, and the last hundred years in most parts of the world. The glory that was Greece emerged, at least in part, because a handful of leaders broke away from older oriental patterns of living. The period from 1,000 to 1,500 A. D., having witnessed the emergence of the European man, produced in early modern times a renaissance, a reformation, a counter-reformation and a series of scientific revolutions. Instead of living in a monistic or homogeneous culture, western man found himself faced with a dualistic situation in which he was supposed to choose theoretically, between the **sacred** and the **secular** way of life. Practically, he found that he could not completely accept one without the other and early modern man became a divided self. During the last hundred years a third pattern of living —the **wholistic,** has been slowly emerging, which, added to the sacred and secular, causes contemporary thinking man to find himself no longer with a monistic, nor even a dualistic situation, but with a pluralistic one within which he must make choices.

Three ways of life appear to function today as they did yesterday in furnishing more or less consistent configurations of ideas for certain individuals and cultures. In the years ahead, at least for those who live in a democracy rather than under a dictatorship, the conflict will be decreasingly a choice between one or the other of the traditional or closed patterns—sacred or secular but increasingly the necessity for the development of a new mentality that will achieve some new and creative synthesis. The wholistic approach is one example of an open pattern which attempts to conserve the values of both the sacred and the secular ways of life and to see these as parts of a whole that includes insights not available at the time the older traditions were formulated.

Today the confusion of creeds in our heterogeneous culture poses problems for the integration of personal living. It has been found that a careful consideration of possible alternative courses of action, prior to a decision to act, has proven valuable and further that it is desirable for individuals and groups to have some relatively consistant frame-of-reference as a guide in dealing with the myriad of specific problem issues.

One fruitful pursuit is to focus on behavioral characteristics in which a classification of ways of life as sacred, secular and wholistic is helpful.* Again one may study specific areas of individual-institutional life and thought in which applied areas may furnish case studies in which the usefulness of varied conceptual schemes can be tested both theoretically and practically. An illustration of the need for a comprehensive scheme in the area of philosophy of education is proposed in the concluding chapter of **Qualities of Experience and Educational Philosophy,** edited by John P. Wynne, (Bookman Associates, New York, 1960), in the concluding chapter entitled "The Philosophical Issues in an Open-Closed Framework."

Here, in **Patterns of Thinking,** the primary focus is on beliefs—not only the classic formulations by supernaturalists, materialists and experimentalists—but on the kinds of problems included in any comprehensive patterns of thinking, philosophic or non-philosophic, as well as on the need for some more adequate method of classifying the myriad answers to these questions than that usually provided for in the study of individual philosophical systems. In considering the pertinent questions the usual three-fold division of

* In actual use the content of these articles is part two of a Trilogy entitled *Patterns of Ideas;* including Patterns of Living, Patterns of Thinking and Patterns of Philosophizing.

philosophical systems (epistemology, metaphysics and axiology) is used but the terminology is translated into more commonly understood terms (knowledge-views, world-views and value-views). In presenting and considering the answers, the Open-Closed classificatory scheme is proposed.

INTRODUCTION

Patterns of Thinking is an attempt at a simple and concise presentation of some of the basic questions and alternative answers to those questions with which any comprehensive view of the "totality of existence" should deal. While the model for analysis comes from the field of philosophy and while most of the questions and answers in this volume are drawn from this same discipline, other models might be used and illustrations might be taken from other synoptic disciplines. It is hoped that the use of non-technical terminology and a simple classificatory system for the many patterns of thinking will aid in the clarification of similarities as well as differences in basic assumptions of various frames-of-reference. That such understanding of differences in initial assumptions might lead believers in one system to cease trying to "prove" at the theoretical level the falsity of another system is probably too much to expect. However, some understanding of the reasons for agreeing to disagree might contribute to a more careful consideration at the practical operational level of the adequacy or inadequacy of alternative theoretical proposals.

The Organization of Knowledge.—Some comprehension of the magnitude and significance of the funded experience of the race is one of the most precious heritages of contemporary man. The results of the aspirations, creations and conservations—as well as of the blood, sweat and tears of those who have gone before—surround us from birth in **common sense** knowledge on the one hand and the **disciplines** on the other. However, this heritage is frequently unappreciated and unused for want of the ability to see the significance of the parts in relationship to the whole. It is the purpose of a synoptic philosophy to furnish the perspective.

Common sense knowledge may be defined as that which is accepted uncritically, does not appear to require verification because it is widely held and appears on the surface to brook no debate by the specific person or group to whom it is "common." Disciplines on the other hand are bodies of knowledge in rather well defined fields which have been subject to criticism, verification and refinement of the material or experience around which the field is organized. The subject matter is usually open to check by competent observers who may view it from a variety of vantage points.

"Specialized" disciplines focus on specific aspects of experience—science, religion, art, etc.—and are concerned primarily with the contemporary formulation of the subject matter into some organized form and with delineation of its present limits, concerns, purposes, accumulated knowledges and trends. The "Synoptic" disciplines are History and Philosophy. They differ from the specialized disciplines in that they are primarily descriptive and are concerned with a comprehensive general view of the whole of experience. Although either History or Philosophy in this sense may for specific purposes concern itself with a discrete or specialized area each is primarily concerned with interrelationships and wholes.

In a thoroughgoing Synoptic History one would be concerned with what has happened developmentally in the totality of experience—history of scientific discoveries, history of aesthetic expressions, history of religious thought, etc. Each would find its place in interrelationship with each other at any single period and in the sweep of time. In Synoptic Philosophy one is concerned

with the processes by which the general views are and have been arrived at and with the meanings these views have for contemporary individual and social living.

Synoptic Philosophy.—If thinking is defined as "behavior involving a delayed response until after various possible courses of action have been considered," thought processes could be studied in almost any field of knowledge. Since the time of the Greeks those men who reflected systematically upon general and comprehensive views of experience have been called philosophers. As the ideas of these individuals were classified and systematized by their followers, various schools of philosophy emerged. It is on the procedures by which adherents to some of these schools arrived at their conclusions, upon the organization of certain fundamental characteristcs of these views and upon the experiential implications of these views for various aspects of personal and social living that Patterns of Thinking focuses. These philosophical problems can and have been approached in many ways.

A person may go through the process of systematically examining, by whatever method, everyday patterns of applied philosophy in education, religion, politics, economics or the family, and trace conflicting value statements to their respective basic assumptions and thus discover the pluralistic character of the contemporary assumptions and practices. To go no further than to point out this pluralism gains little. Again, one may compare and evaluate identifiable systems of general philosophy in regard to their internal consistency, comprehensiveness in dealing with relevant data, and similarities to and differences from other so-called systems. By this method confusion may be only more confounded.

Historians and authors of text books have classified philosophical positions on the basis of certain similarities into "systems" which have then been discussed from the point of view of their differences. The classifications have varied from time to time in way reflecting not only the interpretation of the position classified, but the concerns of the classifier and the interests of the period in which he lived. Discussion of which philosopher belonged to which system or sub-division of a system at what period in his life, and consideration of the relationship of applied practices to certain systematic assumptions has occupied much of the time of majors in philosophy and for them has its values. However, instead of any of these, what is sought in this study is a conceptual framework by means of which comprehensive general views of experience can be understood and evaluated in a relatively simple way.

Patterns of Thinking.—The classic division of a philosophical system into its epistemology (knowledge-view), its metaphysics (world-view) and its axiology (value-view) still appears to be most illuminating for purposes of analysing basic assumptions. Therefore, the **procedural** or epistemological questions concerned with ways of getting, testing and regarding ideas; the **organizational** or metaphysical questions concerned with fundamental characteristics of the "totality" of existence (nature, culture and human nature); and the **experiential** or axiological questions concerning ways of seeking, exaluating and achieving values, will be asked. It is understood that these parts will be separated only for purpose of analysis since in any given system they are closely interrelated and even overlap. In brief form the parts and sub-parts may be defined as follows:

Knowledge-views (K-V) are beliefs about the ways of getting, testing and regarding ideas—"getting" has to do with ways in which ideas are acquired, "testing" has to do with the processes of confirming accuracy and "regarding" has to do with the general attitudes held toward ideas.

World-views (W-V) are beliefs about

the fundamental characteristics of the "totality" of existence; including nature, culture and human nature—"nature" refers primarily to man's physical environment, "culture" refers primarily to man's social environment and "human nature" refers primarily to man himself.

Value-views (V-V) are beliefs about the ways of seeking, evaluating and achieving human values—"seeking" is concerned primarily with world-view implications, "evaluating" is concerned primarily with knowledge-view implications and "achieving" is concerned with the actual application of the value theory.

Questions and Answers—What kind of questions and types of answers are typical in each of the three parts of a pattern of thinking? First, with regard to **knowledge**—

Relative to "getting" or ways of acquiring knowledge we may ask: Where do ideas come from? Do they come before (a priori) or after (a posterior) experience? Do they come by sensation, revelation, intuition or reason? Should we search our minds to find "innate ideas"? Are certain authorities invested with "true" ideas? Are there certain ways of getting ideas that are better than others? How is the best way to be determined? Is one method of problem solving best for all problems? How is logic related to acquiring ideas? Are all forms of logic equally good for all types of reasoning? Is knowledge acquired only through verbal symbols or through artistic, musical and other symbols as well?

Relative to testing knowledge one may ask: Are all ideas subject to test? To what type of knowledge do such tests as formal logic, empirical data or a combination of the two apply? Do imagination or feeling have any place in the testing of knowledge? What are facts? How should they be used in testing knowledge? How does one compare critically supposedly "true" ideas on which there is not agreement? Are consequencs a good test of all or some ideas? Can basic assumptions be tested? What does statistical method prove? What does logical demonstration demonstrate?

Relative to ways of regarding knowledge one may ask: Does absolute truth exist? Is truth objective or subjective? Is all knowledge subject to public check or is some limited to personal experience? Are moral absolutes essential to the good life? Should scientific knowledge be regarded differently from religious knowledge? Should certain ideas be accepted without question? Are there natural and moral laws which exist and must be sought out? Should knowledge be regarded as final or provisional, certain or probable, complete or incomplete, inaccessible or accessible, non-cumulative or cumulative?

The preceding questions constitute a by no means exhaustive list, even through the attempt to answer them one by one might be an exhausting task. Therefore instead of treating the answers atomistically certain similarities are selected for purposes of classification. The procedure here used is that of a formal theoretical conceptual scheme with a different set of terms used initially for each part of the system. Answers to procedural or epistemological questions depend on processes that are primarily **external** (Authoritarianism), **internal** (Subjectivism) or **situational** (Contextualism).

Combining the three kinds of questions and the three types of answers with which knowledge-views are primarily concerned gives the following outline:

I. Knowledge-views are beliefs about the ways of **getting, testing** and **regarding** ideas. The processes may be a. **external,** which we shall call Authoritarianism; b. **internal,** which we shall call Subjectivism, and c. **situational,** which we shall call Contextualism. (1) In **getting** ideas: a. the external process is from the experience of **others;** b. the internal process is from **one's own** ex-

perience, or c. the situational process is from **joint** experiences and experiments. (2) In **testing** ideas: a. the external process involves comparison with the ideas of others, which we shall call the test of **tradition;** b. the internal process involves comparison with one's own feelings or ideas, which we shall call the test of **intuition**; or c. the situational process involves comparison with facts-ideas-consequences, which we shall call the test of cognitional efficiency. (3) In regarding ideas: a. the external process results in **Objective Truth;** b. the internal process results in **Subjective Truth,** or c. the situational process results in **objective-subjective truths.**

Again, what questions are to be raised with regard to **world-views?** Relative to nature one may ask: Are there Natural Laws to be sought out? Are such laws mechanical? . . . teleological? . . . merely descriptive of predictable processes? Are quality and quantity in nature equally real? Are Space and Time absolute realities? Is nature dynamic? Does monotheism, polytheism, deism, determinism or some other "ism" best explain the world around us?

Relative to culture one may ask: Is there some economic, political, familial or religious system which if followed would be most desirable for all mankind? What is the relationship between basic beliefs and the development of institutions within a culture? Should one culture superimpose its values and constructs upon another? Are the mores of a culture directly related to some absolute moral law?

Relative to human nature one may ask: Are mind and body essentially different? Does man have a soul? If so, what is it? Does man have free will? How does the will operate? Is mind a function of the organism? From whence does man derive his value judgments?

Relative to the totality of existence one may ask: Is there a basic orderliness to be discovered? Is some form of supernaturalism essential to an understanding of the "totality"? Is the world of appearance different from the world of reality? Can some key concept be found that is adequate in dealing with nature, culture and human nature?

Again, this is by no means a complete list of questions in this area. However, the method proposed for handling the answers to these and other world-view questions is to classify the descriptions as primarily **deterministic** (Formalism), **atomistic** (Casualism), or **developmental** (Functionalism).

Combining the three kinds of questions and the three types of answers associated with world-views gives the following outline:

II. World-views are beliefs about the "totality" of existence; including **nature, culture,** and **human nature.** The descriptions may be a. **deterministic,** which we shall call Formalism; b. **atomistic,** which we shall call Casualism, or c. **developmental,** which we shall call Functionalism. (1) In describing **nature:** a. the deterministic view is that this is a **World of Law;** b. the atomistic view is that this is a **World of Chance;** or c. the developmental view is that this is an **episodic world.** (2) In describing **culture:** a. the deterministic view is **ethnocentric;** b. the atomistic view is **egocentric,** and c. the developmental view is **anthropocentric.** (3) In describing **human nature:** a. the deterministic view is that man is ruled by **one faculty;** b. the atomistic view is that man is a **product of chance,** or c. the developmental view is that man is a **bio-social personality.**

Finally, what questions are to be raised with regard to **values?** Relative to seeking values one may ask: Are human values inherent in the universe? Are there certain values common to all mankind? Is there an infallible source of moral standards? How is conscience related to value judgments? Is there cosmic support for certain values? Are cultural mores adequate standards for persons of that culture? How is intelligent choice related to value judgment?

Relative to evaluating values one may ask: Are values best judged by their conformity to some convention or by their consequences? Is happiness the highest value? Are human values the highest of cosmic values? What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility? Does the end justify the means? Should one's own cultural values be normative for all cultures? Are individual or social values of greatest importance? Are there absolute values of goodness, beauty and truth by which to measure human values?

Relative to achieving values one may ask: Are human values best exemplified by action? How should individual creativity be related to social continuity? What is each person's obligation to other human beings? . . . to his own personal growth? . . . to social progress? Is prayer, force, persuasion, education or some other means most effective in achieving values?

The method proposed for handling the answers to these and similar value-view questions assumes that they are corrolaries to certain types of knowledge-views and world-views and refers to them as Collectivism, Individualism or Interpersonalism, respectively. Combining the questions and answers gives the following outline:

III. Value-views are beliefs about ways of **seeking, evaluating** and **achieving** human values. The affirmations may be considered as corrolaries of world-views and knowledge-views that are a. **formalistic and authoritarian,** which we shall call Collectivism; b. **casual and subjective,** which we shall call Individualism; or c. **functional and contextual,** which we shall call Interpersonalism. (1) In **seeking** human values, the primary concern is with their metaphysical status: a. for the collectivist the approach is **formalistic;** b. for the individualist the approach is **casual;** or c. for the interpersonalist the approach is **functional.** (2) in **evaluating** human values, the primary concern is with the process of making value-judgments: a. for the collectivist the criteria are **authoritarian;** b. for the individualist the criteria are **subjective;** or c. for the interpersonalist the criteria are **contextual.** (3) In **achieving** values, the primary concern is with the behaviors that are required to realize the desired goals: a. the **collectivist** recommends conformity to the ways of the group; b. the **individualist** recommends complete personal freedom; or c. the **interpersonalist** recommends freedom and responsibility.

Conclusion. Now that the kinds and questions and types of answers for the parts of the pattern have been briefly stated, the combination of certain views (knowledge -world-value) into patterns reveal configurations with certain identifiable characteristics. In other words, both the pattern and its parts may be classified as OPEN or CLOSED, assuming that a system or idea is **open** if it can be characterized as incomplete rather than complete, probable rather than certain, provisional rather than final, accessible rather than inaccessible, and cumulative rather than non-cumulative. It is **closed** if it has the opposite characteristics.

Not only this but as has been previously noted (Wynne, **Ibid.** p. 155): "Upon further examination it will be found that the **closed** systems, although fundamentally alike in the above-mentioned characteristics, can be divided into two rather well defined subtypes, for which I have had difficulty finding an over-all designation, but which will become clear, I hope, in ensuing discussion. For purpose of illustration let us take a political theory which might be called "hierarchic" in nature (such as a kingdom or a dictatorship). Its epistemological framework would be that of **authoritarianism** (the view that there is a supreme, extrinsic source of unconditional and independent knowledge). Its metaphysical framework would be that of **formalism** (the view that the world including man is explained by some all-determining fac-

tor). Its axiological framework would be that of **collectivism** (the view that the beliefs and behaviors of the in-group are final, unqualified and not debatable). Such a theory would be classified as **closed** by the definition of being complete, certain, final, inaccessible and non-cumulative.

"Equally closed, but in quite a different way, is the political theory which might be called 'anarchic.' Its epistemological framework is that of **subjectivism** (the view that unconditional and independent knowledge comes from an inner source). Its metaphysical framework is **casualism** (the view that the world, including man, lacks any all-determining factor). Its axiological framework is **individualism** (the view that beliefs and behaviors are dependent only on the opinion and immediate experience of the individual). It will be noted that the essential difference between these two closed theories is that each one denies what the other affirms.

"An **open** political theory is that commonly known as 'democratic.' Its epistemological framework is that of **contextualism** (the view that knowledge is conditioned by the relationship between the observer and the available data and by agreement among peers). Its metaphysical framework is that of **functionalism** (the view that the world, including man, is characterized by emergent creativity and order). Its axiological framework is that of **interpersonalism** (the view that beliefs and behaviors are operational procedures in and among individuals and groups)."

Similar examples could be taken from the literature concerned with other applied value areas but in each case the theory of value is part of a configuration that includes the other two parts of the pattern. One might begin with a definition of a specific aspect of a world-view or a term used in discussing knowledge-views and note its relation to the other two parts and arrive at the same conclusions concerning types of thinking.

In summary, now that the parts have been outlined it appears that a **pattern of thinking** is internally consistent if the type is predominantly **hierarchic** (authoritarianism - formalism - collectivism), **anarchic** (subjectivism-casualism-individualism) or **democratic** (contextualism-functionalism-interpersonalism), and also that the first two (hierarchic and anarchic) are of the CLOSED type, while the third (democratic) is of the OPEN type of thinking.

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