Thinking and Doing

Hector-Neri Castañeda

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HECTOR-NERI CASTAÑEDA
The Mahlon Powell Professor of Philosophy, Indiana University
Editor of *Noûs*

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The Philosophical Foundations of Institutions

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This book expounds a system of theories on several different aspects of practical thinking and action, the bulk of which were conceived between 1951 and 1955. The ensuing years I have spent, among other things, developing those theories, working out their harmony and unity, gathering the relevant large collection of supporting evidence, and attempting to acquire a modest mastery of the English language so as to give those theories a minimally communicable expression. The results are far from perfect. But I am confident that a reader will both forgive my style, lexicon, and grammar, and build better views upon my errors, if he can appreciate the comprehensiveness and the unity of my theories and the richness of the supporting data.

Naturally, the preparation of a treatise during twenty-four years owes much to many people. The philosophical debts on specific points that I remember are recorded in the appropriate notes. But to the many critics of early statements of my views in private discussions and to the many students in my ethics classes, whose questions and challenges undoubtedly contributed to my developing a better formulation of many a thesis and argument, I can only express, apologetically, my collective and anonymous gratitude.

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Perhaps the greatest influence, after Sellars', both on my philosophical methodology and on what I take philosophy to be about is that of my colleagues at Wayne State University during 1957–64, especially Richard Cartwright, David Falk, Edmund Gettier, Keith Lehrer, George Nakhnikian, Alvin Plantinga, and Robert Sleigh. Nakhnikian criticized many of my earlier papers and generously corrected my style and grammar. Keither Leher read in 1972 a draft, written in 1968–71, which included both this book and a history of the philosophical theory of obligation in the Twentieth Century (this history furnishing additional evidence for my theories), and presented me with eight pages of valuable comments.

I owe special gratitude to Juan José Arévalo, the 1945–51 President of Guatemala and his Minister of Education, the late Ricardo Castañeda Paganini, for having made it possible for me to study philosophy under Sellars' guidance. Thanks to the British Council and the Guatemalan University of San Carlos I was able to work on action theory at Oxford University during 1955–56. Wayne State University and the Guggenheim Foundation supported my 1967–68 sabbatical leave during which I planned this book, began its writing, and did some of the final research for it. Since 1969 Indiana University has encouraged my research providing me with valuable peace of mind and stimulating colleagues.

My associate William Rapaport has helped me with some criticisms and with the useful figures in Chapters 1 and 12. Anita Baugh and Elizabeth Meyers wrestled valiantly with my obscure handwriting in order to produce the 1968–71 typescript. Kim Liford, chiefly, and Margaret Dennig have courageously fought their way through the corrections of that typescript and have delivered the final copy. To all of them I am very grateful for their precious aid and their forbearance.

To those this treatise is dedicated I owe the greatest debt for their patient sacrifices that made it feasible for me to write several versions of it.

H-N.C.

Bloomington, Indiana,
January 27, 1975

PREFACE

Philosophy is the search for the large patterns of the world and of the large patterns of experience, perceptual, theoretical,..., aesthetic, and practical – the patterns that, regardless of specific contents, characterize the main types of experience.

In this book I carry out my search for the large patterns of *practical* experience: the experience of deliberation, of recognition of duties and their conflicts, of attempts to guide other person's conduct, of deciding to act, of influencing the physical world with one's doings, and the like. This is the experience that makes possible our social life, the formulation of plans for teamwork, the building of institutions, the development of nations, and the adoption of the ideal of morality.

Here I develop a network of theories about the most fundamental aspects of practical thinking: what is thought in such thinking; what makes that thinking correct; what makes it practical; and the structure of the doings that accrue to the world when such thinking is effective. I have attempted to build each theory in sufficient detail, so that it illuminates its subject matter with a certain degree of fullness. But I have also aimed at producing an harmonious system of theories, so that the grand pattern of practical thinking can be admired, not only for the beauty of the separate structures of its parts, but also for its architectonic unity. Chapter 1 gives the details of the many facets of this project and discusses some methodological techniques.

Each of the chapters has been conceived as a unit by itself, but most of them are not wholly self-sufficient. The hurried reader who is especially interested in one of the main topics may proceed directly to the chapters in which the topic is dealt with, although a preliminary quick glance at Chapter 2 may be helpful. For a thorough study of a topic the references to the supporting evidence and complementary theories in other chapters should be followed up. (The table of contents, which is analytic, and the index may prove of value in pursuing more distant connections). A reader who wants to take the development of the theories in the order they are

presented, but prefers to concentrate on certain types of theories (ontological, logical, meta-psychological) may read the book through skipping only the sections that deviate from the path of his main interest.

The chapters of this book are, then, initially independent of each other up to a point, but grow in interrelatedness with the other chapters. This is an unavoidable consequence of our attending to the complexities of each aspect of practical thinking including its connections with the other aspects. Perhaps the following arrangement of chapters of the book where some main topics are treated may be of some help to the reader interested in a single one of the major aspects of practical thinking.

Action, doings and deeds: 12, 5, 10–11 [note the order]
Intentions and intending: 2, §5; 6; 10;12
Wants, needs and desires: 5; 7, §4–§6; 10, §4–§5; 11
The finitude of the mind: 10–12
Ought, obligation, norms and deontic judgments: 2, §7; 7–9, 11, 13
Imperatives and prescriptions: 2, §3 and §4; 4; 5; 10, §6
Propositions: 2, §2; 3; 5; 7; 9
Truth and legitimacy: 3, §2; 5; 6, §8; 8
Logic: 3, 4, §2, §9; 6, §7; 8; 9
Practical language: 1, §4; 3, §6–§7; 4, §4, §5; 6, §1–2; 7, §9–14; 10, §3; 11, §2–5
Metaphysics: 1, §3; 2, §3; 10, §3; 12; 13

Obviously, practical thinking is not an isolated phenomenon, but is an integral part of our experience of the world. This overall total unity of experience I have kept in view throughout these investigations. It has forced its way into the unity of the system of theories I have arrive at here. Yet its more pervasive core lies beyond our present reach. But I have taken pains to indicate at the appropriate places both in the main body of the text and in notes, where and how our large issues in the theory of practical thinking blend with or become difused into the most fundamental problems of general philosophy.

We search for the large patterns of experience, but underlying our concrete experiences lie only segments of those patterns. Hence, we have two philosophical tasks: (1) to describe a large amount of formal aspects of our concrete experiences, thus, collecting philosophical data, and (2)

to project from the rich data a theory, i.e., a system of hypotheses, about the total pattern. I have here attempted to theorize on the basis of abundant data. No data can *prove* any theory, mine or somebody else's. But everybody can test another's theories, and if these theories are fruitful, he can build better and more comprehensive ones on them. This fruitfulness I have striven to achieve. Given the totalitarian or holistic nature of philosophy, *no* philosophical theory, regardless of how comprehensive it may be, is anything but tentative.

This treatise puts forward a very comprehensive theory of action, i.e., of the structure of human action, delving into the normative and practical structures of practical thinking, and the most basic structure of practical reasoning. Yet it does not deal with values. Naturally, in terms of what in Ch. 1 we call the Representational Image of practical thinking, our theory of action has to be complemented with the theory of the implicational relationships between values and intentions and norms. But since values are nothing more than representations to consciousness of facts about needs, desires, wants, and intentions of agents, the theory of the validity of practical thought contents and the truth of normative judgments can connect directly with those facts about needs, wants, and intentions, as we show in Chs. 5, 6, 10, and 11, thus bypassing the value judgments and the theory of values. In general, the peculiarity of values as contents of consciousness makes them more indispensable, not for action, but for esthetic contemplation and the theory of art.

It would be appropriate to end this preface with a list of both the most important theses and the new views I am defending in this treatise. I mean the specific theses over and above the important general claims made above that: (i) the views on the specific topics of practical thinking and action theory must belong to one unified comprehensive theory; (ii) this comprehensive theory must be integrated within a 'larger' theory of the mind and reality; and (iii) the structural simplicity of a theory, which is a crucial desideratum, must yield pride of precedence to the capacity of a theory to conform to the largest possible collection of data. In consonance with these general theses, the system of theories here developed is based on a large amount of data, and its structural cumulative simplicity consists of its threading together a large number of theses on a wealth of topics. It would be too tedious and lengthy to summarize the several theories and their unity here bereft of their evidence. The reader can frame an idea of

the richness of the crucial and novel theses by glancing at the topical index, in particular, by reading the content of the entry Principles and other entries like Deontic, Imperative, Ought, Thinking, Mandate, Intention, Action, and Language.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: TASKS AND PROBLEMS

In this chapter we both demarcate the subject-matter and formulate the aims of the ensuing investigations. We explain in what sense this is an investigation into the philosophical foundations of institutions and normative systems. We distinguish six sets of philosophical problems which will be dealt with in this book. Our aim is to develop a family of interconnected theories that provide a unitary systematic account of our problems. We will take some pains to collect, describe and organize a large amount of data, so that our theorization can be both comprehensive and well supported.

1. THE FOUNDATIONS OF NORMATIVE SYSTEMS AND INSTITUTIONS

One of our main topics is the philosophical foundations of normative systems. Since a norm is a principle of action, the foundations of normative systems lie ultimately in the nature of action and in the nature of practical thinking, i.e., the thinking, intimately bound up with action, concerning what is right, or wrong, to do in certain circumstances. The study of the philosophical foundations of normative systems is simply the study of the structure of practical thinking ,the structure of what is thought in practical thinking, the connection between both of them and action, and the role and status in the world of what is thought in practical thinking. Because of the characteristic involvement of thinking with language, the investigation will have to delve into the functions and structure of the language of action.

Many philosophers have been concerned with the foundations of morality, and many others with the foundations of law. In this book we sharpen and generalize the problem so as to include the general foundations of all normative systems. Roughly speaking, a normative system is a certain set of rules, or norms, or judgments, or statements, that formulate permissions, licenses, rights, obligations, requirements, duties, injunctions, prohibitions, interdictions, or some type of correctness or incorrectness

of some course of action – or, alternatively, a certain set of *do*'s or *don't*s and *shall*'s or *shan't*s.

The moral codes of all the different communities and the legal systems of the nations of the world are, of course, among the most important normative systems. But each institution of any society is either a normative system or, more likely, a complex of normative systems which assign roles and duties to the officers of the corresponding institutional hierarchy. Each particular law or ordinance, each by-law of an association, each set of rules of a game, and each agreement, contract or promise is, or determines, a normative system.

One of the tasks of the present investigation is to clarify the very concept of normative system. Such a task includes that of explaining the relationships between any two of the different items mentioned above as composing a normative system. We will, for instance, explain how in general licenses or rights relate to requirements or oughts, and how these relate to *do*'s and *don't*s, and how all of the preceding relate to *shall*'s and *shan't*s. For the time being let us say for convenience that normative systems are (at least in part) systems of *norms* or *deontic judgments*.

A normative system is (in part) a system of norms determined by a special characteristic set of considerations, through which it partitions all actions into three classes: (i) those actions that are *required* by those characteristic considerations; (ii) those (different) actions that are *unrequired*, i.e., whose no-performance is required by those same considerations, and (iii) all other actions, which are thus the actions the normative system leaves open, or free, for every agent to perform or not to perform as he pleases. (We may allow as a limiting case that normative system that has actions neither of type (i) nor of type (ii).) Thus, each normative system determines a type or kind of *requiredness*. And each norm either assigns to some action the normative character of being required, or assigns to it the normative character of being non-required, by the considerations characteristic of the normative system to which the norm belongs. Thus, the elucidation of the nature of a normative system consists (at least in part) in the elucidation of the nature of its characteristic requiredness. This is tantamount to the elucidation of the nature of the norms characteristic of the system. Now, the characteristic norms of a normative system N are of the following canonical form:

(F) X is required *by N* [or ought *Nly*] to do A,

where the adverbial phrase *'by N'* [or *'Nly'*] signals the type of requiredness determined by system N. Consider for instance:

(1) One is required *by the local traffic regulations* to stop before a red light;
(2) X ought *morally* to forgive Y;
(3) Jones ought, *in accordance with his promise to his wife of June 15,* to buy himself a new suit.

In these examples the italicized adverbial phrases clearly indicate the types of requiredness involved, and they also indicate in the proper contexts of utterance to what normative systems the norms they would express belong to.

The full theory of a given institution *i* is at bottom, then, the total theory of the norms characterizing, or, better, constituting, the normative system N(*i*) that determines institution *i*. This is the theory that accounts for the logical form of such norms, their implication relationships, and their truth conditions. For example, the total theory or philosophy of morality is the theory of the norms of the form 'X ought *morally* to do action A' as well as of the complex statements composed of such norms. Likewise, the theory or philosophy of law is the theory of the norms involving the form 'X must (ought, should) *legally* do A'. Similarly for the other institutions. In short, the *total theory of an institution i* is composed of two parts:

(a) the *general* theory of norms, i.e., the general theory of the sense and truth constraints built into the matrix:

(F.1) X ought [is required, is obligated]_____ to do A, and

(b) the *special* theory of the particular institution *i*, that is, the theory of the contributions to the truth conditions of the norms composing the corresponding normative system N(*i*) by the special considerations characteristic of N(*i*); in brief, the special theory of institution *i* is the theory of what the adverbial phrase entering in the blank in form (F.1) above expresses.

Thus, the special theory of morality is the theory of the adverb 'morally', rather than the theory of *ought*, as is often said. The special theory that constitutes the distinctive part of the philosophy of law is simply the theory of the adverb 'legally'. But neither the philosophy of morals (or

morality) nor the philosophy of law has anything to say about general requiredness.[1]

In this book we develop a series of theories that deal with the general normative matrix (F.1). We place it in a still larger context, relating it to other types of statements and to the general mechanisms of action. These theories are the foundation for the special theories (b) of particular institutions. The specific theories of type (b) are, so to speak, adverbial theories that modify the theory of requiredness in general, when superimposed upon it. Naturally, the adverbial character of the special theories of given institutions does not prevent such theories from being more complex and more difficult to formulate than the general theory of their foundational matrix (F.1). Furthermore, the complexity of a special theory may depend on the fact that the institution the theory deals with is a complex of sub-institutions. This is indeed the case both with morality and with the law. Morality is, as I have explained elsewhere[2], a complex of three interacting normative subsystems. That is, the adverb 'morally' has a threefold ambiguity; or, if you prefer, it is an adverb that needs specification by one of three subsidiary adverbs that modify it. A system of law, especially in contemporary societies, is a most complex normative system: it is a huge system of systems, some of which are also systems of systems of norms.

To sum up, the preceding explains briefly a sense in which our study of norms and requiredness in general provides foundations for the studies of institutions, especially morality and the law. It also indicates how the study of normative systems can be concentrated at least in part on the study of the structure of norms, their interrelationships, and their relationships to other things, especially circumstances, thinking, and action.

The involvement of a normative system with the production of action is precisely its *raison d'être*. However useful it is to consider a normative system as an abstract system of norms, the crucial thing is that a normative system is adopted by a special domain of agents. Even when there is a process of enactment carried out by a representative set of norm-makers or legislators, the normative system is meant to be adopted by the agents of the domain, so that they can guide their actions by it. The life of a normative system lies, so to speak, in the internalization of the norms composing it into the action mechanisms of the agents for whom the system formulates its own special brand of requiredness. That internali-

zation of a normative system makes the agents possessing it rational producers of action in two ways. On the one hand, an agent is rational, superficially speaking, both by contemplating different courses of action as within his power and by being aware of the actions he performs. On the other hand, an agent is a rational producer of action, in a profound sense, when he chooses courses of action for performance from the very conception of the requiredness of the action he believes to be required by the sum total of his circumstances, or by the balance of the special considerations of the diverse requiredness impinging on him in his current circumstances. More generally, to think endorsingly at a certain time that an action is somehow required through some existing circumstance by virtue of one's having adopted a certain normative system, is to nudge oneself to some degree to perform the action in question. Normative thinking is a thinking with an internal causality, i.e., a causality involving what is thought and what one is inclined to do.

The connection between the performance of an action and the thought of a norm formulating a special requiredness, is one of the main topics on which this investigation is to shed some light. But in order to increase the flood of light we must, once again, generalize the problem. This time we generalize beyond the practical dimension of normative systems, and consider the general problem of how practical thinking, whether normative or not, connects with action.

2. Practical thinking

We exercise our thinking powers in learning what things are and how they relate to, and affect, one another. We postulate hypotheses and invent theories about what things are and how they affect one another. These are all instances of thinking in which one contemplates the world, its contents, and its laws. They are variously referred to as descriptive, or theoretical, or contemplative, or pure uses of reason. Here we shall call them instances of *contemplative* or *propositional thinking*.

But we also exercise our thinking powers in finding out or deciding what to so, as well as in helping others to decide or learn what to do. Knowing what to do is an intimate and subtle blending of contemplation and causation. Thinking what to do oneself, or what another person is to do, consists partly in the contemplation of several fragments of future possible

worlds, all beginning at the terminal point of a past history shared by those worlds. Thinking what to do is much more than comparing alternative fragments of the future of the world. It is also to be at least dimly aware of oneself as housing causal powers that can alter, even if slightly, the future of the world. To come to know what to do is to have a thought which itself consists of an awareness of its bringing about an action, or of its bringing about at least a re-arrangement of the causal powers in oneself, so as to create a state of readiness for action in the appropriate circumstances. To advise or, in general, to tell another agent what to do is to guide him to, or even to force him into, a contemplation of the alternative fragments of the future of the world that impinge on his manifold of causal powers; moreover, it is to lead him to contemplation on the presupposition that those powers will be activated, or at least re-arranged into a state of readiness, by the agent's very contemplation of those alternative possible futures of the world.

Thinking what to do oneself, or what another is to do, intending or deciding to do something (whatever it may be), advising or telling others what to do, are just some of the practical uses of reason; they are forms of *practical thinking*. They and their cognates are the locus of the investigations carried out in this book. We will explore here the 'nature' of practical thinking.

The causational dimension is the most profound mystery in the nature of practical thinking. That dimension is the coalescence of contemplation and causation, we said; but it is more: it is the coalescence of contemplation and the causation of that contemplation, and the contemplation of that causation. Practical thinking is a most intricate intermeshing of awareness and action, and of action and *what* one is aware of. Thus, however it is that a man's thinking reorganizes his tendencies to act and even eventuates in action, practical thinking consists of a massive and obscure awareness of one's, or other's, causational powers through some characteristic concepts and some characteristic thought contents. We shall call them *practical concepts* and *practical thought contents*. Among the practical concepts are the concepts of *ought, right,* and *wrong,* the concept expressed by the imperative mood, and the concept expressed by the future tense in declarations of resolution or intent.

In the case of purely contemplative thinking, the units of thought content are variously called *propositions, statements,* and *judgments*. They

are characterized by being true or false, and by other aspects discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. In order to avoid begging any questions we shall use the Greek work *noema* (plural *noemata*), meaning *what is thought* or *conceived, planned* or *purposed,* to refer both to propositions and to the similar counterpart units of content of practical thinking.

Among the fundamental noemata that appear to consciousness in practical thinking are:

(1) *what* one thinks when one intends to do something (hereafter called an *intention*); *what* one thinks when one makes up his mind to do something (hereafter called a *decision*);
(2) *what* one thinks when one considers, even without issuing it a command, an order, a piece of advice, a request, or an entreaty;
(3) *what* one thinks when one conjectures or comes to believe that a man has an obligation, or a duty, to do something, or that he ought to, or is required to, do this or that;
(4) *what* one thinks one supposes that it is wrong, or unlawful, or forbidden, for a certain agent to perform a given act;
(5) *what* one thinks when one considers or thinks that it is right, or permissible, for a man to do some action A.

Of course, some contents of practical thinking are propositions. This is the case when one considers a proposition as a condition, or a circumstance, or a qualification, of a decision, obligation, order, or prohibition. Propositions also enter practical thinking in the identification of agents thought of as possessors of obligations, permissions, or rights, as well as in the identification of objects as persons affected by obligatory or forbidden actions. (These crucial distinctions will be elucidated in Chapters 4–9.)

We shall *theorize* that decisions are intentions that appear at the tail end of deliberations. For convenience we shall call:

(1) *intentions,* all noemata of type (1);
(2) *mandates* or *imperatives,* all members of type (2);
(3) *ought-judgments,* the noemata of type (3);
(4) *wrong-judgments,* those of type (4), and
(5) *right-judgments,* those of type (5).

We shall refer to ought-, wrong-, and right-judgments as *deontic noemata*. In Chapter 7, we shall argue that *deontic noemata* are propositions. Non-commitally, i.e., without implying that they are genuine properties, we shall call oughtness (obligatoriness, dutihood), wrongness (unlawfulness, forbiddenness), and rightness (permissibility, allowedness) *deontic properties*. The categories of noemata are further explained in Chapter 2, and in the ensuing chapters they receive full clarification.

Undeniably, there is practical thinking. Undeniably, its contents are more variegated than those of purely contemplative thinking, as the preceding list shows. Yet there is an obvious sense in which purely contemplative thinking and its contents have an ontological primacy over practical thinking and its contents. This is the sense in which there is no inconsistency in the supposition that there might be a purely contemplative creature, endowed with the capacity to think and the power to cognize the world, but deprived of the power to act deliberately on the world: that is, deprived of the power to conceive intentions or mandates and unable to consider deontic noemata. On the other hand, if a creature is an agent endowed with practical reason, he is, a fortiori, endowed with contemplative thinking.

This is why propositions are also contents of practical thinking. Our intentions and our duties to act depend on our circumstances. This is as it must be: we want to change the *same* world we find ourselves in, i.e., the world our perceptions and beliefs are about. The comprehensiveness of practical thinking that includes and requires contemplative thinking is characteristic of a mind that has the adequate mechanism, with great survival value, for keeping fast to the needed *unity* of the world of contemplation and the world of action. While contemplative thinking is, as explained, ontologically prior, and could in principle appear pure in an angelic creature, practical thinking becomes psychologically dominant and logically encompassing. The ultimate unity of reason *is* the unity of practical reason.

There is still a series of more profound ontological problems about reality surrounding practical thinking. In ordinary contemplative thinking we consider propositions, which are true or false, and if a proposition is true, there is then in the world a fact corresponding to (or, in some theories, identical with) that proposition. This naturally raises the question whether anything similarly corresponds to the practical noemata or

not. Perhaps, deontic judgments correspond to some facts. After all, we do say that it is true that one ought morally to do such and such, and that it is false that one is required in accordance with this or that institution to do a certain action. Perhaps, the words 'true' and 'false' do not mean exactly the same thing in these cases as they do in the case of brute facts, e.g., in 'it is false that the earth is flat' or 'it is true that cats are afraid of dogs'. These are questions we shall decide later on. (See both Chapter 7, §1, and Chapter 8) But there is another problem. To the extent that norms or deontic judgments are true or false, we seem to be committed to there being in the world such properties as requiredness or rightness or wrongness. Perhaps there are such properties, but certainly they are most peculiar; e.g., non-existent entities, like unperformed actions, seem to have them. A full understanding of the nature of practical thinking, and of normative systems, demands that such properties, if so they are, be placed in their proper position in the structure of reality. (See Chapter 13) Furthermore, intentions and mandates do not seem to correspond to facts in any way analogous to that in which true ordinary propositions of observation and of scientific research correspond to their facts. In what sense, then, are intentions and mandates real, if at all, over and above the sense in which the mental states of intending and endorsing mandates are real? In what sense are they real over and above the sense in which intentions appear in declarations of intention, and mandates appear in acts of issuing orders, requests, etc.?

These last questions bring in the most profound issues of philosophy: the nature of the mind, and the connections between thinking and language, on one hand, and the connections between thinking and reality, on the other. These are, of course, part and parcel of the ultimate framework within which we must find the foundations of normative systems. But we will not deal with such large issues here, except to the extent that some of them take on a special aspect in the context of practical thinking. Our design is to deal with the *local* problems, so to speak, within the field of problems pertaining to practical thinking. We hope to provide solutions to those problems bringing the investigation up to the point where the problems have to be dealt with within the larger setting of general philosophy.

The preceding discussion demarcates our area of investigation and gives an idea of the main problems that will occupy us in our journey.

But before we set off we must complete some preparations. We need a better chart of the area to be traveled and we also need some indispensable equipment.

3. Our six types of philosophical problems

To the initial reflection on deliberate action by an agent, the agent's mind appears as a mechanism that is both representational of the world and causal. Thus, what appears to initial reflection is partitioned into three systems: (i) the agent, his internal mechanisms of action and thinking, and his internal episodes of thinking; (ii) the representational system of noemata; (iii) the rest of the world. They appear to be embedded in a large network of relationships connecting the elements of one to those of another. Each of those relationships must be elucidated.

The representational system we call the *phenomenological image.* It raises two internal types of problems: (i) the *ontological problems* pertaining to the constitution of noemata: their elements and structure; and (ii) the *logical problems* pertaining to the implication relationships between noemata. The problems pertaining to the relationships between the representational image and the Rest of the World we call *metaphysical.* The problems about the connections between the representational image and the internal mechanisms of the agent we call *meta-psychological,* and the problems about the organization of the internal representational mechanisms of the agent belong in *rational psychology.*

In short, we distinguish the following six types of philosophical problem in which we are interested in this investigation:

(A) *The phenomenologico-ontological problems,* which we will for brevity call *ontological problems,* of practical thinking in general (and of normative thinking in particular) are the differentiation from one another of the practical noemata, and the formulation of the structural relationships between practical noemata. Specifically, here belong questions like these:

(1) What are the differences and structural relationships between mandates and propositions? For instance, is the command *Jones, go home* reducible to the corresponding proposition *Jones is going or will go home*? I.e., is the command the result

of some operation on the proposition or is it a complex having the proposition as a component?

(2) What are the structural relationships between intentions and mandates?

(3) Is what is intended a proposition?

(4) Is the structure of a deontic judgment of the form *X ought Nly to go home* that of the adverbial qualification *Nly* modifying the deontic matrix *X ought* _____ *to go home*? Is this matrix the result of the operation of ought on the simpler matrix *X*... _____ *to go home*? Is this latter matrix a proposition, namely the proposition *X is going (will go) home*?

(5) What sorts of structural relationships are there between intentions and deontic noemata?

(B) *The logical problems* of practical thinking are those of formulating the networks of implication relationships between and among the noemata thought in practical thinking. Since propositions are also thought of in practical thinking, included here are the implications from contemplative propositions to practical noemata, and vice versa. It should be stressed that simple principles like so-called Hume's guillotine and Poincaré's principle are lame attempts at solving the logical problem of practical thinking in one fell swoop. Poincaré's 'principle' claims that no imperative (i.e., mandate) follows from any set of propositions; and Hume's guillotine asserts that no ought judgment follows from non-deontic propositions. *Fortunately,* the logical problem of practical thinking is more complex, and cannot be solved by such wholly segregating principles. We say 'fortunately' because our brief remarks above about the unity of reason and the proposition-encompassing character of practical thinking strongly suggest that, rather than logical principles segregating the different types of content of practical thinking, what we must have are *bridging* principles of implication. Such bridging principles are the ones that hold together, so to speak, the unity of the world as both a world of contemplation and a world of action.[3] Our task is to produce not only the principles of implication internal to practical noemata, but also some of the most important principles bridging the difference between propositions and deontic noemata.

Evidently, the solutions to the logical problems are to be built upon

answers to the questions of type (A). They are both very closely related that sometimes we will speak of the logico-ontological structure of a noema to refer both to its internal structure and to the network of implication relations at whose intersection it lies.

(C) *The semantical, or proto-metaphysical problems* of practical thinking are those concerning the analysis (not necessarily reduction) of the values of practical noemata involved in practical reasoning. If deontic judgments or norms are true or false, then in this rank we are to reveal the structure of deontic truth. Since the word 'truth' suggests some correspondence with facts or something in the world, we are dealing here with the reality content of deontic judgments. That is why I prefer to call this the proto-metaphysical rank. The word 'semantical' suggests in one of its uses something linguistic, and in another something having to do with set-theoretical models. While both connotations relate to something important as we shall see, we will also be dealing here with something more fundamental and concrete. The same considerations apply to intentions and mandates and their inferential values.

The problems of this rank presuppose solutions to some of the problems of ranks (A) and (B).

(D) *The meta-psychological problems* of practical thinking are those pertaining either (i) to the involving of practical noemata with mental states or states of consciousness, or (ii) to the special way in which practical thinking is involved with action. The problems of type (i) can be grouped under the heading of problems in the *rational* (or *philosophical*) *psychology of practice* (or action). In the case of contemplative thinking philosophers often speak of propositional attitudes (referring to believing, supposing, and the like), and to propositional states of consciousness (like perceiving, thinking or imagining that something or other is the case). We shall speak of *practical* (and later on, of *practitional*) *attitudes,* and of *practical* (and *practitional*) *states of consciousness.* Here one of the main problems is the relationship between the practical and propositional attitudes and states. This is an ontological problem, pertaining to the structural relationships between the operations of the mind and the practical noemata. The other problems of type (i) pertain to the formulation of the differences between any two of the practical attitudes or states of consciousness. These are for the most part logical problems in that the different practical attitudes characteristically differ from one another

in their implications. Clearly, these problems presuppose at least partial solutions to the problems of types (A) and (B), and some of them presuppose solutions to the problems of type (C).

The meta-psychological problems of type (ii) are those pertaining to the practicality of practical thinking in all its manifestations. Included here are the special discussions of the structure of the way in which each type of practical noema is involved with action. This investigation here is theoretical and connects both with profound metaphysical issues and with most difficult problems in empirical science. Among the former are the issues about universal causality and the indeterminism of the will, as well as the issue of the self's intervention in the physical world. The empirical problem of describing the neuro-physiological mechanism of intended and deliberate action is the one that at this juncture plugs in with our philosophical discussion.

(E) *The metaphysical problems* of practical thinking pertain to the degrees and type of reality of practical noemata. We shall examine what sort of entities actions are. But, more importantly, the investigation must reveal the sense in which the world is, as most of us think it is after abrief reflection, primarily composed of non-normative and non-practical facts. This includes an account of the status of deontic properties as not being really part of the ultimate furniture of the world. This investigation clearly presupposes solutions to problems of all the preceding ranks. In general, metaphysical claims about what is real, or not, in the deep sense of something being in no way a by-product of the mind, or of the use of language, are supervenient claims. They have to be grounded on pervasive phenomenal features of the relevant categories of entities, or concepts. Only after we have gone through the development of the answers to the basic questions of ranks (A)–(D) can we consider some features of those answers as metaphysical clues – i.e., as clues that, if at all possible, take us, after careful tooling, from the several accounts of what appears to consciousness in practical thinking, to reality in itself.

(F) *The philosophico-linguistic problems* of practical thinking are of three main types: (i) problems having to do with the deep structure underlying the sentences expressing noemata thought in practical thinking; (ii) problems pertaining to the different speech acts performed by the utterance of given sentences, and (iii) special problems pertaining to the theory of communication. Clearly, solutions to problems of type (i) are

(B), and (C), a foundation for the rational psychology of action. The narrow philosophical problem of type (ii) in rank (D) will be treated in Chapters 9, 10–12. But the general metaphysical problems of indeterminism of the will and of the role of the self in action will not be broached. We shall attack the problems in rank (E), both the one about what sorts of entities actions are and the one about the metaphysical status of deontic noemata. (See Chapters 12 and 13, respectively.) Finally, the main problems of type (i) and (ii) in rank (F) will be treated in the process of dealing with the other problems, especially those in ranks (A) and (B). We will also discuss some features of the contents of less general speech acts like promising and formulations of intention. However, we will not deviate from our route, which traverses the problems of practical thinking, to attempt to articulate a detailed theory of speech acts or deep structure of practical language. We limit ourselves to providing the specific required foundations for such a theory. (Specific references to these and other problems can be found in the Index.)

Figure 1 indicates the framework and the scope of our investigation.

4. Practical language

In §1 we formulated the problem of the foundations of normative systems through the contrast between some linguistic matrices. In §2 and §3 we formulated the main and the large bulk of our problems in terms of practical thinking and practical noemata. We have already mentioned the intimacy between thinking and the production of symbols. Some philosophers equate thinking with the use of language. But we do not have to endorse or reject this view. At the pre-theoretical level in any case thinking is the crucial phenomenon.

Of course, it may very well be that to think is always to use language, overtly or covertly, or to have something like sentences running through one's brain or body. In such a case the proper theory of thinking will have to have an appropriate account for the fact that episodes of thinking have contents. And the theory may very well establish that those contents do not really have a status in the world. Yet nothing of this is precluded by posing our problems about the nature of practical thinking directly, as problems about thinking, not about language. Posing the problems that way has several absolutely important virtues. Among them are: (a) we

have not begged *any* questions concerning the nature of the relationship between thinking and language; (b) we side neither with the physicalists, who claim to reduce the mental to the physical, nor with the dualists, nor with the neutral monists; (c) we side with no position on the possibility of a private language, i.e., a language that is a means of thinking without being a means of communication.[4] Furthermore, (d) our attentive study of the structures that appear to consciousness in practical thinking has the enormous value of providing data that any theory about the nature of the mind has to take into account.

It is often said that a rational being who lives all by himself, outside all social intercourse, needs not conception of *ought* or *right*. Thus, it might be thought that practical thinking by its very nature requires a minimal social organization and, hence, a language that as a means of communication ties the social organization together. It might be thought that even if the logical and ontological problems of purely contemplative thinking could be treated without reference to language, the logical and ontological problems of practical thinking must perforce be formulated as problems about the structure of communicative language. But the fundamental assumption about the presupposed sociality of practical thinking seems to be false. *A being who acts and changes the world can have the power to make decisions and adopt goals, whether he has always been entirely alone in the world or not.* Likewise, certain courses of action will be right for him to perform, others will be required, and others will be wrong, even if this is so only in relation to his own purposes or goals. Hence, such a being still has to think, and perhaps equally hard, to determine what are his long-range goals and what he ought to do in order to attain them. Therefore, the crucial philosophical problems of understanding the structure of *what* that being thinks remain unaltered. That general structure is the same as that of the practical thinking of a social creature. He, of course, needs no moral thinking. But this is another matter.

Now, *we* live in communities and engage and indulge in social intercourse. We learn from each other, and we are interested in presenting our views to others in order to help them, or be helped by their criticism. In short, our practical thinking is certainly richer by thinking and expressing it through language. But a person living all alone and with only personal practical thinking will most likely have a language – private if you wish.

But its structure must be the general one. To the extent that a language is fit for the exercise of practical thinking, that language has syntactico-semantical categories that reflect the structures of practical noemata. Since we are anxious to understand the very structures and categories of what appears to us in our actual practical thinking, we must study those structures and categories as they are present in the language we use to face the world, both in pure contemplation and in action. Hence, an examination of the syntactico-semantical categories of ordinary language is the proper method to follow in our investigation in its early stages. Ordinary language contains all the concepts we need in our ordinary experience and thinking of the world; thus it contains all the philosophical clues. But these clues do not come labeled, or naked, or isolated. They come mixed with empirical beliefs and even superstitions. They must be mined, and sometimes subjected to elaborate processes of refinement and distillation. For instance, the fact that we in daily life do not say certain things, or do not use certain syntactical constructions, can be due to all kinds of reasons: because it is impolite, because it is cruel, because it is cumbersome, because it is in fact obviously false, because it is necessarily false, because nobody has thought of it, because.... Only some of those reasons can have philosophical significance. Sometimes we do not use a given string of words because there is no proposition or other noema they could express. But that this is the reason for our not using certain words does *not* follow from the mere fact that we do not use the words in question[5].

At any rate, especially when one is philosophizing for, or before, or with others it is unavoidable that one engages in examinations of ordinary language. We shall do so here in order to apprehend structural and implicational (-like) aspects of practical noemata. But we shall feel free to modify ordinary English sentence structure and vocabulary in order to gain more perspicuous representations of the (deeper) structures of the practical noemata we are studying. Naturally, we shall not be proposing that ordinary language be changed. We shall sometimes introduce notations that make certain structures more perspicuously similar to their cognate structures, yet our notations should not be construed as implying adverse criticisms of ordinary grammar.

For a further discussion of philosophical methodology and theorization in a detailed context see Chapter 6 §2.

5. Conventions on quotation marks

We are, therefore, in part to engage in an examination of ordinary language. And we shall often need to talk about a sentence or phrase as well as about the noemata or 'parts' of noemata it expresses, given the ordinary syntactical and semantical conventions of ordinary language. For the sake of brevity we adopt the following conventions:

C1 Single quotes around a sentence, clause, locution or word form a name of the sentence, clause, locution or word in question.

Thus, 'Jones' is a family name widely used in English, and "Jones" is a name of that family name. Similarly, the sentence 'Mary went with Jones' has as its name "Mary went with Jones", and the sentence, *not* the name, is made up of the words 'Mary', 'went', 'with', and 'Jones' in that order.

C2 Single asterisks, i.e., '*'s, around a sentence, clause, locution or word produce a name of *what* is expressed by the sentence, clause, locution, or word *in a given context of discussion.*

Convention C2 must be used with care. As is well known, sentences and words are ambiguous and may express different contents or parts of contents of thought. That is why we must assume a certain context given, so that the name can refer uniquely to a certain item of thought. Thus, during a limited discussion we may refer to the proposition a man formulates when he says "I am happy" as the proposition *I am happy*. In such a case it should be understood that the word 'I' refers to the speaker in question at the time of his assertion. In general, of course, there is *no* single proposition *I am happy*. But this is exactly the same as with ordinary proper names. The name 'Jones' is used to refer to given persons (or other entities) when the context of conversation or previous agreement fixes the reference. There is no single man named 'Jones'; yet we do manage pretty well quite often when we use it intending to make unique references.

In short, in a given context we can refer to a certain proposition by using the name '*Karl will go home*', and to the corresponding order by means of the name '*Karl, go home*'. Hence, in discussing examples of noemata, whether practical or purely contemplative, we shall assume that


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kingly one, one ought ultimately (everything being considered) to do what the gods have decreed.

Hence,

10. I ought ultimately (everything being considered) to bury Polyneices (even if I must die for disobeying Creon).

Therefore,

11. I *shall* bury Polyneices.

We dismiss here the question whether the word 'ought' is the most adequate at every place it appears in *A*, or whether other words like 'must' or 'should' would be more appropriate at some places. 'Ought' is well enough. We are not concerned with the words, but with what these words express; we are interested in the common and peculiar idea they would all express in sentences expressing deliberation. Thus, for convenience we call that common and peculiar aspect **ought**, without implying that it is a real property or a thing.

It would obviously be unfounded, and irrelevant, to conjecture that Antigone went through the eleven steps of deliberation *A*, pondering each one of them equally, or that eleven sentences of Ancient Greek translating the above eleven English sentences ran through her mind, or that events in her brain corresponded to our eleven sentences. Most likely, without verbalizing each of the steps, Antigone 'saw' the fundamental premises and immediately reached her conclusion. Given her religious upbringing and her intense love for her brothers, it was not necessary for her to dwell upon premise 9 (that divine law overrides kingly law). Most certainly, steps 9 and 5 (that one has the religious duty to obey the divine law) and 6 (that a divine decree demands burial by closest kin) were built in, by training, into her mechanisms of practical thinking. Thus, her learning of Polyneices' death, and the ever present knowledge that Polyneices was her brother, prompted in her, automatically, the thought of steps 10 (that she ought ultimately to bury Polyneices) and 11 (to bury him). Be this as it may, here we are not interested in the study of Antigone's psychological processes of cognition or of reasoning.

We are interested in the eleven steps of deliberation *qua* possible contents of occurrences of thought, i.e., in the terminology of Chapter 1, *qua noemata*. Now, regardless of the actual details and ordering of what


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Karl'. Clearly, then a proposition cannot be identical with the linguistic means of expressing it.

It might be thought that a proposition is identical with the class of all sentences that express it and nothing else. This excludes the sentence 'It is impossible for Bonita to love Karl' from the class to be equated with the proposition *Bonita loves Karl*, since that sentence clearly expresses something more by means of the frame 'It is impossible for...'. This suggestion faces at least one further serious problem. The well-known Cantor's theorem about power sets says, roughly, that a given set or class of objects has more subsets than it has members. For example, the triple {a, b, c} has three members and eight subsets: the null set, the three sets {a}, {b}, and {c}, the three pairs {a, b}, {a, c}, {b, c}, and, of course itself. Similarly, the infinite set of natural numbers {1, 2,...} yields a class of subsets which is of higher degree of infinity.

For convenience, the word cardinality is used to cover both natural numbers and degrees of infinity. Let us use '$<$' to indicate that the class mentioned on the left has lower cardinality than that mentioned on the right, and '$\leqslant$' to mean '*has the same cardinality as, or lower cardinality than*', then we have:

(a) class of sentences $<$ class of classes of sentences;

(b) class of classes of sentences $<$ class of classes of classes of sentences;

(c) class of classes of classes of sentences $\leqslant$ class of propositions attributing to a certain class of sentences membership in a class of classes of sentences.

Therefore,

(d) class of sentences $<$ class of propositions.

Propositions come in pairs: for every true one there is its negation, which is false, and vice versa. Furthermore, every class of classes of sentences yields as many true propositions as there are classes of sentences that attribute membership to each of the latter in the former. Nevertheless, we cannot replace in (c) above the sign '$\leqslant$' with '$<$'; for the infinite cases we may still get the same degree of infinite cardinality.

From (d) above it follows that a large number of propositions are not identical with classes of sentences – let alone sentences. Now, the

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