

feature of experience is a fallacious generalization. Thinking, for instance, is an experience, but what is thought about is not necessarily a thinking experience.¹² A subjective conditioning is an empirical fact, but a total subjectivism in philosophy fails to account for the data of common thoughts and communicated thoughts.

On another side of things, a naive realism fails to account for the differences in scientific theories of the same phenomenon. A responsible position may be called a critical realism, in the words of Arthur Holmes.¹³ This position recognizes that some of our observations are relative to our particular methods and viewpoints, but at the same time may give understanding of the real. Interpretive hypotheses seek to understand nature, and their predictive power shows how closely they fit the facts. In spite of all the variables influencing human knowing, we have to do with some realities other than ourselves.

The Law of Non-Contradiction

The universal validity of the law of non-contradiction is evident, for without it, communication is impossible. When contradictions are proposed in a discussion, one cannot even determine what is being proposed. The very thing that is asserted is denied, so it seems nothing has been asserted. Furthermore, any attempt to speak against the law carries meaning only if the law holds. In India I found that the Eastern mind which purportedly welcomes contradictions does so only on issues of relative unimportance. Hindus would not permit me to deny that "all is one" or "all is Brahman" or that "the observable world is maya." Their basic tenets could not be contradicted; only mine could be!

What are the implications of this common ground in human rights, justice, love, facts and logic? All knowledge is not lost in a sea of variables, but is related to these norms. They provide the latitudinal and longitudinal lines within which a knower can function responsibly in the world. When a view consistently fits the facts externally and internally, it cannot be dismissed as all right for you but not for me. Total subjectivity and an existentialist subjectivism have been answered in part. Marxists cannot justifiably say our knowledge is determined by our economical status, and Freudians cannot justifiably account for such views as determined by early childhood experiences. Neither can John Dewey's humanistic contextualism dismiss such well-founded assertions as merely relative to the experience of a given community or culture. The principles discovered are what Gordon Kaufman called "functional absolutes"¹⁴ and Paul Tillich termed without qualification, "absolutes".¹⁵

These absolutes mean that Christians approach non-Christians with confidence in their worth as persons, with respect for their rights, justly and lovingly, factually and logically. Granting some acknowledgement of these ideals can be attained, we need not push every non-Christian to the point of nihilistic despair with Francis Schaeffer.¹⁶ Neither will we present Christianity as the mere fulfilment (rather than the negation) of the non-Christian's longing with Clark Pinnock.¹⁷ The Christian calls the