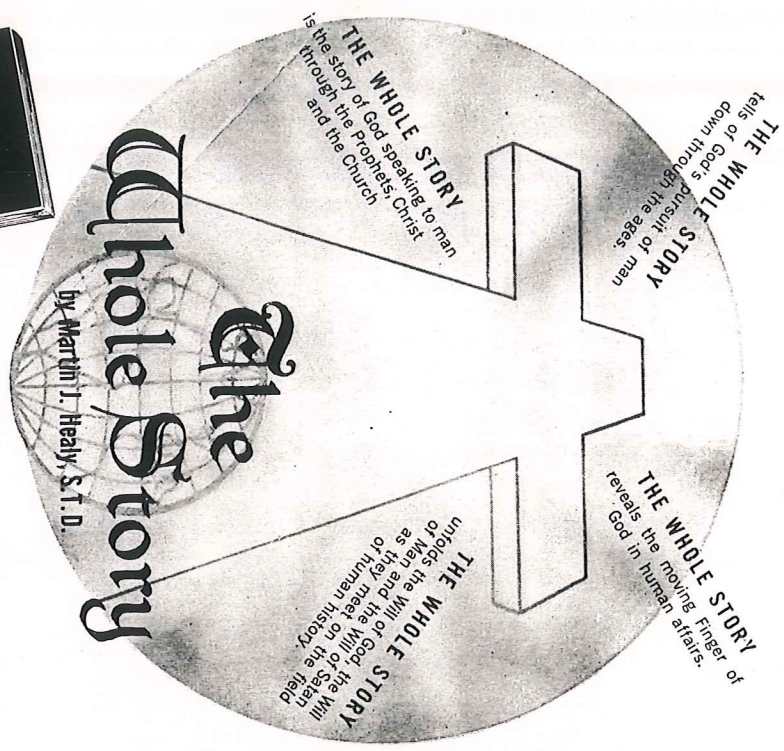


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spreading so rapidly south of the Sahel

Asserting that the scientific method alone produces truth, the liberal-behavioral revolution strikes at the heart of American culture.

THE REVOLUTION IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

by Francis G. Wilson

This is the first of a series of articles on problems for Catholics at the frontiers of knowledge. Succeeding issues will present articles dealing with problems in law and psychiatry.

THERE HAVE BEEN times in the history of the Church in America when mutual sympathy and support between Catholics and non-Catholics have been evident. There have also been times, however, when the course of Catholic intellectual effort has deviated from the main currents of American life. The Rev. Thomas T. McAvoy, C.S.C., a distinguished historian of things Catholic, has said of the decades preceding World War I, "Catholic intellectual activities were seriously out of touch with the intellectual development of the United States." ("The Catholic

Minority after the Americanist Controversy, 1899-1917: a Survey" in *The Review of Politics*, January, 1959).

In the present period, however, the dialectic between Catholic intellectuals and the new social science elite seems to have become more difficult than in the past. There is a curious intensity to this dialogue because the secular scholar at times may pay no attention to the positions represented by the Catholic.

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method and judgment in the social sciences. The fact is nevertheless that the revolution of the behavioral sciences is with us. It is backed by significant grants from foundations, by an increasingly careful choice in appointments to the social science departments in the universities, and by the selection of material for publication.

THE CONTEMPORARY social scientists do have to their credit great achievements, with notable developments in methods and quantitative techniques. Whether one considers the anthropologists, for example, Margaret Mead; the psychologists like Erich Fromm, or the *epigoni* of Freud; the mathematical and macro-economists, sociologists and social psychologists, such as the several Leners, the Talcott Parsons or Kimball Young; students of education, such as the disciples of John Dewey; political scientists like Harold D. Lasswell and his associates in the policy and behavioral sciences, or the survey technicians in the areas of public opinion research—there are certain characteristics they have in common. While it is not easy to state the common denominators of the different disciplines, it does seem that they lie in theories of what is rational and what is scientific.

The words "scientific" and "rational" are very widely used, but they are seldom defined in terms of the postulates involved in a definition. It is precisely here that the difference between a Catholic scholar and one who belongs to the liberal-behavioral syndrome of ideas is most sharply defined. Aside from the pragmatic absolute (they accept no true absolutes), the secularized social scientists will say that sci-

How far may the Catholic social scientist go in his dialogue with non-Catholic conferees? He shares their enthusiasm for the scientific method but must dissent from those well-subsidized crusaders who claim it is the only trustworthy method for reaching truth. In disparaging reason and revelation, this crusade undermines the base of Western culture. **Francis Graham Wilson, Ph.D.**, is professor of political science at the University of Illinois and author of *The American Political Mind*, etc.

ence and reason are all but identical in their process and results.

They claim that the scientific method alone produces "truth" whereas the "wisdom" of men is subjective. Behavioral social science is committed to a form of radical empiricism, but at the same time it is identified with certain ideas that seem to come from the "best" thought of the eighteenth century. The liberal may suggest that change, newness and experiment make up the order of progressive life but at the same time he may admit there are such things as "intelligent convictions" which might well be true.

STILL, SCIENTIFIC method seems to point in at least two directions. On the one hand, the liberal and behavioral definition of the rational in the social process is formalistic, something like a Kantian a priori conception of something that might or may exist. All questions except the "truth" of science and empiricism are open-ended; it is rational that men's minds be formally open to new convictions and changes in opinion. In theory, what is important is not so much the conviction itself as how the conviction was reached.

On the other hand, empiricism suggests that only those things experienced can be true, that the in-

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Catholic social scientist with non-Catholic contrariness and enthusiasm for the method must dissent from the crusaders who claim this method for reaching reason and reveal the base of Francis Graham Wilson, of political science at St. Louis and author of *The Mind*, etc.

are all but identical and results. That the scientific produces "truth" of men is a moral social science to a form of radicalism at the same time with certain ideas from the "best" of the eighteenth century. They suggest that the scientific and experimental method of progressive science came into being at the same time he may say such things as "intuitions" which might

the scientific method seems to be in two directions. On the one hand, the liberal and behaviorist method of the rational in science is formalistic, a Kantian a priori something that might be asked of all questions except science and empiricism; it is rational and is formally open to change and changes in theory, what is important is the conviction that the conviction was

On the other hand, empiricism says those things exist true, that the in-

tangible is subjective, and that ultimately there can be no effective and logical demonstration of a value. There is, thus, a potential conflict between the formalistic definition of what is reasonable and rational and the derivation of the reasonable from that which has been experienced. It is the fact that may be known and never the value.

A CATHOLIC SCHOLAR might suggest that he is no enemy of facts, but only of monopolistic claims for the empirical method. He may well argue that values are to be known just as facts are; he may say there are other ways of knowing things than by the methods of science and by radical empiricism. Intuition, revelation, theistically inspired (as empiricism in St. Thomas' interest in facts in relation to his propositions), and logical demonstrations might all be cited in addition to the collation of the observable. If all questions are "open," then the truth of the Faith might also be part of the conversation or dialectic among intellectuals.

But in a more specific sense, the Catholic social scientist is concerned with the values that inhere in American life and provide the "order" of our society. America means something in its values and this something is not simply subjective preference. Let us take, for example, the Ten Commandments. There is probably no set of propositions in human experience on which there is a wider range of agreement as to their truth and validity in human justice. Catholics, Protestants, Jews agree that they represent a summary of God's law for man's relation to God and to his fellow man. The behavioral social scientist might say, on the contrary, that

the Ten Commandments are simply part of the content of the superego, with no suggestion offered of the truth or falsity of such doctrines. The Freudian analysis replaces the "rationality" of the moral judgment. The Catholic intellectual would say that, aside from revelation, the rationalistic proof of natural law provides a basis for judging the truth of the ten best known major propositions in human history. And the Catholic would say, as well, that since American society has been founded on the belief in moral truths, to reduce the Commandments to the superego is to attack the common basis of the American social order.

ONE SENSES, indeed, an inner conflict in the liberal-behavioral complex of ideas in its approach to American culture. On the one hand, the writers speak of intelligent judgments and convictions, of rational or reasonable judgments, and of a liberal point of view that for them is ingrained in the study of liberal arts and humane letters. On the other hand, the scientific study of society is objective, detached, and it reduces the values that one might find in the liberal arts to subjective preference, or at least to something that has no scientific relation to society, or to the formation of public policy.

In the study of personality, culminating in a sense in the notable volume called *The Authoritarian Personality*, by T. W. Adorno, *et al.* (Free Press, 1954), there are also a certain number of ideological judgments which should be based on the determination of social truth. As a result, the description of American culture and of the personality traits of the individual American must be

an application of psychology and survey techniques to a given human situation. While there may be no formal judgment either of the culture as a whole or of the individual, the mere assertion of "authoritarian" and other traits suggests a judgment of the undesirableness of these qualities. Presumably, one may ultimately determine what is good and bad about the personality solely from psychological study, and this is surely demanding of the "facts" more than is proved, for the postulate is reached outside of and before the application of the method.

IT HAS BECOME increasingly clear that Catholic scholars are not opposed to the newer developments of scientific method, provided the method itself is not used to prove more than can be proved by empirical techniques. Eric Voegelin has said that one may criticize metaphysics only from the safe distance of imperfect knowledge. The Catholic insists that one should be clear about the postulates for which one is using the scientific method. But the method itself will not judge American culture, unless one has already fixed in his mind what is appropriate to find. One may find all the facts one desires, and correlate them using the newer techniques, but the judgment of the social order reaches back to philosophical and theological truth. The Catholic intellectual is opposed to the proposition that some of the followers of Arthur F. Bentley use, that values are important in behavior and they should be studied, especially by survey techniques, but that it is no concern of the social scientist to inquire into their truth or falsity. To the Catholic, the defense of Ameri-

can life must go beyond the recognition of ethical judgments as political forces; it must make a judgment on these forces.

The Catholic social scientist is to be found here and there throughout American society. He may be considered a Christian leavening the profession. He may be in a Catholic institution or center of inquiry, or he may be in the general educational system supported by all who pay taxes. He is radically aware of the revolution going on in the social sciences, especially as it has been supported by foundation grants, by the sponsoring of seminars for high executive or administrative people and for members of Congress, and by the selection of university personnel in the light of their adherence to behavioral theory, or one might say to the liberal-behavioral complex of ideas.

Radical theories of civil liberty and radical quantification seem to go together in the contemporary revolution of the behavioral sciences. Along with the American Civil Liberties Union one accepts Riesman's *Lonely Crowd*. Along with the political autonomy of the physical scientists, one accepts the discipline of the bureaucracy, and the techniques of *The Organization Man* (William H. Whyte, Jr.). Politics becomes a science of power, as Lasswell has suggested, while the liberal is concerned to advance what he considers to be the welfare of the common man. Psychology may be used to analyze the types of people in political activity, but it may also be used to assist the lonely individual in his adjustment to a technological Leviathan. And the anthropology of the South Seas is extended to the civilized citizen of modern America.

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MANY OF THE trends in social science suggest the final creation of a monolithic society, rather than the preservation of the pluralistic society of which we commonly speak. To make the social scientists, committed to liberal ideology and the revolution in method, a power elite is to prepare for the defeat of the pluralistic system which we have associated with the liberties of Americans.

To insist on scientific method and liberal conformity is to misconstrue the idea of a pluralistic order, for pluralism suggests in its political and core meaning the coexistence under a public order of fundamental differences in metaphysical judgment. Freedom is in no small degree the right of a man to choose his metaphysical position. The Catholic scholar must assert his right to be represented in the ranks of the social scientists who may be consulted in the formulation of public policy.

For the Catholic intellectual, then, who is the opponent? To say that there are few Communists in the United States or England or Western Germany, for example, does not lessen the threat to our liberty throughout the world from Communists and the modern nihilists. Against these destroyers of the personal and public liberties of man, the Catholic Church has become the great sufferer from tyranny and the great defender of freedom.

Liberty steadily becomes Catholic. Liberty becomes Catholic in theory and in social program. From the conflict of classes we move to the co-operation of groups and professions, and co-operation between those who function in economic society; as democracy struggles against the vast movements against

it — Fascism and Communism — it has lost the optimism by which it was once so deeply moved. The belief in the future must surely be Christian.

Now, in Europe it seems that the neo-liberals are again accepting God in their search for meaning in the universe, or in their insight into a transcendent order. The "old" liberals on the Continent were, let us say, believers in the free market and they favored the destruction of organized Christianity. Perhaps there are not many "old" liberals now but the Catholic is sensitive to the indifference or antagonism of Americans to the affirmation that Western society has been founded on the principles of the Christian faith. The pragmatic deism of many liberals is so watered down that it can hardly seem less than a destructive heresy, or an unconscious assistance to the Communist barbarians.

The behaviorist, the describers of American life and personality, the probers into the mind of the citizen through surveys and motivation research, simply do not defend American culture. They do not accept the traditional American belief in God, and that we are a nation under God, or even that God might have anything to do with the human political order. The minds indifferent to the truth of morality, the technicians of society, and those who believe themselves to be simple pure defenders of an absolute civil liberty, believe themselves also allied with the general cause of liberalism. In so far as this is true, the Catholic scholar must regard them as unlikely allies.

The Catholic social scientist is seldom part of a majority in a con-

crete intellectual situation. While he may accept liberal economic policies, he cannot adjust to liberal philosophy. For as Harold Taylor, the President of Lawrence College, has said: "The idea of liberalism is part of the romantic movement, the Protestant movement, the liberal revolt against authority and a static society." Liberalism, Taylor said, rests on the theory of creative evolution of Henri Bergson (but which Bergson did not find so contrary to Catholicism at the end of his life—"Liberalism and the Liberal Arts," *Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review*, February 28, 1959.)

THE CATHOLIC stands in opposition to the kind of liberalism that says the meaning of America is indifference to truth in morality, and which sees in any attempt to control the pornography and vulgarity of either literature or the magazine rack a violation of civil liberty. For in concrete detail, the liberty of the *avante garde* writers is given priority over the protection of youth against moral corruption. The Catholic is opposed to those who see no menace to the privacy of the democratic citizen in the vast expansion of survey techniques, and

to those who claim the intellectual founding fathers of modern America are William James and John Dewey. He must disagree with those who say that any absolutes (except the affirmation of science and radical empiricism) are a menace to freedom. In this the Catholic scholar has most Americans on his side. He is engaged in a struggle of the centuries for the preservation and the restoration of an educational system which accepted in times past a transcendent order, and which believed that a Christian atmosphere was one in which letters, arts, and science might flourish.

The Catholic social scientist must always be more than a mere scholar, a mere intellectual, or a mere technician in the study of men's minds and in the manipulation of their responses to the desires of either the federal triangle in Washington or of the social science of Madison Avenue. The enemy is not scientific method in itself but the belief that nothing can logically be affirmed beyond the empirical. The Catholic social scientist must always be a man with a vision of wisdom in the perfecting of the society in which he follows his discipline.



THE RIC TO CHO YOUR O SCHOOL

by VIRGIL C. BLUM

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THE SOCIAL SCIENTIST IN AMERICAN LIFE

Mailed
July 1959
from Wash.

There have been times in the history of the Church in America when mutual sympathy and support between Catholics and non-Catholics has been evident. But there have also been times when the course of Catholic intellectual effort has deviated from the main currents of American life. As Father McAvoy, a distinguished historian of things Catholic, has said of the decades preceding World War I, "Catholic intellectual activities were seriously out of touch with the intellectual development of the United States." (1) In both world wars, and during the early 30s, when the sense of community ran high, there seemed to be much ~~very~~ common spirit between Catholics and the ~~Catholic~~ Protestant majority.

(1) Thomas T. McAvoy, "The Catholic Minority after the Americanist Controversy, 1899-1917: A Survey," The Review of Politics, XXI (January, 1959), 53.

However, in the present period the dialectic between the Catholic intellectuals and the new social science elite seems to have grown more difficult than before. And there is a curious intensity to this conversation because the secularized scholar may pay no attention to the positions necessarily represented by

the Catholic. In detail, there are many reasons why the Catholic cannot accept the new crusade for purity in method and judgment in the social sciences. But the revolution of the behavioral sciences is with us, backed by significant grants from foundations, ~~and~~ by an increasingly ^{careful} choice in appointments to university positions in the social sciences departments, and by the selection of material for publication.

In truth, the contemporary social scientists have to their credit great achievements, with notable developments in methods and quantitative techniques. Whether one considers the anthropologists, say Margaret Mead; the psychologists like Eric Fromm, or the epigoni of Freud; the mathematical and macro-economists, sociologists and social psychologists, such as the several Lerner's, Talcott Parsons, or Kimball Young; students of education, such as the disciples of John Dewey; political scientists like Harold D. Lasswell and his associates in the policy and behavioral sciences, or the survey technicians in the areas of public opinion research, -- there are certain common characteristics. While it is not easy to state the common denominators of the different disciplines, it would seem that they lie in theories of what is ~~rational~~ rational and what is scientific.

The words "scientific" and "rational" are very widely used, but they are seldom defined in terms of the

postulate that are involved in a definition. It is here that the difference between a Catholic scholar and one who belongs to the liberal-behavioral syndrome of ideas is most succinct. Aside from the pragmatic absolute (there are no absolutes), the secularized social scientist will say that science and reason are all but identical in their process and results. The scientific method alone produces "truth," while the "wisdom" of men is subjective. Behavioral social science is committed to a form of radical empiricism, but at the same time it is identified with certain ideas that seem to come through from the "best" thought of the eighteenth century. The liberal may suggest that change, newness, and experiment make up the order of progressive life. But at the same time the liberal may admit there are such things as "intelligent convictions," which might well be true.

Still, scientific method seems to lead in at least two different directions. On the one hand, the liberal and behavioral definition of the rational in the social process is formalistic, rather like a Kantian a priori conception of something that might or may exist. All questions, except the truth of scientific ~~method~~ and empiricism, are open-ended; it is rational that men's minds be formally open to new convictions and changes in opinion. In theory what is important is not so much the conviction itself as how the conviction was reached. On

the other hand, empiricism suggests that only those things experienced can be true, that the intangible is subjective, and that ultimately there can be no effective and logical demonstration of a value. There is, thus, a potential conflict between the formalistic definition of what is reasonable and ~~not~~ rational ^{and} ~~with~~ the derivation of the reasonable from that which has been experienced. It is the fact ^{that} may be known and never the value.

A Catholic scholar might suggest that he is no enemy of facts, but only of ~~the~~ monopolistic claims for the empirical method. He may well argue that values are to be known just as facts are; he may say there are other ways of knowing things than ^{by} the methods of science and by radical empiricism. Intuition, revelation, theistic naturalism (as exemplified in St. Thomas' interest in facts in relation to his propositions), and logical demonstrations might all be cited in addition to the collation of the observable. If all questions are "open," then the truth of the faith might also be part of the conversation or dialectic among intellectuals. But in a more specific sense, the Catholic social scientist is concerned with the values that inhere in American life and provide the "order" of our society. America means something in its values that is not simply subjective preference. Let us take, for example, the Ten Commandments. There is probably no set of propositions in human experience on which there is a wider range of agreement on their truth and their validity

in human justice. Catholics, Protestants, Jews all agree that they represent a summary of God's law for man's relation to God and to his fellow man. The behavioral social scientist might say, on the contrary, that the Ten Commandments are simply part of the content of the Superego, with no suggestion offered of the truth or falsity of such doctrines. The Freudian analysis becomes that which is "rational" and it replaces the "rationality" of the moral judgment. The Catholic intellectual would say that, aside from revelation, the rationalistic proof of natural law provides a basis for judging the truth of the Ten best known ~~principles~~ major propositions in human history. And the Catholic would say, as well, that since American society has been founded on the belief in moral truths, to reduce the Commandments to the Superego is to attack the common basis of the American social order.

One senses, indeed, an inner conflict in the approach to American culture in the liberal-behavioral complex of ideas. On the onehand, the writers will speak of intelligent judgments and convictions, of rational or reasonable judgments, and of a liberal point of view that for them is ingrained in the study of liberal arts and humane letters. But, on the other hand, the scientific study of society is ^{fund} subjective, detached, and it reduces the values that one might ^{find} in the liberal arts to subjective preference, or at least to something that has no scientific relation to society, or to the formation of public policy.

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The Catholic social scientist is scattered here and there throughout American society. He may be considered a Christian leavening in the profession. He may be in a Catholic institution or center of inquiry, or he may be in the general educational system supported by all who pay taxes. He is radically aware of the revolution going on in the social sciences, especially as it has been supported by foundation grants, by the sponsoring of seminars for high executive or administrative people and for members of Congress, ~~as well as by the sponsorship of social scientists~~ ~~and by the selection of university personnel in the light of their adherence to behavioral theory, or one might say to the liberal-behavioral complex of ideas. Radical theories of civil liberty and radical quantification seem to go together in the contemporary revolution of the~~

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W | Many of the trends in social science suggest the final creation of a monolithic society, rather than the preservation of the pluralistic society of which we commonly speak. To make the social scientist, committed to liberal ideology and the revolution in method, a power elite is to prepare for the defeat of the pluralistic system which we have associated with the liberties of Americans. To insist on scientific method and liberal conformity is to misconstrue the idea of a pluralistic order, for pluralism suggests in its political and core meaning the coexistence ~~of~~ under a public order of fundamental differences in metaphysical judgment. Freedom is in no small degree the right of a man to choose his metaphysical position. The Catholic scholar

must assert his right to be represented in the ranks of the social scientists who may be consulted in the formulation of public policy.

For the Catholic intellectual, then, who is the opponent? There may ~~be~~ not be many Communists in the United States, but there are many in the world. To say that there are few Communists in England and Western Germany, for example, does not lessen the threat to our liberty throughout the world from Communists and the modern nihilists. Against these destroyers of the personal and public liberties of man, the Catholic Church has become the great sufferer from tyranny and the great defender of freedom. Liberty steadily becomes Catholic. Liberty becomes Catholic in theory and in social program. From the conflict of classes we move to the co-operation of groups and professions, and between those who function in economic society; as democracy struggles against the vast movements against it -- fascism and communism -- it has lost the optimism by which it was once so deeply moved. The belief in the future must surely be Christian.

Now, in Europe it seems that the neoliberals are again accepting God in their search for meaning in the universe, or in their insight into a transcendent order. The "old liberals" on the Continent were, let us say, believers in the free market and they favored the destruction of organized Christianity. Perhaps there are not many "old liberals" in Europe, but the Catholic is sensitive

to the indifference or antagonism of Americans to the affirmation that Western society has been founded in the principles of the Christian faith. The pragmatic deism of many liberals is so watered down that it can hardly seem less than a destructive heresy, or an unconscious assistance to the Communist barbarians. The behaviorist, the describers of American life and personality, the probers into the mind of the citizen through surveys and motivation ~~xxx~~ research, simply do not defend American culture. They do not accept the traditional American belief in God, and that we are a nation under God. Or, indeed, that God might have anything to do with the human political order. The minds indifferent to the truth of morality, the technicians of society, and those who believe themselves to be simon pure defenders of an absolute civil liberty, believe themselves also allied with the general cause of liberalism. In so far as this is true, the Catholic scholar must regard them as unlikely allies.

The Catholic social scientist is seldom part of a majority in a concrete intellectual situation. While he may accept liberal economic policies, he cannot adjust to liberal philosophy. For, as Harold Taylor, the President of Lawrence College, has said: "The idea of liberalism is part of the romantic movement, the Protestant movement, the liberal revolt against authority and a static society." Liberalism, Taylor said, rests on the theory of creative

evolution of Henri Bergson (but which Bergson did not find so contrary to Catholicism at the end of his life). (2)

(2) Harold Taylor, "Liberalism and the Liberal Arts," Michigan Alumnus Quarterly Review, LXV (February 28, 1959), 96-97, and 93ff.

The Catholic stands in opposition to the kind of liberalism that says the meaning of America is indifference to truth in morality, and which sees in any attempt to control the pornography and vulgarity of either literature or the magazine rack a violation of civil liberty. For in concrete detail, the liberty of the avante garde writers is placed ahead of the protection of youth against moral corruption. He is opposed to those who see no menace to the privacy of the democratic citizen in the vast expansion of survey techniques, or to those who find the intellectual founding fathers of modern America in William James and John Dewey, or to those who say that any absolutes (except the affirmation of science and radical empiricism) are a menace to freedom. In this the Catholic scholar has most Americans on his side. He is engaged in a struggle of the centuries for the preservation and the restoration of an educational system which accepted in times past a transcendent order, and which believed that a Christian atmosphere was one in which letters, arts, and science might flourish. The Catholic social scientist must always be more than a mere scholar, a mere intellectual, or a mere technician in the study of men's mind and in the

manipulation of their responses to the desires of either the Federal Triangle in Washington or of the social science of ~~Mad~~ Madison Avenue. Scientific method in itself is not the enemy, but the belief that nothing can logically be affirmed beyond the empirical. The Catholic social scientist must always be a man with a vision of wisdom in the perfecting of the society in which he follows his discipline.