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A Study of Basic Philosophies of Seminary Teachers Determined by the Ames Philosophical Belief Inventory

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A STUDY OF BASIC PHILOSOPHIES OF SEMINARY TEACHERS
Determined by the Ames Philosophical Belief Inventory

A Thesis
Presented to
the Department of Church History and Doctrine
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Religious Education

by
V. Mack Sumner
August 1970
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there were differences in the basic philosophies of seminary teachers who were ranked highest and lowest by experienced coordinators. It also sought to determine which philosophical background was associated with the most successful teachers, and which with the least successful.

This study was based upon the hypothesis that there would be a significant difference in the philosophies of the highest and lowest ranked teachers. It is felt that knowledge of these factors could be a useful aid in the selection of future seminary teachers.

DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Seminary Teacher. Full time teacher in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (LDS), Seminary System.

Merit System. A series of rating programs used by the LDS department of education since 1929 to rate individual teachers.

Ames Inventory. A forced choice inventory, developed at the University of Wyoming, by Dr. Ken Ames. It measures the philosophical level of an individual in each of the following areas: Realism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, or Phenomenology.
Realism. Belief that the natural objects of the world exist separately from man's knowledge of them. That the best way to learn of the natural world is through empirical means and scientific methods. Scientific methods should be applied to working with people and their problems.

Idealism. This philosophy places great emphasis upon man's ability to think. It points out that great ideas and values exist independently of man, but that their existence and meaning can best be approached through the perception of man's ability to think. Ideas, values, and man's rational quality are the basis for helping people with their problems.

Pragmatism. This belief provides that since the world is in continual change, values and knowledge are relative in time. People plan and evaluate their actions in terms of the probable consequences of those actions. The best way, then, to help people is to assist them in developing skills in problem solving.

Existentialism. Man's own experiences are the basis of meaning in life. If one has the courage to be himself, he can then bring meaning into his own life through his chosen experience. To help another is to help him be himself.

Phenomenology. How man chooses and evaluates his actions is primarily a result of the views he has of himself. His self
understanding as well as his knowledge of his environment are gained through his own perceptions. To help a person with his problems would be a matter of helping him understand how and why he views things the way he does.

DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. No attempt was made to compare the experience levels of the teachers involved in the inventory.
2. The philosophical factors were not compared with any other factors.
3. The study used male Seminary teachers who had taught three or more years.
4. The study was not concerned with why differences exist.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Population. Seminary teachers of three large seminary districts were surveyed by the Ames Inventory. The Districts involved were:
1. The Eastern Utah District; coordinator, Stanley E. Best. 2. The South Salt Lake District; Coordinator, Lyman C. Berrett. 3. The Davis N.E. Utah District; Coordinator, Alden Richens. Of those taking the tests, the coordinators identified the ten most successful, and the ten least successful teachers in each district. More than the twenty needed teachers were asked to complete the inventory in order that the coordinators might keep their rating quite private.
Means of Obtaining Data. The Ames Inventory was explained to the coordinators of the districts involved. The coordinators then received a booklet and answer sheet for each of their seminary teachers. Attached to each answer sheet was a small piece of paper listing the name of the teacher. The coordinator then instructed each teacher involved to complete the Inventory, and to make no other marks on either the booklet or answer sheet except those necessary to answer the questionnaire. The teacher then returned the booklet and completed questionnaire answer sheet to the coordinator. Privately, the coordinator removed the name tag, and indicated only his rating of that teacher on the answer sheet. When all of the materials had been returned to the coordinator and he had completed his ranking of the teachers, he returned all of the materials together, preserving the anonymous nature of the individual tests.

Process of Inference Involved. The results of the Ames Inventory and the teacher rankings were tabulated and compared. The Chi-Square method was used to determine if differences in the basic philosophies of the highest and lowest ranked teachers were significant.

ORGANIZATION OF THE THESIS

The foregoing material describes the problem and the method used in research. It also defines terms relative to this study and describes its delimitations. The remainder of the thesis is divided
into three chapters: Review of Related Literature, Findings of the Ames Inventory among the Seminary Teachers, and Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations.

Due to the exhaustive material available concerning the five philosophies measured by the Ames Inventory, Chapter II, part B, is divided into five sections treating each philosophy separately. The LDS Department of Education Teacher Rating System, to which the five philosophies are correlated in this study, is presented in part A, of the same chapter.

The findings of the Chi Square analysis concerning the philosophies of the teachers, and their placement, is presented in Chapter III, entitled, Findings of the Ames Inventory among the Seminary Teachers.

The final chapter summarizes the findings, presents the conclusions, and makes some recommendations to the Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion of the LDS Church.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TEACHER RATING SYSTEM

Since 1929 the Latter-day Saint Department of Education has employed some elements of a merit rating program, but there was very little, if any, attempt to systematize merit rating practices until the mid 1950's.

Beginning with the school year 1953-54, all seminary teachers were rated A, B, or C. This was based on the following:

A. Independent ratings by supervisors
B. Appraisal by stake boards of education
C. Statistical records
D. Appraisals by principals in larger seminaries

In 1954, the Board of Education adopted a salary schedule, and a policy of higher pay for excellence-in-service was emphasized. The following year, 1955, the administrative officers of the Department of Education initiated plans to develop a systematic merit rating program. It was their intent to introduce objective elements into teacher evaluation and to fully acquaint every teacher with the design and operation of the rating process. A committee of teachers was assigned to study the problems of merit rating and to develop a beginning program for the administration. Near the close of the school year the committee presented a merit rating program to the administration and recommended that it be given a trial. It

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has been revised several times, the latest being in the spring of 1964.²

The teacher classification at that time and for several years after was as follows:

A. A teacher classified as "A" is one who exercises great spiritual influence on students and community, shows exceptional ability to influence and hold young people; who displays initiative in his work, and ambition to go forward to further his scholastic preparation.

B. A teacher classified as "B" is a good teacher of fine personality, faith, and teaching preparation, but could not be termed as outstanding.

C. A teacher classified as "C" is one who is doing only fair work and requires a great deal of direction and supervision.³

Since 1964, the Department of Education has again changed merit policy. In a directive concerning this subject, dated January 19, 1969, President William E. Berrett stated, "that the administration has determined that here-after we will eliminate merit rating so far as it affects salary raises." He gives, however, the following instructions to the coordinators: "We do, of course, expect you to make evaluations on the forms that have been forwarded from this office which will now be used for the purpose of knowing our teachers strengths and weaknesses so that we can better assist them to improve in their total teaching effort." Such is the current policy of the Department concerning teacher evaluation.

²Ibid., p. 37.
³Ibid., p. 40.
PHILOSOPHIES MEASURED BY THE AMES INVENTORY

Students do have personal philosophies; but counselors too, have philosophies not necessarily the kind developed in school, or those professionally eclectic ones, but rather the ones lived by and based on personal experience.

Regardless of the kind of personal philosophy evolved by the counselor, it must surely affect the techniques he uses and the evaluation of the effectiveness of his work.4

Defining these philosophies is not an easy task. There is much overlapping. Often, the terminology is difficult, not only for the layman, but for the philosophers themselves.

A second rather fundamental demand of science is for public definition. It surely does not seem much to ask, that terms and concepts be somehow communicated so as to have a rather common meaning to most reasonable scientists. But, both old and new, the existentialists resist this simple entrance requirement. When existentialists define a term such as "dread", it is not merely my complaint that they are not operational; they are simply incomprehensible. When they are comprehensible, the meanings given by even two friendly existentialists may be quite disparate.5

This statement holds true for each of these philosophies as well. The following portion of chapter II will give reasons for accepting the definitions used in the Ames Inventory.

Realism. These basic beliefs of mankind are also the three


of realistic philosophy: (1) There is a world of real existence which men have not made or constructed; (2) This real existence can be known by the human mind; and (3) Such knowledge is the only reliable guide to human conduct, individual and social.\(^6\)

Socrates left no writings, but from the account of him given by Plato as well as from other sources, it is clear that he made two important contributions to philosophy. The first was his passionate search for universal definitions of knowledge, virtue, and other basic facts which men think they understand as obvious but which on being subjected to Socrates' questioning, they discover that they do not really know. Never satisfied with the sensible instances men kept pointing at, Socrates would refer to other equally genuine but radically different instances of the same concept. Never ceasing to raise the philosophic question - what is it? - he did not rest until he had at least approached an intelligible definition of the universal concept, which remains the same in all instances and which is based upon a stable structure of things, independent of human opinion and desire. This critical zeal for the illumination of reality by immutable concepts led to the first formulations of realistic thought by Plato and his followers.\(^7\)

Philosophy moved through Kant to objective idealism with its concrete universals and its doctrine of coherence. Coherence became at one and the same time, the criterion of truth and the meaning of truth. I have not hidden my belief that idealism was in essentials a blind alley; and yet it marked a returning interest in judgment and a fuller appreciation of its nature. Categories came to the front again although they were roughly handled as, for example, by Bradley. Still the correspondence approach to truth was as outlawed as ever. Experience was something which could not be transcended even in intention.\(^8\)

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Realism drew many in the early 1900's, from the ranks of the liberals, however, not without some cautions. Also, many were drawn towards other philosophies.

I propose, therefore, that we make it our business before quitting the camp of liberalism for the camp of realism, to make a fair appraisal of the liberal theology, with a view to carrying over and incorporating into our realistic theology what ever genuine values may be rescued in the wreck, while at the same time candidly recognizing the illusions and shortcomings which have brought the liberal cause to disaster. 9

To illustrate realism, Horton related the story of some Indians living in a desert near to some foothills of a high mountain range. The desert only blossomed when it rained. They danced and cut themselves. Some became atheistic and criticized. These enterprising humanists devised little hand carts and carried water for miles for little gardens, but the desert was still a desert. Then explorers visited those parts and discovered that there was a great lake high up in those mountains, whose waters were cut off from the desert by only a little ridge of rock. They blasted the rock and the desert blossomed like a rose. He then summarized:

It was the glory of the scientific age which lies just behind us that it learned how to chart the vast resources of nature, discern the lines of connection that link us with these resources, and then build connecting channels through which nature's abundance flowed out to meet our need. I cannot believe that the social problems of the age that lies ahead of us are to be solved in any other way. They will not solve themselves if we pray to

God, beat our breasts, and let things drift as they have been going. They cannot be solved by human cunning and human will-power alone, though these must play their part. We shall be delivered from our social ills only if we first learn how to discern behind the surface of human events the constant actions of divine Providence, and then learn how to align ourselves with the great thrust of that holy Will, and serve as instruments in the mighty Hand.10

Realism is not always defined by simple stories. Roderick Chisholm challenges one's thinking.

Our compresence with physical things, in virtue of which we are conscious of them, is a situation of the same sort as the compresence of two physical things with one another. To recognize that my consciousness of a physical object is only a particular case of the universal compresence of finites is in fact the best way to realize the analysis which has been given. Of two compresent things A and B, let A be a mind, and suppose both to be contemplated by a being higher than mind. For such a superior being (say God) they would be separate things, and if A is perceiving B, he would see in this nothing but a state of things in which B stirs A to a conscious action and A becomes conscious of B, but B does not owe its character as B to its being perceived by A. Now consider A himself. He would be for himself only an enjoier, and B would be contemplated. But the fact is unaltered. It is still the fact that B is compresent with A, B is experienced because A is an experiencing. But that does not make B any the less a distinct existence from A.

Hence it follows that the distinction of enjoyment and objects contemplated is more fundamental than that of act of mind and its object (of experiencing and experienced). For it is only in the light of the first that the second, which is in truth and for realism identical with it, receives its fit interpretation.11

10Ibid., p. 194.
Critical realism, as I understand it, is an elucidation of natural realism in which the mechanism of knowing is studied and certain illusions about the nature of knowing are mastered. It follows that critical realism is one with natural realism as regards the directness and objectivity of knowing. It is the external object which is known and **not** the idea of the object.\(^{12}\)

Knowledge is the possession of ideas which do disclose the characteristics of the object denoted. In knowing people hold themselves to grasp the nature of the object, its properties, and characteristics.\(^{13}\)

We have been quite ready to admit that natural realism tends to foster the latter illusion just because sensory presentations bulk so large in perception and because the mechanism of perceiving is not obvious but must be discovered. As against all naive realists, then --and I include Whitehead in this group--I maintain that cognizing is judging in terms of predicates and that knowledge asserts the disclosure-value of these predicates when used to characterize an object.\(^{14}\)

In summary, a second statement from Roderick Chisholm:

The temper of Realism is to deanthropomorphize: to order man and mind to their proper place among the world of finite things; on the one hand to divest physical things of the colouring which they have received from the vanity or arrogance of mind; and on the other to assign them along with minds their due measure of self-existence. But so deeply ingrained and so natural is the self-flattering habit of supposing that mind, in its distinctive character of mind, is in some special sense the superior of physical things, so that in the absence of mind there would be no physical existence at all, that Realism in questioning its prerogative appears

\(^{12}\) Sellars, *op. cit.*, Preface.

\(^{13}\) Ibid., p. 106.  
\(^{14}\) Ibid., p. 107
to some to degrade mind and rob it of its riches and value. But this apprehensive mood is the creature of mistake. Realism strips mind of its pretensions but not of its value or greatness.\footnote{15}{Chisholm, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 186.}

**Idealism.** Several of the philosophies seem to have branched out from some of the old masters. Especially is this true of Plato and Kant.

In general it may be said that the modern idealist is the disciple of Plato and of Kant, but this does not mean that he would merely reiterate their conclusions. While knowledge remains incomplete and the conquest of mind continues, new issues will require new interpretations, and new ideas will be gained in the cost of old.

Idealism, with its profound trust in the supremacy of reason over the irrational, must greet with utmost cordiality, any alteration of doctrinal statement which arises from deepend insight.

Idealism is regarded as a philosophical attitude, primarily, and not a rigid dogma.\footnote{16}{Clifford Barrett, \textit{Contemporary Idealism in America} (New York: The Macmillian Company, 1932), Preface.}

The idealist would press further, however, and maintain the purposes and values which dominate in the viewing or controlling of a definite situation lose their character except as they, too, are viewed as related within larger structures of purpose and value, and ultimately, within a cosmic order of purpose and value.\footnote{17}{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 20.} Portions of Kant's work which are related to idealism are,
first, his precise analysis of the knowledge process; and, secondly, the metaphysical principles he held, such as the reality of the self and its freedom, the moral law and the imperative to fulfill it, immortality and God.18

The student therefore need not be surprised if patience is required to understand Kant. Because of the great comprehensiveness and caliber of his thought it often seems that there is no end to the detailed excursions on which he takes his reader.19

The famous German philosopher, Hegel, comes into importance in the development of idealism, both for what he contributed and for what some of his disciples left out. Viewed in the light of Hegelian idealism, the history of philosophy is the story not of distinctly different points of view but of the growing up and maturing of man's thoughts.20

The dialectical materialists embraced the dialectic of Hegel, but rejected his idealism; they accepted the form of Hegelian thought but substituted a materialistic metaphysics for Hegel's idealistic metaphysics.21

The common attitude on which idealism builds is the rather unconscious disposition most of us have to feel that in some way we

\[\text{19 Ibid., p. 152.}\]
\[\text{20 Ibid., p. 163}\]
\[\text{21 Ibid., p. 165.}\]
ourselves are real existent beings, not transitory illusions, not dreams nor fancies.\textsuperscript{22}

In his forward to Royce's lectures on Idealism, John E. Smith widened the gap among idealists themselves when he stated:

Neglect of post-Kantian idealism has often been coupled with a tendency to suppose that the deficiency might be made up by substituting the absolute idealism of the British philosophers. Thus the doctrines of Bernard Bosanquet and F. H. Bradley have frequently been accepted as an easier and more intelligible version of the ontological idealism of Kant's successors.\textsuperscript{23}

At the very least one's knowledge of the world involves, and in part depends upon, his own way of reacting to the world.\textsuperscript{24}

Philosophy must always face the question, what is fit to be known? And in terms of the latter question, every theory of reality, however tentative, however skeptical, however radically empiristic it tries to be, will always more or less consciously be determined.\textsuperscript{25}

How then does any one of us know what human experience, on the whole, verifies or proves? I answer, 'we accept as human experience what certain social test require us to regard as validly reported, as significantly related to our own observation, as such that it is reasonable to view this as experience, although we ourselves do not directly verify the fact that it is experience.'\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{22}Ibid., p. 173.


\textsuperscript{24}Ibid., p. 235. \textsuperscript{25}Ibid., p. 236.

\textsuperscript{26}Ibid., p. 238.
On the other hand, every finite individual's account of the world is subject to re-interpretation and in the process of thinking will doubtless become, so to speak, absorbed in higher, syntheses. At any point in time the returns, so far as truth is concerned, are not all in. For countless individual interpretations have not yet been made, or are not now in synthesis. Hence philosophy is peculiarly subject to the reproach of being unfinished and unstable.\textsuperscript{27}

One of the cautions for idealists comes from Bryn Jones.

Compromise is necessary and compromise is dangerous. Therefore it is important not only to yield to the necessity but to avoid the dangers that must always be associated with it. Of these dangers the greatest is the moral danger of becoming so habituated to compromise that the fine edge of our moral susceptibilities is blunted.\textsuperscript{28}

Possibly due to so much over-lap in the field of philosophy, there exists the strange phenomena of patting a foe on the back, with a knife concealed in the palm. In her "Defense of Idealism", May Sinclair uses much ink praising William James, and then counters with this attack:

The back bone of philosophy is logic. Pragmatism has no logic; it is spineless. Idealism may have too much logic; it may be too rigid. But this, surely, is a fault on the side of hardness rather than of softness. At any rate, the method of philosophy should be purely logical. The idealist does claim purity for his method; and with some reason. The method of the pragmatist is contaminated with its genial contacts, its joyous

\textsuperscript{27}Ibid., p. 244.

commerce with the metaphysically irrelevant. Pragmatism is an unsterilized philosophy.\(^2^9\)

One case she uses is pragmatism's view of memory. Memory presupposes two things which are not simple space and time. It is not easy to see how any set of neural associations could yield either.\(^3^0\)

An idealist view finds that the universe has meaning, has value. Ideal values are the dynamic forces, the driving power of the universe. The world is intelligible only as a system of ends . . .

Idealism in the sense indicated concerns the ultimate nature of reality, whatever may be its relation to the knowing mind. It is an answer to the problem of the idea, the meaning or the purpose of it all. It has nothing in common with the view that makes reality an irrational blind striving or an irremediably miserable blunder. It finds life significant and purposeful.\(^3^1\)

**Pragmatism.** Pragmatism seems to have more American origins than the other philosophies. Some argue that it is more a method than a philosophy.

Pragmatism is a recent movement of thought which is seeking to do justice to the neglected claims of common sense, of religious faith and of science, in determining a true philosophy of life. As professor James says, it is merely a new name for some old ways of thinking, yet in its scope and depth of significance it promises to


\(^3^0\) *Ibid.*, p. 27.

rank among the important and characteristic products of our Anglo-Saxon civilization.32

Pragmatism originated as a principal of logical method first formulated by Mr. Charles Pierce in 1878 ... twenty years later William James brought Pierce's principle to the attention of the philosophical world, since which time those sympathetic with the general point of view have been rallying about it as an organizing centre.

At the present time, (1910) it is connected with the names of three men, professor William James of Harvard University, Mr. F. G. Schiller of Oxford University, England, and professor John Dewey of Columbia University, each being associated with a distinct phase of the movement. Professor James emphasizes the practical meaning of philosophy for every-day life, and in describing his point of view uses the words "Pragmatism" and "Radical Empiricism". Mr. Schiller defends the rights of religious faith and feeling in determining our beliefs, and prefers the term "Humanism". His philosophy has much in common with what in other quarters has come to be called "Personalism". Professor Dewey is the champion of a scientific empirical method of philosophy. This method is quite generally known as "Instrumentalism", but in a recent article is described by Professor Dewey himself as "Immediate Empiricism".33

The Pragmatic Method is primarily a method of settling metaphysical disputes that otherwise might be interminable ... The pragmatic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference can be traced, then

33 Ibid., p. 8.
the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle.\(^{34}\)

A pragmatist turns his back resolutely and once for all upon a lot of inveterate habits dear to professional philosophers . . .

He turns towards concreteness and adequacy, towards action and towards power . . .

It is a method only.\(^{35}\)

If you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as "reason," "God," "Matter," etc., as closing your quest. You must, as James indicates, bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas, in which we can rest.\(^{36}\)

The fruits of evolutionary pragmatism have born several component ideas as the seeds of pragmatism today. American pragmatism has fostered, first, as empirical respect for the complexity of existence requiring a plurality of concepts to do justice to the diverse problems of mankind in its evolutionary struggles. Secondly, it has abandoned the eternal as an absolute frame of reference for thought, and emphasized the ineluctable pervasiveness of temporal change in the natures of things. Thirdly, it has regarded the natures of things, as known and appraised by men, to be relative to the categories and standards of the minds that have evolved modes of knowing and evaluating objects. Fourthly, it has insisted on the contingency and precariousness of the minds interactions with the physical and social environment, so that even in the most successful results of hard gained experimental knowledge, what we attain

\(^{34}\)William James, Pragmatism, A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking (London and New York: Longmans and Green, 1906), p. 45.

\(^{35}\)Ibid., p. 51.

\(^{36}\)Ibid., p. 53.
is fallible. Finally, American pragmatism upholds the
democratic freedom of the individual inquirer and
appraiser as an indespensable condition for progress
in the future evolution of science and society.37

Our New England pragmatists were brought up on an
Emersonian faith in man's ability to live nobly in
accordance with an eternal ideal that was supposed to
transcend the competition of the market and the struggle
for survival. But they soon realized that Emerson’s
ideal was too remote from the competitive world of action.38

James Pratt was asking the question, "What is pragmatism"
back in 1912. In an attempt to answer, he stated:

Pragmatism may be regarded as the result of two
confluent, though not altogether consistent, streams
of tendency. The first, and probably the less influ-
ential of these may be traced back as far as Kant’s
doctrine of the primacy of the practical reason. We
cannot, said Kant, prove the reality of God, freedom,
immortality, and the moral law. But since we are
volitional, active, rational beings we have both the
right and the duty to postulate the reality of these
things and whatever else may be essential to moral
action. It is indeed possible that we are not free;
but we are bound to act as if we were free, and since
freedom is essential to morality, it is our duty to
believe it.39

The scientist, in short, sees that his hypothesis
and laws ultimately get all their meaning from experience.
And, moreover, he no longer regards them purely as ends
in themselves; rather are they now his instruments by
the use of which human action may profitably be guided.

37Philip Wiener, Evolution and the Founders of Pragmatism

38Ibid., p. 199.

39James B. Pratt, What is Pragmatism? (New York: The
Hence he is less concerned than were his predecessors with the question whether his hypothesis are true; what concerns him most is their usefulness. His great question concerning any proposed generalization is, does it work? And this for two reasons: in the first place, because its working is practically more important to him than its merely theoretical truth; and secondly, because the only test he has for its truth is its successful working; unless it works, he has no reason to believe it is true.  

Existentialism. Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher and writer, took the position that religion was a personal experience. Using Kant's idea that the only thing we can "know" is experience as a stepping-off place, Kierkegaard evolved a philosophical system which divided existence into three categories; that is, he claimed that experience may be of three kinds: aesthetic, ethical, and religious. The child is an example of the individual who lives almost exclusively at the aesthetic level. For the child, all choices are made in terms of pleasure and pain, and experience is ephemeral, having no continuity, no meaning, but merely a connection of isolated, non-related moments. The ethical level of experience involves choice; whenever conscious choice is made, one lives at the ethical level. At the religious level, one experiences a commitment to oneself, and an awareness of one's uniqueness and singleness. To live at the religious level means to make any sacrifice, any anti-social gesture that is required by being true to oneself. Clearly, these levels are not entirely separable, but may coexist: When one chooses the aesthetic level of existence, the very act of choice involved ethical experience; and when one makes choices at the ethical level, and these choices are true to one's singleness, one lives at the religious level.

Kierkegaard believed that man, proceeding from one level of experience to another, would ultimately choose suffering and pain, and a constant awareness of the difference between ephemeral, temporal existence and ultimate truth. He concluded that only when man experiences the suffering of firm commitment to the religious

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40 Ibid., p. 15.
level of experience can he be considered to be truly religious, and, further, that the suffering endured by God is greater than that endured by any man.

If religion, then, is a purely personal matter, truth is clearly subjective, quite separate from the "truth" of religious doctrine, for the truth of man's experience must emerge from his faithfulness to his own unique identity. Kierkegaard recognized this difference between the objective, universal truth, and the subjective, personal truth. Objective truth must be experienced by the total individual. One may have objective truth, but one must be religious truth.41

Many, possibly all, philosophies are related at least in some of their expressions. Existentialism and phenomenology have much in common.

We have noted that the phenomenological approach and existentialism have often been apparently linked in the literature, but it is important to note that the existential self and the phenomenal field are not one and the same. The phenomenological approach seeks to understand the behavior of the individual from his own point of view. It attempts to observe people, not as they seem to outsiders, but as they seem to themselves. One can be phenomenological in his approach and still be deterministic, whereas one cannot be deterministic and existential. There would seem, however, to be little difference between the concept of the phenomenal self and that of the existential self, since both operate within the perceptual field.

Both would probably agree that determinism may be a part of the world in which man exists, but determinism does not apply to man. In this regard the theistic existentialist would probably not be very acceptable to most theologians who tend to see the world as a pre-determined place, operating on some Grand Plan under some Divine Order, in which man only

exists, but does not actually live, since his life is determined and he thus cannot be free. To many theologians, possibly to most, God is some outer external force which controls and directs man to do his bidding. This is why it may be easier for many of them, and for many "religious" individuals, to see God in a magnificent church or in some symbol of power and might, rather than in some ordinary, insignificant man, even though surprisingly enough, the man that most "Christians" would say they try to emulate was a very ordinary, simple, loving, compassionate individual.42

Existentialism is the philosophy which declares as its first principle that existence is prior to essence.43

If one looks for such a standard in existentialism, then, the first thing one finds is, as we have seen, that freedom itself, for Sartre and Heidegger at any rate, appears as the source of ultimate value. Values are generated by our free decisions: they start up, Sartre declares, like partridges before our acts. Yet the only value, it seems, that can stand against the charge of bad faith, the only self-justifying value, is the value of that very free decision itself. Acts done and lives lived in bad faith are those in which we cloak from ourselves the nature of our freedom, in which, to escape dread, we try to make our subjectivity into an object and so, though, of course, we do act freely even in such self-deception, we betray our freedom by disguising it.44

Sartre was a pessimist. May Sinclair preserved this fact when she wrote:

In order to assure myself that the human race


44Ibid., p. 143.
would perpetuate me, I implanted firmly in my head the conviction that it would never come to an end. To be extinguished within it was to be born again and to become infinite. But if anyone put before me the hypothesis that someday a catastrophe could destroy the planet, even if it were 50,000 years from now, I was terrified. Even yet today and disillusioned, I am unable to think without fear of the cooling of the sun. That my contemporaries may forget me the day after my burial matters little to me. So long as they live, I will haunt them, inapprehensible, unnamed, but present in each one of them—like the millions of deceased whom unknowingly I preserve from annihilation, but if humanity finally disappears, it will kill its dead for good. (From Sartre's Les Mots, p. 208)\(^45\)

This quote gives insight into the statement of one Mormon philosopher, Truman Madsen:

The existentialist attitude toward life is utter pessimism. Suicide is its most consistent outcome. Answerable to nobody and estranged from everybody, these people suffer through the disease of "nihilism." Even those who follow Kierkegaard or Marcell or Tillich and "leap" to God, leap in the dark and are convinced that "Before God we are always in the wrong." At best "eternal life" is a symbol for enduring in the present sordid world. This is a religion of much nothing and nothing much.\(^46\)

Phenomenology. One major problem is to decide where to draw the line between phenomenologists and non-phenomenologists. It would be easy enough to make such a decision by arbitrary definition.


\(^{46}\)Truman Madsen, Eternal Man (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1966), p. 29.
But this is exactly the kind of definition which phenomenology wants to avoid.47

Edmund Husserl, 1859-1938, is the primary force in the many branches of phenomenology. Phenomenology is not confined to Edmund Husserl's philosophy. That it comprises more is one of the main points I want to establish in this book. But it would not even be correct to say that all of Edmund Husserl's own philosophy is phenomenology. For it was not until Husserl had nearly reached the age of forty that his philosophical thinking had matured into his conception of phenomenology. Nevertheless it remains true that the central figure in the development of the phenomenological movement was, and still is, Edmund Husserl.48

It develops as a course of self-reflection taking place in the region of the pure psychological intuition of the inner life, or, as we might also say, as a "phenomenological" reflexion in the ordinary psychological sense. It leads eventually to the point that I, who am here reflecting upon myself, become conscious that under a consistent and exclusive focusing of experience upon that which is purely inward, upon what is "phenomenologically" accessible to me, I possess in myself an essential individuality, self-contained, and holding well together in itself, to which all real and objectively possible experience and knowledge belongs, through whose agency the objective world is there for me with all its empirically confirmed facts, in and through which it has for me at any rate trustworthy (even if never scientifically authorized) essential validity. This also includes the more special apperceptions through which I take myself to be a man with body and soul who lives in the world with other men, lives the life of the world and so forth. Continuing this self-reflection, I now also become aware that my own phenomenologically self-contained essence can be posited in an absolute sense, so I am the Ego who invests the being of the world I so constantly

48Ibid., p. 73.
speak about with existential validity, as an existence which wins for me from my own life's pure essence meaning and substantiated validity. I myself as this individual essence, posited absolutely, as the open infinite field of pure phenomenological data and their inseparable unity, am the "transcendental Ego"; the absolute positing means that the world is no longer "given" to me in advance, its validity that of a simple existent, but that henceforth it is exclusively my Ego that is given, "given from my new standpoint," given purely as that which has being in itself, in itself experiences a world, confirms the same, and so forth. ⁴⁹

There are still other difficulties which are essentially connected with the realization of a purely phenomenological experience. We saw that it will be necessary to get rid of all the prejudices induced by our contact with other sciences. Even the most self-evident tenents of logic must be left out of consideration since they are already interpreted in a too one-sided way from the viewpoint of the physical sciences. In our analysis we only hold on to what the phenomenological reflection offers us in consciousness and to what appears there truly in a genuine self-evidence. We thus must try to focus exclusively on the phenomenological experience without paying any attention to what appears in this experience as factual actualities. The phenomenological experience now is first of all a self-experiencing. All other forms of experiencing the physical find their root in this immediate self-experience. This holds true also for the experience of someone else and of society. It is for this reason that in phenomenology the method of pure self-experiencing, of through-going phenomenological self-revelation, is dealt with in such great detail. ⁵⁰

Some of the similarity between existentialism and phenomenology may be recognized here.


Psychological experience, even purely phenomenological experience, is and remains a mundane experience. It is only after the application of the transcendental reduction that we come into contact with the transforming experience in which there is no longer question of a really spatio-temporal, mundane being. In psychology the phenomenologist as man-in-the-world always remains part of the subject matter under investigation. The phenomenologist is no longer this "I," this human being, after the transcendental reduction. He himself is placed between brackets as a human being, he is nothing but phenomenon. He is now the phenomenon for a transcendental "I" for the "life of the I" which manifests itself as the last functioning subjectivity, the hidden function of which was precisely the universal apperception of the world. That which is phenomenological psychology retains a psychological-real meaning is transformed in transcendental phenomenology to mere, pure phenomenon. 51

A phenomenological approach in psychology, then, will not just represent an active sympathy toward the clinical, in which one chooses as preferable those data which have to do with "inner" processes or which consist of "subjective" reports. For in principle these are no different from any other kind of data. They are second-order data in the sense that they are built upon data of another sort. These latter are conceptually primary, but they are more difficult to describe; they take the form of the individual constructions by which one's organized thinking is generally made possible. An effort of will and of attitude is required in order to "have" such an experience, in which the accumulated results of one's own prior constructions are held in abeyance and, by a series of "reductions" the world's appearance is revealed. Therefore, the phenomenologist who would base his task on such an act, addresses himself first of all to the question of the ways in which the data of psychology are to be gathered. He does not differ from the empiricist in respect to the kinds of data he prefers—as though the scientist really had this choice—but rather in terms of his starting point. 52

51 Ibid., p. 260.

The brief discussion of the merit programs used by the Seminary Program was presented, in order that the reader might understand how the coordinators, used in the study, attempted to rank their men.

Any one of these five philosophies could yield several times as many references as this work contains in total. The purpose here was to acquaint the reader with enough material to support acceptance of the definitions used in chapter I of this thesis.
CHAPTER III

FINDINGS OF THE AMES INVENTORY AMONG THE SEMINARY TEACHERS

The Population. The Ames Inventory was administered to all experienced seminary teachers in the Eastern Utah, the Salt Lake Valley South, and the Davis North Utah Districts. A packet of materials for each teacher involved was distributed by his coordinator. The packets contained an Ames Inventory booklet, an answer sheet, and an instruction sheet. (See appendix) Each teacher completed the inventory and returned them to his coordinator. When the coordinator had received all of them, he ranked them into three groups: The top ten, the bottom ten, and others. The present study was conducted on the top and bottom groups. This comprised a total of sixty men, thirty ranked as higher, and thirty ranked as lower.

Selection of the Instrument. The Ames Inventory was developed by Dr. Ken Ames, now a member of the education staff at Gonzaga, as his major work toward his doctorate in education. It was recommended by Dr. Jonathan Chamberlain, director of the Regional Child Services Center, headquartered in Price, Utah. The Inventory measures a person's philosophical level in five of the common philosophies of modern society. These are Realism, Idealism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, and Phenomenology. The inventory consists of a series of 105 pairs of sentences. The person taking the instrument is asked to choose which sentence in each pair of statements is most acceptable.
to him. The sentences involved are representative of each philosophy mentioned, and they are repeated throughout the inventory in every combination available; yielding a person's basic philosophic preference. The possibility of further use of this instrument is discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

Results of the Inventory. The inventories from the three districts were combined, and the results from the top thirty and the bottom thirty compared. Table I, page 31, shows the choices of the top rated men, and Table II, page 32, the choices of the men ranked lower. The figure in each box indicates the number of men who scored in that philosophy, as a result of the inventory.

In order that a Chi Square analysis could be used to test the significance of the data, it was necessary to combine the smaller samples. Since the philosophy of Idealism was the largest choice among both groups, the others were combined, in pairs, to create a 2 by 3 Chi Square table. This met the requirement that in any such analysis, not more than 20 percent of the expected frequencies be less than five and none less than one.

Pragmatism and Realism were combined; and Existentialism and Phenomenology were combined; as they are the philosophies most closely associated with each other. In this manner the cells of the Chi Square were made large enough to satisfy basic requirements for cell size. The Chi Square analysis indicated that differences were significant at the .05 level. The results of this Chi Square analysis
TABLE I
PHILOSOPHICAL CHOICES OF HIGHER RANKED MEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>South Salt Lake Dist.</th>
<th>Davis North Utah Dist.</th>
<th>Eastern Utah Dist.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existentialism</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals 10 10 10 30

is presented in Table III, page 33.

It was thus determined that there was a difference in the basic philosophies of the higher and lower ranked men as measured by the Ames Inventory. The philosophy most strongly associated with the higher ranked group was Idealism.

While ten of those ranked lower, by the coordinators, also scored in Idealism, their numbers were more evenly divided among the other four philosophies. Realism was the second choice of the lower ranked men, a field rejected entirely by the men in the top ranking, with one exception.
TABLE II
PHILOSOPHICAL CHOICES OF LOWER RANKED MEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Philosophy</th>
<th>South Salt Lake Dist.</th>
<th>Davis North Utah Dist.</th>
<th>Eastern Utah Dist.</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realism</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phenomenology</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existentialism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This work was limited to discovering only if there were differences in the philosophies of the seminary teachers, not why those differences exist. It also sought to determine which philosophical background was associated with the most successful teachers, and which with the least successful.

The results have indicated that there are differences in the philosophical backgrounds of the higher and lower rated men. The Chi Square analysis indicated that the findings were significant at the .05 level of confidence.
TABLE III
RESULTS OF THE CHI SQUARE ANALYSIS ON THE COMBINED PHILOSOPHIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>o</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>o - E</th>
<th>(0 - E)^2</th>
<th>(0 - E)^2/E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>-4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square significant at the .05 Level \( \chi^2 = 7.62 \)
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was undertaken to determine whether or not there were differences in the basic philosophies of seminary teachers who were ranked highest and lowest by their coordinators. It also sought to determine which philosophy was associated with the most successful, and which with the least successful teachers.

Research design. The Ames Philosophical Inventory was administered to seminary teachers in three seminary districts. The districts involved were: 1. The Eastern Utah District; Coordinator, Stanley E. Best. 2. The South Salt Lake District; Coordinator, Lyman C. Berrett. 3. The Davis N. E. Utah District; Coordinator, Alden Richens. The Inventories were collected and the teachers ranked by the coordinators of each district. Experienced coordinators were chosen in order that a degree of uniformity could be attained in the rating of the men. They determined the ten top and the ten bottom teachers of those taking the inventory. The three districts were then combined, and two tables were constructed showing the results of the scoring among the top and bottom ranked men.

The statistical tool used to determine if there was a significant difference between these two groups, was the Chi Square Analysis.

Findings. From the data gathered in this study, the following
findings were obtained:

1. There were differences in the basic philosophies of the highest and lowest ranked seminary teachers. This finding was significant at the .05 level of confidence.

2. The philosophy most associated with the top teachers was that of Idealism.

3. The philosophy most associated with the lower rated teachers was also Idealism, but only one third of these teachers scored in it. This was a significantly lower number than was registered by the higher rated group. The second most common philosophy among this group was Realism, a field almost entirely rejected by the top teachers.

Conclusions. From the findings of this study, the following conclusions are presented:

1. It appears from this study that despite similar interviewing, training, and supervision, a seminary teacher's success is influenced by his basic philosophy.

2. It is certain that the Ames Inventory does not give an exact measurement of a Latter-day Saint's philosophy. The inventory consists of a series of 105 pairs of sentences. The person taking the instrument is asked to choose which sentence of each pair is most acceptable to him. The sentences involved are representative of each philosophy, and are repeated throughout the test in every combination
possible, yielding a person's basic preference.

Some of the choices, as far as basic LDS philosophy is concerned, paired two unacceptable statements together. This made the inventory somewhat frustrating, and may have influenced the degree of seriousness with which teachers completed the inventory.

**Recommendations.** Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are suggested to the Department of Seminaries and Institutes:

1. It is recommended that the Department **not** consider using this particular instrument as an aid in selecting prospective seminary teachers. It is feared that the non-LDS slant contained in the Ames Inventory would be frustrating to new men. It was somewhat frustrating to experienced men who took the inventory as a part of this study.

2. Despite the above problem, the trends established by this sample were significant, and lead to the recommendation that the Department encourage the development of a philosophical inventory based specifically on LDS philosophy. This would make a challenging, as well as a useful study on the doctorate level.

3. It is suggested that such an instrument could be a useful aid in the selection of new seminary teachers. It would
identify an additional area in which the administrator would receive help in the selection of new men.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


B. PERIODICALS


C. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Dear Coordinator:

I'm writing this brief note to introduce Brother Mack Sumner. He has labored in our district for the past seven years, and is presently serving as our methods specialist. Brother Sumner is attempting the completion of his master's work by June, and is very anxious to relieve himself of the pressures applied by the master's program, in order that he might devote all of his energies to teaching, and to developing the specialist program.

Brother Sumner will need your assistance in distributing the "Ames Philosophical Inventory" to those teachers in your district who have taught three or more years, present year included. These teachers will complete the questionnaire on their own, and return the materials to you.

To further assist this good brother in evaluating the results of the questionnaire it will be necessary for you to rate the brethren taking the inventory, in one of the following classifications: A. One of the ten top teachers, B. One of the ten bottom teachers, C. Others. This is done in such a manner that no one, including brother Sumner, will know how you have rated any individuals. In rating mine, I have used about the same method I used when merit rating the men. I mention this only to assist us in achieving a degree of uniformity.

Please return the enclosed card indicating your willingness to assist, and I'll have Brother Sumner contact you with instructions.

Sincerely,

Stanley E. Best, Coordinator
Eastern Utah Division
Dear Coordinator:

I hope that you received this type of assistance from someone when you were working on your own program, so that you will realize how much I appreciate your efforts.

I've tried to make this as easy as possible, because I know you are busy. Each envelope that you receive contains the following items for the teacher whose name appears on it.

1. One Ames Inventory Booklet.
2. One answer sheet.
3. One instruction sheet, (telling each teacher that the booklet and answer sheet are to be returned to you, in the envelope.)

When you receive the completed inventory, privately remove the teacher's name tag, and simply write on the answer sheet his position among those taking the inventory. As Brother Best indicated, you are only to divide them into two major groups, the ten top, and the ten bottom. The others can be your buffer between the two groups. I realize that we no longer use merit rating as we once did, so this will be only for the purpose of this survey. Then, when you have received them all, kindly return the envelopes, booklets, and answer sheets, in a package, C.O.D., in the mail.

Again, I express my thanks for your assistance.

Sincerely your brother,

V. Mack Sumner,
Eastern Utah District
Dear Fellow Teacher:

The accompanying materials are extremely important to the completion of a Master's Thesis. I pray that the following brief instructions will assist to make this a simple task, and save you all the time possible.

1. Leave your name tag attached—your coordinator will discard it when you return the materials to him.

2. Please read the brief, but carefully written, instructions in the inventory, before completing same.

3. Please make no marks in the Ames Inventory, mark only your choices on the answer sheet. Do not put your name on the answer sheet, or booklet.

4. When you complete the inventory, please place the booklet and answer sheet in the envelope, and return it to your coordinator.

When I receive the materials from your coordinator, he will have arranged the answer sheets into three basic groups, and will have discarded the name tags. I will then be running an analysis concerning those groupings, and the philosophies. No names will be involved.

Let me thank you in advance, and say that if I have not already been able to assist you with one of these projects in the past, I will be happy to return the favor whenever you are in need.

Sincerely your brother,

V. Mack Sumner,
Eastern Utah District
A STUDY OF BASIC PHILOSOPHIES OF SEMINARY TEACHERS
DETERMINED BY THE AMES PHILOSOPHICAL
BELIEF INVENTORY

V. Mack Sumner
Department of Church History and Doctrine
Master's Degree, August 1970

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not there were differences in the basic philosophies of Seminary Teachers who were ranked highest and lowest by experienced coordinators. It also sought to determine which philosophical background was associated with the most successful teachers, and which with the least successful.

Seminary teachers of three districts were surveyed by the Ames Inventory, and each coordinator identified his ten most successful and least successful teachers. The results of the Inventory and the teacher rankings were tabulated and compared, using the Chi Square analysis to determine if differences were significant.

The findings indicated a significant difference in the basic philosophies. The philosophy most associated with the top men was Idealism. Realism, associated with the bottom rated men, was rejected by the top men, with only one exception.

Suggestion is made that the Department encourage the development of an inventory specifically for an LDS society. Such an inventory could be a useful aid in the selection of new teachers.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

(Mervin J. Peterson, Committee Chairman)

(Milford C. Cottrell, Committee Member)

(LaMar C. Berrett, Department Chairman)