While psychology for the past sixty or seventy years, and philosophy and theology for many years previous to that, has concerned itself with the problems of human alienation, as well as human fragmentation, there would seem to be little disputing the fact that its ultimate concern is human integration (1). To be sure, the subject is not its prerogative, any more than were the questions of alienation or fragmentation. One need only scan the pages of the New Testament, for example, to learn how concerned the early Christians were with this matter; or those of the Old Testament, to cite another example, to see the famous Job painfully struggle towards those realizations that enabled him to put his life together after a nightmare of suffering. That much having been conceded, however, the fact remains that psychology has devoted itself in a unique way to the study of this phenomenon of personality integration. And well it should.

Counseling centers and offices, on and off campus, are daily visited by persons who experience themselves as falling apart, at loose ends, losing their grip, overwhelmed by life and its demands. They come to the psychologist for help: to put it all together, to gain or regain their grip on things, to manage at least a glimpse of the forest amid the trees of their life. It can be phrased in many ways. Whatever the wording, the objective is
the same: to effect some meaningful synthesis amid the pain, turmoil or chaos of their life. Help has been sought from the psychologist since he is presumably expertised in the area.

It was Freud himself who once described the good life in the phrase: lieben und arbeiten (to love and to work, accomplish). A profound observation indeed, for the man who learns how to spend his days loving and accomplishing has undoubtedly found the secret of the good life. One must add immediately, however, that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for him to do so if that personal world of which he is the center is falling apart. Somehow it is necessary that he experience a unity of sorts, however fleeting, before he can hope to love in a relatively selfless way or before he can hope to dedicate himself consistently over a period of time to tasks whose realization yields that joy which genuine accomplishment can generate.

Thus the psychologist’s concern with the human personality’s integration, unity, experiential oneness pervading the multiplicity of his everyday living is readily understandable. In fact if a given person felt that his life was together, that he was one with himself and his world, he would never have sought out help in the first place. That being the case, then, once a person is convinced that his or her life is together, integrated, the professional relationship with the psychologist is apt to quickly terminate (2). Such is the significance of this phenomenon.

Since the subject of this article is not personality integration, however, but rather the role of language in the integration of personality, the preceding comments must be rethought in the light of contemporary reflections on the meaning of linguistics and language. Before doing so, two of the above comments should be singled out, more for the philosophical underpinnings that they indicate than the psychological import they might have. Both are germane to the principal thrust of this study. Mention was made of an experiential oneness pervading the multiplicity of a person’s everyday living, and of his need to feel that he is one with himself and his world. In both phrases there is implicit a radical existential anthropology. To be more specific, both comments allude to the fact that man is a Being-In-The-World (an In-Der-Welt-Sein, to employ the wording of Heidegger) (3). This would mean that a person cannot be understood (whether one focuses on his intellectual life, sexual life, emotional life, etc.) except in terms of his being a Being-