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Freedom, Cultural Traditions and Progress

Philosophy in Civil Society and Nation Building: Tashkent Lectures, 1999

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Introduction

George F. McLean

The great drama of the last part of the 20th century has been the implosion of communism. Much attention has been given to the limitations of that system which led to its collapse, but relatively little has been devoted to the new and emerging sensibilities which made the old ideology suddenly so intolerable. In other words we have interpreted these great changes retrospectively in terms of "freedom from" but have given too little attention to the "freedom for" on which the future will be built.

This has derived centrally from a new ability to look at things and interpret life not only objectively as something beyond or other than the one who knows and decides its future, but subjectively, that is, in terms of the actual consciousness and valuing by which we shape our future.

The emerging appreciation of subjectivity has opened new awareness of the nature of freedom. For if 'to be' for a living being is 'to live' and for a conscious being is 'to live consciously', then 'to be' for a human person is to exercise freedom and to do so with others and in time. That is, to live in a cultural tradition and in the structures of civil society.

The present work seeks to unfold some of the import of this appreciation of subjectivity for social life. It sees (a) freedom as the properly human exercise of life and being; (b) the pattern of values and virtues as constituting a cultural tradition which gives form to freedom as lived by a people; and (c) civil society as the structure through which this freedom's exercised. Hence, the exercise of freedom in the formation of a culture and civil society will be the path of social progress. This, however, must face three major challenges in our time the tendency of many to consider tradition statically in a fundamentalist manner that impedes progress, the diversity of peoples within and between cultures, and the diversity of cultures within a civilization.

The structure of this work reflects basically two levels of philosophical communication. The first is written, the second is oral. The first tends to focus on the issue and the philosophical materials at hand in order to respond to that issue. The second focuses rather on the particular hearers, on their experiences and concerns to which it brings the resources of philosophy. The difference becomes apparent upon reading a paper written on the basis of a set of notes and listening to a lecture based on that same set of notes.

In the past the latter text would be simply discarded in favor of the former. Today, however, as we come to appreciate the significance of subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the pursuit of insight and truth, the latter promises to retain its own significant along with the former. Hence in this work the chapters have two parts, the original and prepublished text and the transcription of the lectures as actually presented to the set of philosophers taking part in the program.

The program itself is a matter of special philosophical interest. Its context is the great change of vision going on in many parts of the world in the aftermath of the ideologies at this turn of the millennium — but perhaps no-where more dramatically than in Central Asia. There the decision has been made to form a series of new countries which never before existed. For this it is necessary to establish the proper identity of the peoples. This must be distinguished from that of Russia to the North, for which it is necessary to reach back into earlier stages of their rich cultures — nomadic, Islamic, Christian, and Zoroastrian — as one bores ever more deeply into time. At the same time, in asserting their Islamic roots it is necessary to avoid both falling into the fundamentalism which lurks at the southern boarders if these are asserted too strongly, and alternately falling afoul of the same fundamentalism if the assertion of identity is too weak.

At the same time some would urge giving up on efforts at self-identity all together and allowing the blind hand of the market to shape them into puppets of a new global identity.

The circumstances of this program for philosophy professors reminds me of my days as a young professor in philosophy in the early 1960s. With so much change going on in that turbulent decade it was essential to bring philosophers together in order to investigate the new values which were emerging and how philosophers could respond. This has remained my central concern in philosophy ever since.

I am in awe at the challenge being faced here in Central Asia at this turn of the millennium. My experience had been with the social transformation taking place in a basically stable and longstanding democracy. Here the challenge is the development of a whole new understanding of personal existence and its free and creative exercise in creating new nations. Hence, it is an important matter not only of personal freedom but a major initiative in the history, culture and identity of peoples.

In this context the present work takes a number of steps. Chapter I begins by looking for the level of freedom in which human life as such is truly engaged. This means going beyond the first level of freedom as a matter of external objects or things chosen. It means also going beyond the second level of formal freedom at which one is ruled by abstract universal laws above and beyond us. This brings us home to the third level of freedom in which our existence is engaged as we proceed to build our life project.

The second chapter looks at this not only as a personal issue, but as the challenge of a whole people in developing their culture. Beyond these issues of freedom and culture, we are challenged to develop the structures required for the personal exercise of social responsibility, rather than leaving all to the state as in earlier centrist ideologies. Hence, the first three chapters will be serially on freedom, culture and civil society: the three dimensions of freedom in our time.

Three major challenges appear to be implied. One is from the past: as cultures form traditions will these be impediments to, or bases for progress. Another is from within: as a nation takes account of its cultures it becomes evident that generally the situation is pluralistic, i.e., that there are a number of peoples and cultures within the same country. Therefore the challenge is to develop, e.g., an Uzbek house which can hold the full diversity of the cultures of the nation. This will be the concern of the fourth chapter.

Beyond these challenge within, there is also a challenge from without; namely, how is it possible to be a new nation in a world that has become global in extent? This will be the topic of the fifth chapter. Radically, all of these are issues of freedom and how we live it with others and in the world.

Chapter I
Levels of Freedom

If freedom is the responsible exercise of our life then it can be understood how the search for freedom is central to our life as persons and peoples. But the term is used so broadly and with so many meanings that it can both lead and mislead. It seems important then to sort out the various meanings of freedom.

After surveying carefully the history of ideas, Mortimer Adler and his team, in *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectic Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1958), outlined a number of levels of freedom: circumstantial freedom of self-realization as a choice of whatever one wants among objects; acquired freedom of self-perfection as the ability to choose as one ought; and natural freedom of self determination by which one responsibly creates oneself and one's world.

I. Empirical Freedom of Choice

At the beginning of the modern stirrings for democracy John Locke perceived a crucial condition for a liberal democracy. If decisions were to be made not by the king but by the people, the basis for these decisions had to be equally available to all. To achieve this Locke proposed that we suppose the mind to be a blanc paper void of characters and ideas, and then follow the way in which it comes to be furnished. To keep this public he insisted that it be done exclusively via experience, that is, either by sensation or by reflection upon the mind's work on the materials derived from the senses.1 Proceeding on these suppositions as if they were real limitations of knowledge, David Hume concluded that all objects of knowledge which are not formal tautologies must be matters of fact. Such "matters of fact" are neither the existence or actuality of a thing nor its essence, but simply the determination of one from a pair of sensible contraries, e.g., white rather than black, sweet rather than sour.2

The restrictions implicit in this appear starkly in Rudolf Carnap's "Vienna Manifesto" which shrinks the scope of meaningful knowledge and significant discourse to describing "some state of affairs" in terms of empirical "sets of facts." This excludes speech about wholes, God, the unconscious or *entelechies*; the grounds of meaning, indeed all that transcends the immediate content of sense experience are excluded.3

The socio-political structures which have emerged from this model of Locke have contributed much, but a number of indices suggest that he and others have tried too hard to work out their model on a solely empirical or forensic basis. For in such terms it is not possible to speak of appropriate or inappropriate goals or even to evaluate choices in relation to self-fulfillment. The only concern is the ability to choose among a set of contraries by brute, changeable and even arbitrary will power, and whether circumstances will allow me to carry out that choice. Such choices, of course, may not only differ from, but even contradict the immediate and long range objectives of other persons. This will require compromises in the sense of Hobbes; John Rawls will even work out a formal set of such compromises.4

Through it all, however, the basic concern remains the ability to do as one pleases: "being able to act or not act, according as we shall choose or will".5 Its orientation is external. In practice as regards oneself, over time this comes to constitute a black-hole of [self-centered] consumption of physical goods in which both nature and the person are consumed. This is the essence of

consumerism; it shrinks the very notion of freedom to competitiveness in the pursuit of material wealth.

Freedom in this sense remains basically Hobbes' principle of conflict; it is the liberal ideology built upon the conception of human nature as corrupted, of man as wolf, and of life as conflict. Hopefully this will be exercised in an "enlightened" manner, but in this total inversion of human meaning and dignity laws and rights can be only external remedies. By doing violence to man's naturally violent tendencies, they attempt to attenuate to the minimal degree necessary one's free and self-centered choice's and hence the supposed basic viciousness of human life. There must be a better understandings of human freedom and indeed these emerge as soon as one looks beyond external objects to the interior nature and the existence of the human subject and of all reality.

II. Formal Freedom to Choose as One Ought

For Kant the heteronomous, external and empiricist orientation character of the above disqualifies it from being moral at all, much less from constituting human freedom. In his first *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant had studied the role of the mind in the scientific constitution of the universe. He reasoned that because our sense experience was always limited and partial, the universality and necessity of the laws of science must come from the human mind. This was an essential turning point for it directed attention to the role of the human spirit and especially to the reproductive imagination in constituting the universe in which we live and move.

But this is not the realm of freedom for if the forms and categories with which we work are from our mind, how we construct with them is not left to our discretion. The imagination must bring together the multiple elements of sense intuition in a unity or order capable of being informed by the concepts or categories of the intellect with a view to constituting the necessary and universal judgments of science. The subject's imagination here is active but not free, for it is ruled by the categories integral to the necessary and universal judgements of the sciences. In these terms the human mind remains merely an instrument of physical progress and a function of matter.

However, in his second *Critique*, that of *Practical Reason*, beyond the set of universal, necessary and ultimately material relations, Kant points to the reality of human responsibility. This is the reality of freedom or spirit which characterizes and distinguishes the person. In its terms he recasts the whole notion of physical law as moral rule. If freedom is not to be chaotic and randomly destructive, it must be ruled or under law. To be free is to be able to will as I ought, i.e., in conformity with moral law.

Yet in order to be free the moral act must be autonomous. Hence, my maxim must be something which as a moral agent I — and no other —give to myself. Finally, though I am free because I am the lawmaker, my exercise of this power cannot be arbitrary if the moral order must be universal.

On this basis, a new level of freedom emerges. It is not merely self-centered whimsy in response to circumstantial stimuli; nor is it a despotic exercise of power or the work of the clever self-serving eye of Plato's rogue. Rather, it is the highest reality in all creation. To will as I ought is wise and caring power, open to all and bent upon the realization of "the glorious ideal of a universal realm of ends-in-themselves". In sum, it is free men living together in righteous harmony. This is what we are really about; it is our glory — and our burden.

Unfortunately, for Kant this glorious ideal remained on the formal plane; it was a matter of essence rather than of existence. It was intended as a guiding principle, a critical norm to evaluate the success or failure of the human endeavor — but it was not the human endeavor itself. For

failure to appreciate this, much work for human rights remains at a level of abstraction which provides only minimal requirements. It might found processes of legal redress, but stops short of — and may even distract from and thus impede — positive engagement in the real process of constructing the world in which we live: witness the long paralysis of Europe and the world in the face of the Yugoslav dissolution of the moral and hence legal foundations for life in our times.

This second level of freedom makes an essential contribution to human life; we must not forget it nor must we ever do less. But it does not give us the way in which we as unique people in this unique time and space face our concrete problems. We need common guides, but our challenge is to act concretely. Can philosophy, without becoming politics or other processes of social action, consider and contribute to the actual process of human existence as we shape and implement our lives in freedom?

When the contemporary mind proceeds beyond objective and formal natures to become more deeply conscious of human subjectivity, and of existence precisely as emerging from and through human self-awareness, then the most profound changes must take place. The old order built on objective structures and norms would no longer be adequate; structures would crumble and a new era would dawn. This is indeed the juncture at which we now stand.

III. Existential Freedom as Self-Constitution and Self-Determination

Progress in being human corresponds to the deepening of one's sense of being, beyond Platonic forms and structures, essences and laws, to act as uncovered by Aristotle and especially to existence as it emerges in Christian philosophy through the Patristic and Middle Ages. More recently this sensibility to existence has emerged anew through the employment of a phenomenological method for focusing upon intentionality and the self-awareness of the human person in time (*dasein*). This opens to the third level of freedom stated above, namely, that of deciding for oneself in virtue of the power "inherent in human nature to change one's own character creatively and to determine what one shall be or shall become." This is the most radical freedom, namely, our natural freedom of self-determination.

This basically is self-affirmation in terms of our teleological orientation toward perfection or full realization, which we will see to be the very root of the development of values, of virtues and hence of cultural traditions. It implies seeking perfection when it is absent and enjoying or celebrating it when attained. In this sense, it is that stability in one's orientation to the good which classically has been termed holiness and anchors such great traditions of the world as the Hindu and Taoist, Islamic and or the Judeo-Christian. One might say that this is life as practiced archetypically by the saints and holy men, but it would be more correct to say that it is because they lived in such a manner that they are called holy.

In his third *Critique,* Kant suggests an important insight regarding how this might form a creative force for confronting present problems and hence for passing on the tradition in a transforming manner. He sees that if the free person of the second critique were to be surrounded by the necessitarian universe of the first critique, then one's freedom would be entrapped and entombed within one's mind, while one's external actions would be necessary and necessitated. If there is to be room for human freedom in a cosmos in which one can make use of necessary laws, indeed if science is to contribute to the exercise of human freedom, then nature too must be understood as directed toward a goal and must manifest throughout a teleology within which free human purpose can be integrated. In these terms, even in its necessary and universal laws, nature

is no longer alien to freedom; rather it expresses divine freedom and is conciliable with human freedom.

This makes possible the exercise of freedom, but our issue is how this freedom is exercised in a way that creates diverse cultures. How can a free person relate to an order of nature and to structures of society in a way that is neither necessitated nor necessitating, but free and creative? In the "Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment," Kant points out that in working toward an integrating unity the imagination is not confined by the necessitating structures of categories and concepts as in the first *Critique*, or the regulating ideal of the second *Critique*. Returning to the order of essences would lose the uniqueness of the self and its freedom. Rather, the imagination ranges freely over the full sweep of reality in all its dimensions to see where relatedness and purposiveness can emerge. This ordering and reordering by the imagination can bring about numberless unities or patterns of actions and natures. Unrestricted by any *a priori* categories, it can integrate necessary dialectical patterns within its own free and creative productions and include scientific universals within its unique concrete harmonies. This is the proper and creative work of the human person in this world.

In order for human freedom to be sensitive to the entirety of this all-encompassing harmony, in the final analysis our conscious attention must be directed not merely to universal and necessary physical or social structures, nor even to beauty and ugliness either in their concrete empirical realizations or in their Platonic ideals. Rather, our focus must be upon the integrating images of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion, generated deep within our person by these images as we attempt to shape our world according to the relation of our will to the good and hence to realize the good for our times.

In fact, however, this is still a matter of forms and categories, rather than of existence. Further it is a matter of the human person in him or herself. It is possible, however, to read this in terms of existence rather than of essence as well as a matter of relation to the creator and the living of His grace in time. In this light the aesthetic enables one to follow the free exercise of existence in a human life and the third level of freedom becomes truly the work of God with us.

In this manner human freedom becomes at once the goal, the creative source, the manifestation, the evaluation and the arbiter of all that imaginatively we can propose. It is *goal*, namely to realize life as rational and free in this world; it is *creative source* for through the imagination freedom unfolds the endless possibilities for human expression; it is *manifestation* because it presents these to our consciousness in ways appropriate to our capabilities for knowledge of limited realities and relates these to the circumstances of our life; it is *criterion* because its response manifests a possible mode of action to be variously desirable or not in terms of a total personal response of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion; and it is *arbiter* because it provides the basis upon which our freedom chooses to affirm or reject, realize or avoid this mode of self-realization.

Thus, freedom in this third, existential sense emerges as the dynamic center of our life. It is the spectroscope and kaleidoscope through which is processed the basic thrust toward perfection upon which, as we shall see, culture as the pattern of public life is based and by which its orders of preference are set. The philosophical and religious traditions it creates become the keys to the dynamics of human life. Hence the possibilities of peace within a nation and cooperation between peoples must depend fundamentally on the potentialities of creative freedom for overcoming the proclivities of the first level of freedom for confrontation and violent competition, for surmounting the general criteria of the second level of freedom, and for setting in motion positive processes of concrete peaceful and harmonious collaboration.

Notes

1. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Dover, 1959), Book II, chap. I, vol. I, 121-124.

2. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960).

3. R. Carnap, *Vienna Manifesto*, trans. A. Blumberg in G. Kreyche and J. Mann, *Perspectives on Reality* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), p. 485.

4. *The Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

5. M. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1958), I, 62.

Lecture I
Freedom as a Life Project

Introduction

Because all the lectures in this volume are steps toward the realization of freedom I would like to begin with an excursion through the positions on freedom that we find in classical and contemporary philosophy. I would not want to suggest that these are exclusive paths, though some have tried to make them so. Rather, they are different stages of freedom and we can draw fully upon the contribution of each. We do not need to leave anything out or to fight against anything; rather we need to bring together the full resources, personal and social and with these to develop an adequate vision for the challenge of freedom in our day.

Mortiner Adler can help us to look through the history of this notion of freedom. Earlier he brought together a team of young philosophers and to each assigned a specific section of the history of Western philosophy. One he asked to concentrate on the pre-Socratics, another on Plato and Plotinus, and so on through the history of philosophy. Together they began an investigation of freedom. Each day he would ask a question and then have his team examine their sections of philosophy to find what there was on that particular theme. Gradually they uncovered and charted the many dimensions of freedom explored through the history of Western philosophy.

In this process they discovered that there were three basic levels of freedom and that, not incidentally, they corresponded to the three epistemological dimensions of human consciousness. That is, if there are three ways of looking, seeing and understanding, then it is not surprising that there will be three levels of living the reality of freedom or perhaps better said, three free manners of living. This, in fact, turned out to be the case as his team uncovered a parallel between three epistemologies and the three notions of freedom. That these correspond in part to the three levels of abstraction in Aristotle and to the three levels of doubt in Descartes is not incidental and relates these discussions on freedom to the broad movements of the human spirit.

The first way of thinking is by the senses, that is empirical thinking, to which there corresponds freedom as a choice between external objects. The second way of thinking is that of the intellect as reason, as in Kant's first two critiques of *Pure* and *Practical Reason*, to which there corresponds the freedom to choose as one ought. The third mode of consciousness is the aesthetic which was treated in Kant's third *Critique* and to which there corresponds the creative existential freedom of self-construction.

Empirical Freedom

One could say then that there are three sets of eyeglasses and three notions of freedom. The first set of glasses is ground for observing things available to the external senses of sight, namely, color, texture and sound. This was uniquely important for the work on freedom at the beginning of the modern period. It was the time of the transition in England from an absolute, centrist Monarch to a Parliament which spoke for the people. This required that the members of Parliament be able to reason with each other, and hence that they be able to present views in terms equally available to all. To this end John Locke proposed to work exclusively with knowledge of the senses. For example, if I perceive the corner of this lectern to be sharp you need not believe my report but can come, put your finger here and experience the same sensation. Knowledge from the

senses is in principle available to everyone. Locke proposed then removing all content of the mind until it became a blank tablet, and then keeping track of which ideas from the senses are written upon it and how they are moved through various permutations by the mind. This process is described and ordered in his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Similar positions were held by Hobbes and Hume in those days and by Carnap in ours.

It is important to note what, with such a set of glasses, one does and does not see. One sees the other, but not oneself; and what one sees of the other is their external or surface characteristics such as black or blond hair, but not their self. This is stressed by Carnap who rejects any sense of a whole, an entelechy or purpose; only the surface is available. The knowledge had by the senses is only of things as objects and only of their surface characteristics, enabling us to distinguish sets of contraries — black rather than blond, tall rather short. Hume would call these matters of fact, by which he meant not existence or what it means to be, but simply which of a pair of contraries obtains in this particular case.

In these terms my life would be lived in terms not of a sense of personal dignity or of self — my own or other's — but of objects or things at which I stare or which, more literally, are thrown over against (ob-ject) me as subject. Further, as known by the external senses these could be only material or physical objects.

This first level of freedom then is a matter of taking possession of objects, and turning them into productive sources or matters of consumption. Thus such freedom is lived in terms of objects to be possessed, or of the economy: its ethics is of things as useful or utilitarian, its goal is (hedonistic) consumption, which some refer to as the consumer society.

Further, because these objects are physical goods, what is possessed or used by one cannot be possessed by another: food or money taken by one is not available for another. The implication then is competition in the exercise of freedom in relation to the available physical goods. In the early United States there was a great concern to promote initiative or competition with the intention of promoting the development of a dynamic society for the production of goods for the whole nation. Thus the political system was organized to promote initiative and the competition implied by this level of freedom.

In fact, such economic competition flows over into political conflict for power and control of the economic goods and productive power. The conflict can be very strong, even violent to such a degree that it destroys competition. The strongest compete best, while the weak are not really competitive. In time only a few are able to compete while the others become progressively incapable of participating in the exercise of freedom in the society. To protect against this a number of systemic mechanisms are built into the democratic system, e.g., in Anglo-Saxon cultures, one is common law that decides conflicts between people and sets precedents which stabilize the future. Another is government regulation which protects competition in an area, or even self-regulation by those in an area in order to preclude the need for government to do so. A third is human rights which protect a minimum level of freedom for an individual.

The problem here is not that there is competition, but that when conceived and exercised simply in terms of empirical or sense knowledge there are a number of negative consequences. First, the basic concern turns to material possessions, that is, to 'having' rather than to 'being'. What is sought is absolute ability to choose physical things. But as this desire is neither shareable nor satiable it generates a state of perpetual conflict or permanent warfare in which man is wolf to man.

Indeed, the focus on things so distracts from human purposes that there is no basis for evaluating in terms of goals what would be humanly and socially appropriate or inappropriate. We lose attention to issues of self-realization or self-fulfillment; 'to have' quite replaces 'to be'.

Two characteristics then of this first level of freedom are that it is concerned with objects and material possessions; it is not concerned with the self. It is an issue of 'having,' as Eric Fromm would say, not of 'being'. Secondly, it does not identify which goals really pertain to the search for human fulfillment and which are destructive thereof. It says simply that everyone must be able to choose as they wish. Of course, it can be said that the issue of life purpose is left to the individual, but then what is most humane is least protected and promoted. It becomes important then to recognize further levels of freedom.

Freedom to Choose as One Ought

Kant was very interested in the work of Hume in relation to science. Hume could provide a way in which scientific concepts could be grounded through the senses in the actual world. But when it came to ethics Kant considered the first level of freedom described above to be no ethic at all, for it simply opens a chaotic, anarchistic, voluntaristic search for possessions. It does not provide a law for rational coordination for that search. Secondly, it is so concerned about possessing things or objects distinct from ourselves that it is not concerned about the development of the person. Thus there are two things that must be corrected. We must have law, and we must care for the self.

From his first *Critique* Kant was very conscious that all must be under law as is found in physics or the economy. But these would not originate from me. The work of my imagination would be in ordering data for the intellectual category. This is not a matter of exercising of freedom, but simply of service to the physical or economic order.

Kant's solution was that for ethics there is needed of laws for the exercise of freedom but that these must remain matters of freedom. That is, they must not be heteronomous or from outside ourselves, but autonomous: they must be laws which we give to ourselves. We must be autonomous in legislating for the exercise of freedom.

This constituted a great personal challenge for it meant that we could not easily compromise our standards or search only for our self-interests. Rather, we need to be great in moral virtue in order to make laws which are worthy of the whole ethical sphere and for the entire human race. We would have to will at a high level if we were not simply to follow laws imposed, but determine our own action according to standards good enough for all of humanity to live by. One could be autonomous or free only if one's will was of the stature of a supreme lawmaker himself.

It is the creator who effects all things, making them actually to be; humans can imitate this universality only on a formal level. They do so in the theoretical order by constituting universal terms and recognizing principles; in the practical order they do so by acting according to standards fit to be universal laws. This is the lawgiving involved in properly human or ethical action. In these terms Kant set high general standards for the human person who, for instance, must always act as regards both oneself and others as being an end, never a means. This is a standard which must be met.

Existential Freedom of Self-realization

Two things were missing, however, in that second level of freedom: one was motivation. I can describe and admire a law which would be good for all of humanity, but I must be motivated actually to implement that law in my life. The second is that these universal laws do not take account of the particular, concrete circumstances in which I stand and the particular concrete decisions which I must make. We need common guides, but we must act concretely in the existential order.

Where is this existential dimension to be found in philosophy? In contrast to the Platonic tradition focused upon replicating an ideal order, we might look to the more active sense of reality as a changing life process in the Aristotelian tradition. But the sense of existence itself would seem to have emerged specifically at the time of the Christian Fathers. For them it was no longer an issue merely of the form or type of things, but rather of the existence they received from the creator and whose exercise in a process of self-realization and self-perfection is the fundamental responsibility of human life. Just as for a living being 'to be' is 'to live', so for a self-conscious being to live is to live in a self-aware manner which entails freedom and in turn responsibility for one's actions? In time, with the revival of Aristotelian philosophy, this sense was elaborated systematically first by such Islamic philosophers as al-Farabi and then by Christian philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas.

In recent times the conscious character of this thought has been richly explored by the methods of phenomenology and existentialism, making it possible to reorient thought from a merely objective concern of the first and even the second levels of freedom above to awareness of the proper subjectivity of which freedom is the proper human mode.

Along with not having the motivation to apply the universal law, another lack at the second level of freedom is that of attention to the concrete circumstance in which I must act and of appreciation of the at times heroic sacrifices I make or the creative innovative spirit by which I act concretely according to the law in my life. For that Kant needed to develop a third critique, *The Critique of Teleological and Aesthetic Judgement*.

What this third *Critique* added was the use of imagination to open the full range of the possibilities in a situation, as does a spectroscope in physics. The imagination can act also is a kaleidoscope in working out creatively the many possible combinations of relations, attitudes and ways of action. Hence the first step is to activate my imagination as spectroscope and creative kaleidoscope.

But at this point we arrive at the crucial issue. Where the many possibilities are before us by the work of our creative imagination, which do we choose and which do we avoid? One could get the answer from the laws of economic or in terms of an ideal utopia, but both of these would be heteronomous, lacking the autonomy required for the exercise of human and hence personal freedom.

In contrast there is a third sense of freedom which is built rather upon our self and our exercise of existence. As we consider the possibilities unfolded by our imagination in our concrete circumstances we see that some are good in the sense that they fit with, and contribute to, our life project or thrust toward self-realization or perfection, while others are destructive. This is not merely a speculative judgement, but the reverberation of a possible way of acting upon our life project as being either deeply fulfilling and hence attractive or the opposite experienced as quite literally revolting. It is this reverberation of the concrete circumstances and possibilities on myself

and my community in relation to our goals that grounds our decisions as regards which steps we will want to take as individuals and as peoples.

We have then a set of three notions of freedom which we must review in the light of present circumstances. It is especially the third level of freedom which is the new challenge and opportunity of our day. At the end of the Cold War human sensibilities do not tend to go back to either the very strong central decision-making process, on the one hand, or on the other hand, to the individualism of the consumer society. The first left no room for personal freedom; the second saw freedom as conflict. Today's concerns are rather how to take account of minorities, of women, of the environment and of cultures. All of this is the quite new agenda for human freedom. The Cold War debates in the Security Council which characterized earlier times, have been replaced by the great conferences on the environment in Rio, on the family in Cairo, on women in Beijing. This is the new agenda for human freedom at this turn of the millennium.

All these require the first sense of freedom in selecting among things and working hard to develop the production needed to support a burgeoning population. They require even more the sense of ideals and goals for the human agenda which is articulated by the second level of freedom. But thirdly, they require above all the creative ability to work with initiative and responsibility in order to see the possibilities and to bring these together in a way that is truly promotive of human life. This is the third dimension of freedom which is receiving special attention in our day and opening new possibilities for the future; indeed one might say that this is what constitutes the new era.

To conclude, beyond this issue of freedom for the individual, we need to think in the next chapter of what freedom is for our concrete people in their place and history, and with their values and virtues. We will need to think then of freedom as it is exercised and develops a culture. That will be the next lecture. As this is an issue not only of values, but also of social structure, this will take us subsequently to civil society, pluralism and finally to globalization in the chapters which follow.

Chapter II
Cultural Tradition as Cumulative Freedom

It is not sufficient to consider only the freedom of single actions for that could leave a human, and *a fortiori* a social, life chaotic and inconsistent. Hence, it is necessary to see how the exercise of freedom is oriented and enabled over time by persons and peoples.

I. Values

The drama of this free self-determination, and hence the development of persons and of civil society, is a most fundamental matter, namely, that of being as affirmation and definitive stance against non-being. The account of this and its implication was the work of Parmenides, the very first metaphysician. Identically this is the relation to the good in search of which we live, survive and thrive. The good is manifest in experience as the object of desire, namely, as that which is sought when absent. Basically, it is what completes life; it is the "per-fect", understood in its etymological sense as that which is completed or realized through and through. Hence, once achieved, it is no longer desired or sought, but enjoyed. This is reflected in the manner in which each thing, even a stone, retains the being or reality it has and resists reduction to non-being or nothing. The most that we can do is to change or transform a thing into something else; we cannot annihilate it. Similarly, a plant or tree, given the right conditions, grows to full stature and fruition. Finally, an animal protects its life -- fiercely, if necessary -- and seeks out the food needed for its strength. Food, in turn, as capable of contributing to an animal's realization or perfection, is for the animal an auxiliary good or means.

In this manner, things as good, that is, as actually realizing some degree of perfection and able to contribute to the well-being of others, are the bases for an interlocking set of relations. As these relations are based upon both the actual perfection things possess and the potential perfection to which they are thereby directed, the good is perfection both as attracting when it has not yet been attained and as constituting one's fulfillment upon its achievement. Goods, then, are not arbitrary or simply a matter of wishful thinking; they are rather the full development of things and all that contributes thereto. In this ontological or objective sense, all beings are good to the extent that they exist and can contribute to the perfection of others.

The moral good is a more narrow field, for it concerns only one's free and responsible actions. This has the objective reality of the ontological good noted above, for it concerns real actions which stand in distinctive relation to our own perfection and to that of others — and, indeed, to the physical universe and to God as well. Hence, many possible patterns of actions could be objectively right because they promote the good of those involved, while others, precisely as inconsistent with the real good of persons or things, are objectively disordered or misordered. This constitutes the objective basis for the ethical good or bad.

Nevertheless, because the realm of objective relations is almost numberless, whereas our actions are single, it is necessary not only to choose in general between the good and the bad, but in each case to choose which of the often innumerable possibilities one will render concrete.

However broad or limited the options, as responsible and moral an act is essentially dependent upon its being willed by a subject. Therefore, in order to follow the emergence of the field of concrete moral action, it is not sufficient to examine only the objective aspect, namely, the nature of the things involved. In addition, one must consider the action in relation to the subject, namely,

to the person who, in the context of his/her society and culture, appreciates and values the good of this action, chooses it over its alternatives, and eventually wills its actualization.

The term ‘value’ here is of special note. It was derived from the economic sphere where it meant the amount of a commodity sufficient to attain a certain worth. This is reflected also in the term ‘axiology’ whose root means "weighing as much" or "worth as much." It requires an objective content -- the good must truly "weigh in" and make a real difference; but the term ‘value’ expresses this good especially as related to wills which actually acknowledge it as a good and as desirable.1Thus, different individuals or groups of persons and at different periods have distinct sets of values. A people or community is sensitive to, and prizes, a distinct set of goods or, more likely, it establishes a distinctive ranking in the degree to which it prizes various goods. By so doing, it delineates among limitless objective goods a certain pattern of values which in a more stable fashion mirrors the corporate free choices of that people.

This constitutes the basic topology of a culture; as repeatedly reaffirmed through time, it builds a tradition or heritage about which we shall speak below. It constitutes, as well, the prime pattern and gradation of goods or values which persons experience from their earliest years and in terms of which they interpret their developing relations. Young persons peer out at the world through lenses formed, as it were, by their family and culture and configured according to the pattern of choices made by that community throughout its history — often in its most trying circumstances. Like a pair of glasses it does not create the object; but it focuses attention upon certain goods involved rather than upon others. This becomes the basic orienting factor for the affective and emotional life described by the Scotts, Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith, as the heart of civil society. In time, it encourages and reinforces certain patterns of action which, in turn, reinforce the pattern of values.

Through this process a group constitutes the concerns in terms of which it struggles to advance or at least to perdure, mourns its failures, and celebrates its successes. This is a person’s or people’s world of hopes and fears, in terms of which, as Plato wrote in the *Laches*, their lives have moral meaning.2 It is varied according to the many concerns and the groups which coalesce around them. As these are interlocking and interdependent a pattern of social goals and concerns develops which guides action. In turn, corresponding capacities for action or virtue are developed.

Indeed, Aristotle takes this up at the very beginning of his ethics. In order to make sense of the practical dimension of our life it is necessary to identify the good or value toward which one directs one’s life or which one finds satisfying. This he terms happiness and then proceeds systematically to see which goal can be truly satisfying. His test is not passed by physical goods or honors, but by that which corresponds to, and fulfills, our highest capacity, that is, contemplation of the highest being or divine life.3

But what is the relation of this approach from below, as it were, to religion as seen from above, that is, from the point of view of revelation and grace which point to a more perfect goal and fulfillment? Thomas Aquinas’ effort in his *Summa contra Gentiles*, analyzed by G. Stanley,4 is to show the way in which this latter sense of religion is not a contradiction or substitution of the former, but rather its more perfect fulfillment than is possible by human powers alone. In eschatology the vision of God is not a negation of the contemplation of divine life of which Aristotle spoke, but its fulfillment in a way that exceeds human hopes.

II. Virtues

Martin Heidegger describes a process by which the self emerges as a person in the field of moral action. It consists in transcending oneself or breaking beyond mere self-concern and projecting outward as a being whose very nature is to share with others for whom one cares and about whom one is concerned. In this process, one identifies new purposes or goals for the sake of which action is to be undertaken. In relation to these goals, certain combinations of possibilities, with their natures and norms, take on particular importance and begin thereby to enter into the makeup of one's world of meaning.5Freedom then becomes more than mere spontaneity, more than choice, and more even than self-determination in the sense of determining oneself to act as described above. It shapes--the phenomenologist would say even that it constitutes--one's world as the ambit of human decisions and dynamic action. This is the making of the complex social ordering of social groups which constitutes civil society.

This process of deliberate choice and decision transcends the somatic and psychic dynamisms. Whereas the somatic dimension is extensively reactive, the psychic dynamisms of affectivity or appetite are fundamentally oriented to the good and positively attracted by a set of values. These, in turn, evoke an active response from the emotions in the context of responsible freedom. But it is in the dimension of responsibility that one encounters the properly moral and social dimension of life. For, in order to live with others, one must be able to know, to choose and finally to realize what is truly conducive to one's good and to that of others. Thus, persons and groups must be able to judge the true value of what is to be chosen, that is, its objective worth, both in itself and in relation to others. This is moral truth: the judgment regarding whether the act makes the person and society good in the sense of bringing authentic individual and social fulfillment, or the contrary.

In this, deliberation and voluntary choice are required in order to exercise proper self-awareness and self-governance. By determining to follow this judgment one is able to overcome determination by stimuli and even by culturally ingrained values and to turn these, instead, into openings for free action in concert with others in order to shape my community as well as my physical surroundings. This can be for good or for ill, depending on the character of my actions. By definition, only morally good actions contribute to personal and social fulfillment, that is, to the development and perfection of persons with others in community.

It is the function of conscience, as one's moral judgment, to identify this character of moral good in action. Hence, moral freedom consists in the ability to follow one's conscience. This work of conscience is not a merely theoretical judgment, but the exercise of self-possession and self-determination in one's actions. Here, reference to moral truth constitutes one's sense of duty, for the action that is judged to be truly good is experienced also as that which I ought to do.

When this is exercised or lived, patterns of action develop which are habitual in the sense of being repeated. These are the modes of activity with which we are familiar; in their exercise, along with the coordinated natural dynamisms they require, we are practiced; and with practice comes facility and spontaneity. Such patterns constitute the basic, continuing and pervasive shaping influence of our life. For this reason, they have been considered classically to be the basic indicators of what our life as a whole will add up to, or, as is often said, "amount to". Since Socrates, the technical term for these especially developed capabilities has been `virtues' or special strengths.

But, if the ability to follow one's conscience and, hence, to develop one's set of virtues must be established through the interior dynamisms of the person, it must be protected and promoted by

the related physical and social realities. This is a basic right of the person--perhaps *the* basic human and social right--because only thus can one transcend one's conditions and strive for fulfillment. Its protection and promotion must be a basic concern of any order which would be democratic and directed to the good of its people.

But this is only a right to one's conscience; religion goes further in that it looks to divine grace for help. Some virtues are the result not only of human practice, but of divine action. In other words the perspective shifts from the secondary causality of the human creature to the primary casualty of the divine existence itself. Its effect is created existence with its truth, justice and faith; love that expresses the goodness of the creation; and ecstasy in response to the sublime beauty of the divine.

III. Culture

Together, these values and virtues of a people set the pattern of social life through which freedom is developed and exercised. This is called a "culture". On the one hand, the term is derived from the Latin word for tilling or cultivating the land. Cicero and other Latin authors used it for the cultivation of the soul or mind (*cultura animi*), for just as even good land, when left without cultivation, will produce only disordered vegetation of little value, so the human spirit will not achieve its proper results unless trained or educated.6 This sense of culture corresponds most closely to the Greek term for education (*paideia*) as the development of character, taste and judgment, and to the German term "formation" (*Bildung*).7

Here, the focus is upon the creative capacity of the spirit of a people and their ability to work as artists, not only in the restricted sense of producing purely aesthetic objects, but in the more involved sense of shaping all dimensions of life, material and spiritual, economic and political. The result is a whole life, characterized by unity and truth, goodness and beauty, and, thereby, sharing deeply in meaning and value. The capacity for this cannot be taught, although it may be enhanced by education; more recent phenomenological and hermeneutic inquiries suggest that, at its base, culture is a renewal, a reliving of origins in an attitude of profound appreciation.8 This leads us beyond self and other, beyond identity and diversity, in order to comprehend both.

On the other hand, "culture" can be traced to the term *civis* (citizen, civil society and civilization).9 This reflects the need for a person to belong to a social group or community in order for the human spirit to produce its proper results. By bringing to the person the resources of the tradition, the *tradita* or past wisdom produced by the human spirit, the community facilitates comprehension. By enriching the mind with examples of values which have been identified in the past, it teaches and inspires one to produce something analogous. For G.F. Klemm, this more objective sense of culture is composite in character.10 E.B. Tyler defined this classically for the social sciences as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits required by man as a member of society."11

In contrast, Clifford Geertz came to focus on the meaning of all this for a people and on how a people's intentional action went about shaping its world. Thus he contrasts the analysis of culture to an experimental science in search of law, seeing it rather as an interpretative science in search of meaning.12 What is sought is the import of artifacts and actions, that is, whether "it is, ridicule or challenge, irony or anger, snobbery or pride, that, in their occurrence and through their agency, is getting said."13 For this there is need to be aware "of the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs."14 In this light, Geertz defines culture rather as "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of intended conceptions expressed in symbolic

forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."15

Each particular complex whole or culture is specific to a particular people; a person who shares in this is a *civis* or citizen and belongs to a civilization. For the more restricted Greek world in which this term was developed, others (aliens) were those who did not speak the Greek tongue; they were "barbaroi", for their speech sounded like mere babel. Though at first this meant simply non-Greek, its negative manner of expression easily lent itself to, perhaps reflected, and certainly favored, a negative axiological connotation; indeed, this soon became the primary meaning of the word `barbarian'. By reverse implication, it attached to the term `civilization' an exclusivist connotation, such that the cultural identity of peoples began to imply not only the pattern of gracious symbols by which one encounters and engages in shared life projects with other persons and peoples, but cultural alienation between peoples. Today, as communication increases and more widely differentiated peoples enter into ever greater interaction and mutual dependence, we reap a bitter harvest of this negative connotation. The development of a less exclusivist sense of culture and civilization must be a priority task.

IV. Cultural Traditions

The development of values and virtues and their integration as a culture of any depth or richness takes time, and hence depends upon the experience and creativity of many generations. The culture which is handed on, or *tradita,* comes to be called a cultural tradition; as such it reflects the cumulative achievement of a people in discovering, mirroring and transmitting the deepest meanings of life. This is tradition in its synchronic sense as a body of wisdom.

This sense of tradition is very vivid in premodern and village communities. It would appear to be much less so in modern urban centers, undoubtedly in part due to the difficulty in forming active community life in large urban centers. However, the cumulative process of transmitting, adjusting and applying the values of a culture through time is not only heritage or what is received, but new creation as this is passed on in new ways. Attending to tradition, taken in this active sense, allows us not only to uncover the permanent and universal truths which Socrates sought, but to perceive the importance of values we receive from the tradition and to mobilize our own life project actively toward the future.

a. The Genesis of Tradition in Community

Because tradition sometimes has been interpreted as a threat to the personal and social freedom essential to a democracy, it is important to see how the cultural tradition is generated by the free and responsible life of the members of a concerned community or civil society and enables succeeding generations to realize their life with freedom and creativity.

Autogenesis is no more characteristic of the birth of knowledge than it is of persons. One's consciousness emerges, not with self, but in relation to others. In the womb, the first awareness is that of the heart beat of one's mother. Upon birth, one enters a family in whose familiar relations one is at peace and able to grow. It is from one's family and in one's earliest weeks and months that one does or does not develop the basic attitudes of trust and confidence which undergird or undermine one's capacities for subsequent social relations. There one encounters care and concern for others independently of what they do for us and acquires the language and symbol system in terms of which to conceptualize, communicate and understand.16 Just as a person is born into a

family on which he or she depends absolutely for life, sustenance, protection and promotion, so one's understanding develops in community. As persons we emerge by birth into a family and neighborhood from which we learn and in harmony with which we thrive.

Similarly, through the various steps of one's development, as one's circle of community expands through neighborhood, school, work and recreation, one comes to learn and to share personally and passionately an interpretation of reality and a pattern of value responses. The phenomenologist sees this life in the varied civil society as the new source for wisdom. Hence, rather than turning away from daily life in order to contemplate abstract and disembodied ideas, the place to discover meaning is in life as lived in the family and in the progressively wider social circles into which one enters.

If it were merely a matter of community, however, all might be limited to the present, with no place for tradition as that which is "passed on" from one generation to the next. In fact, the process of trial and error, of continual correction and addition in relation to a people's evolving sense of human dignity and purpose, constitutes a type of learning and testing laboratory for successive generations. In this laboratory of history, the strengths of various insights and behavior patterns can be identified and reinforced, while deficiencies are progressively corrected or eliminated. Horizontally, we learn from experience what promotes and what destroys life and, accordingly, make pragmatic adjustments.

But even this language remains too abstract, too limited to method or technique, too unidimensional. While tradition can be described in general and at a distance in terms of feed-back mechanisms and might seem merely to concern how to cope in daily life, what is being spoken about are free acts that are expressive of passionate human commitment and personal sacrifice in responding to concrete danger, building and rebuilding family alliances and constructing and defending one's nation. Moreover, this wisdom is not a matter of mere tactical adjustments to temporary concerns; it concerns rather the meaning we are able to envision for life and which we desire to achieve through all such adjustments over a period of generations, i.e., what is truly worth striving for and the pattern of social interaction in which this can be lived richly. The result of this extended process of learning and commitment constitutes our awareness of the bases for the decisions of which history is constituted.

This points us beyond the horizontal plane of the various ages of history and directs our attention vertically to its ground and, hence, to the bases of the values which humankind in its varied circumstances seeks to realize.17 It is here that one searches for the absolute ground of meaning and value of which Iqbal wrote. Without that all is ultimately relative to only an interlocking network of consumption, then dissatisfaction and finally ennui.

The impact of the convergence of cumulative experience and reflection is heightened by its gradual elaboration in ritual and music, and its imaginative configuration in such great epics as the *Mahabharata* and in dance. All conspire to constitute a culture which, like a giant telecommunications dish, shapes, intensifies and extends the range and penetration of our personal sensitivity, free decision and mutual concern.

Tradition, then, is not, as in history, simply everything that ever happened, whether good or bad. It is rather what appears significant for human life: it is what has been seen through time and human experience to be deeply true and necessary for human life. It contains the values to which our forebears first freely gave their passionate commitment in specific historical circumstances and then constantly reviewed, rectified and progressively passed on generation after generation. The content of a tradition, expressed in works of literature and all the many facets of a culture, emerges progressively as something upon which character and community can be built. It

constitutes a rich source from which multiple themes can be drawn, provided it be accepted and embraced, affirmed and cultivated.

Hence, it is not because of personal inertia on our part or arbitrary will on the part of our forbears that our culture provides a model and exemplar. On the contrary, the importance of tradition derives from both the cooperative character of the learning by which wisdom is drawn from experience and the cumulative free acts of commitment and sacrifice which have defined, defended and passed on through time the corporate life of the community.18

Ultimately, it bears to us the divine gifts of life, meaning and love, and provides a way both back to their origin and forward to their goal, their *Alpha* and *Omega.*

b. Reason and Hermeneutics

As the recognition of the value of tradition would appear to constitute a special problem for heirs of the Enlightenment, it may be helpful to reflect briefly on why this is so. Enlightenment rationalism idealizes clarity and distinctness of ideas both in themselves and in their interconnection; as such, it divorces them from their concrete existential and temporal significance. Such an ideal of human knowledge, it is proposed, could be achieved either, as with Descartes, through an intellect working by itself from an intellectually perceived Archimedean principle or, as with Locke and Carnap, through the senses drawing their ideas exclusively from experience and combining them in myriad tautological transformations.19 In either case, the result is a-temporal and consequently non-historical knowledge.

Two attempts to break out of this have proven ultimately unsuccessful. One might be termed historist and relativist. In order to recognize historical sequence while retaining the ideal of clarity and distinctness, attempted to attain detailed knowledge of each period, relativizing everything to its point in time and placing historicity ultimately at the service of the rationalist ideal. The other, the Romantics, ultimately adhered to the same revolutionary enlightenment ideal even in appearing to oppose it, for, in turning to the past and to myths, they too sought clear and distinct knowledge of a static human nature. Tradition thus became traditionalism, for all was included in the original state of nature and our only way of obtaining a firm grounding for human life was simply to return thereto.

In the rationalist view, in contrast, any meaning not clearly and distinctly perceived was an idol to be smashed (Bacon), an idea to be bracketed by doubt (Descartes), or something to be wiped clean from the slate of the mind as irrational and coercive (Locke and Hume). Any judgment — even if provisional — made before all had been examined and its clarity and distinctness established would be a dangerous imposition by the will.

This points toward the importance of civil society for realizing human life in a manner that reflects and ultimately leads toward the divine. First the enlightenment ideal of absolute knowledge of oneself or of others, simply and without condition, is not possible, for the knower is always conditioned according to his or her position in time and space and in relation to others. But neither would such knowledge be of ultimate interest, for human knowledge, like human beings, develops in time and with others.20 This does not exclude projects of universal and necessary scientific knowledge, but it does identify these precisely as limited and specialized. They make important but specific, rather than all-controlling, contributions. Hence, other modes of knowledge are required in order to take account of the ongoing and varied life of human freedom and its creative results. Further, this is not a solitary, but a group matter. Hence society, especially civil society,

becomes the focus for the appreciation and evaluation of things and for the responses which build our world.

Secondly, according to Descartes,21 reason is had by all and completely. Therefore, authority could be only an entitlement of some to decide issues by an application of their will, rather than according to an authentic understanding of the truth or justice of an issue. This would be "hastiness" according to Descartes's fourth *Meditation*. Further, the limited number of people in authority means that the vision of which they dispose would be limited by restricted or even individual interests. Finally, as one decision constitutes a precedent for those to follow, authority must become fundamentally bankrupt and hence corruptive.22

In this manner, the choice of clarity as an ideal, first by Plato and then by Descartes, has generated an exclusivist mind-set ruled by a reductivist mechanism. It is not only that what is not clear is put aside as irrelevant. Even more, the dynamism whereby we reflect the love by which we have been made and respond to it with openness and generosity comes to be seen in a negative light as cognitively blind, while freedom appears in a negative light as affectively arbitrary. The only way these could achieve a redeeming clarity for the human mind is to be reduced to the unambiguous and simplest viscerial violence of Hobbes's struggle for survival, that is, by being reduced to the animal level where, precisely, human freedom is dispensed with.

In this light, too, there has been a tendency to isolate public authority from the shared moral sense of community. This, in turn, compromises the moral quality of government, which needs to include and be addressed by those who comprehend and share in the social good which government is to address. This we shall see is civil society.

If the cumulative experience of humankind in living together in peace is to make a contribution to the development of modern life, then, it will be necessary to return human knowledge to the ongoing lived process of humane discovery and choice in society. This, in turn, takes place within the broad project of human interaction and an active process of reception by one generation of the learning of its predecessors. The emerging consciousness of the importance of this effort has led to broadening the task of hermeneutics from the study of ancient, often biblical, texts to a more inclusive attention to the integral meaning of cultures. There it has found, not a mere animal search for survival, but a sense of human dignity which, by transcending survival needs enables human creativity in society and encourages a search for ever higher levels of human life leading ultimately to God.

The reference to the god, Hermes, in the term "hermeneutics" suggests something of the depth of the meaning which is sought throughout human life and its implication for the world of values. The message borne by Hermes is not merely an abstract mathematical formula or a methodological prescription devoid of human meaning and value. Instead, it is the limitless wisdom regarding the source of all and hence its reality and value. Hesiod had appealed for this in the introduction to his *Theogony*: "Hail, children of Zeus! Grant lovely song and celebrate the holy race of the deathless gods who are forever. . . . Tell how at the first gods and earth came to be."23

Similarly, Aristotle indicated concern for values and virtues in describing his science of wisdom as "knowing to what end each thing must be done; . . . this end is the good of that thing, and, in general, the supreme good in the whole of nature." Such a science will be most divine, for: "(1) God is thought to be among the causes of all things and to be a first principle, and (2) such a science either God alone can have, or God above all others. All the sciences, indeed, are more necessary than this, but none is better."24 Rather than evaluating all in terms of reductivist clarity and considering things in a horizontal perspective that is only temporal and totally changing — with an implied relativization of all — hermeneutics or interpretation opens also to a vertical vision

of what is highest and deepest in life, most real in itself and most lasting through time. This is the eternal or divine in both being and value, which is the key to mobilizing and orienting the life of society in time.

In this light one is able to understand better the character of the great civilizations which come together under the inspiration of the Prophets and great examples of the religious life as lived existentially: a Buddha, a Christ or a Muhammad — paradigmatic individuals in A. Cua's term. Each set a distinctive pattern of values and virtues which has been lived through history and unfolded by a community of persons who have attempted singly and together to live the multiple modes of this example. This we will see is a seminal source of the groupings which below will be termed civil society.

At the same time, while still echoing Socrates by searching for the permanent structures of complex entities and the stable laws of change, in redirecting attention to being in time, contemporary attention is open to the essentially temporal character of mankind and, hence, to the uniqueness of each decision, whether individual or corporate. Thus, hermeneutics attends to the task of translation or interpretation, stressing the presentation to those receiving a message, their historical situation and, hence, the historical character of human life. It directs attention not merely to the pursuit of general truths, but to those to whom truth is expressed, namely, persons in the concrete circumstances of their cultures as these have developed through the history of human interaction with nature, with other human beings and with God. It is this human history as heritage and tradition which sets the circumstances in which one perceives the values presented in the tradition and mobilizes his or her own project toward the future.

Notes

1. Ivor Leclerc, "The Metaphysics of the Good," *Review of Metaphysics*, 35 (1981), 3-5.
2. *Laches*, 198-201.
3. *Nichomachean Ethics*, VII, 9, 1159b25-1160a30.
4. Gerald F. Stanley, "Contemplation as Fulfillment of the Human Person," in *Personalist Ethics and Human Subjectivity*, vol. II of *Ethics at the Crossroads*, George F. McLean, ed (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1996), pp. 365-420.
5. J.L. Mehta, *Martin Heidegger: The Way and the Vision* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976), pp. 90-91.
6. V. Mathieu, "Cultura" in *Enciclopedia Filosofica* (Firenze: Sansoni, 1967), II, 207-210; and Raymond Williams, "Culture and Civilization," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), II, 273-276, and *Culture and Society*(London, 1958).
7. Tonnelat, "Kultur" in *Civilisation, le mot et l'idée* (Paris: Centre International de Synthese), II.
8. V. Mathieu, *ibid*.
9. V. Mathieu, "Civilta," *ibid*., I, 1437-1439.
10. G.F. Klemm, *Allgemein Culturgeschicht der Menschheit* (Leipzig, 1843-1852), x.
11. E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 1871), VII, p. 7.
12. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), p. 5.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 85.

16. John Caputo, "A Phenomenology of Moral Sensibility: Moral Emotion," in George F. McLean, Frederick Ellrod, eds.,*Philosophical Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development: Act and Agent* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), pp. 199-222.

17. Gadamer, pp. 245-53.

18. *Ibid*. Gadamer emphasizes knowledge as the basis of tradition in contrast to those who would see it pejoratively as the result of arbitrary will. It is important to add to knowledge the free acts which, e.g., give birth to a nation and shape the attitudes and values of successive generations. As an example one might cite the continuing impact had by the Magna Carta through the Declaration of Independence upon life in North America, or of the Declaration of the Rights of Man in the national life of so many countries.

19. R. Carnap.

20. H. G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1975), 305-310.

21. R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, I.

22. Gadamer, pp. 240, 246-247.

23. Hesiod, *Theogony* trans. H.G. Everland-White (Loeb Classical Lib.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1964), p. 85.

24. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, I, 2.

Lecture II
Cultural Traditions as Cumulative Freedom: The Synchronic Dimension

The first lecture summarized the three levels of freedom. The first begins from sense knowledge and thereby is concerned with physical possessions. Competition for these generates collision between persons with others.

Secondly there is the Kantian ideal sense of freedom as under the categorical imperative to will in such wise that my will could be a universal law for all. But the universal law "to do unto others as you would want them to do unto you" is quite formal. It does not take account of the concrete, actual circumstances in which one lives and does not provide the motivation to follow the law.

Hence freedom moves beyond not only the external senses and objects of the first level of freedom to reason and its universal laws, but finally to existence and the project of self realization in its terms. Existence, however, is always specific; thus when I make a free decision to bring something into existence both the decision and its effect are concrete and unique. It is here that we engage our responsibilities and creativity.

Values and Virtues

While existence seems to be a general and abstract notion, upon reflection it turns out to be quite otherwise. We might begin with a rock as an example of something which exists. You could think of attempting to make this not to exist or even taking a sledge hammer and pounding the rock repeatedly. It would break into small pieces, but would not cease to exist. There would always be some sand remaining; I cannot make it not to exist. As a general principle we can say that it holds to existence and refuses to give it up.

If one puts a plant in good soil with water it will grow and flower. This is the heart of agriculture. It is not a matter of chance such that a plant might grow or it might not; if the conditions are good the plant will proceed stubbornly along its life cycle. Weeds prove this beyond doubt.

An animal is even more resourceful in pursuit of the nourishment it needs in order to grow and reproduce. Moreover, it is axiomatic that one should never corner a rat because it will attack viciously in defence of its existence, that is, its life. In short, what is holds to existence; it seeks to develop toward its perfection or full realization, and does so passionately.

One can conclude then about existence that it stands against non-existence or non being and seeks its full realization according to its nature. In the Latin languages this is expressed as seeking perfection (*facere*- to make, and *per* to make thoroughly). Whatever exists seeks the fulfillment or perfection of its existence, its full realization.

By considering existence in terms of rocks, plants and animals we have learned something about existence, namely, that it pursues stubbornly and actively its fulfillment or perfection. When we consider that notion of existence in terms of a human being, we find that similarly persons strive for perfection or self-realization according to the capabilities of their nature as human person. To the above levels of inorganic and organic reality the person in its search for perfection adds the capabilities of imagination, intellect and will. With that combination humans are able to see many different ways in which to seek fulfillment; in one circumstance one could be a professor,

clerk or artist, or one could try to change one's circumstances for oneself or one's children. For a human being then the path of existence toward perfection can be very varied.

Among these many different ways we must begin to order and set priorities. Is it to take care of our children and to be there with them as they are growing up, or is our priority professional advancement? How we weigh and combine these two is the stuff of the exercise of our freedom. As we give priority to some among these many different ways of seeking perfection we say that they weigh more for us than others. This is expressed by the Latin term "valet", that is to weigh more on a scale, whence the term "value".

Note that this is not something that we can simply make up. It must truly weigh in on the scale and make a difference. Yet we can consider some differences to be more important than others, e.g., being on time may be considered more important than having a well prepared class, or vice versa. So we act according to an order of priorities, that is, an order of values, and adjust our lives accordingly.

In the previous lecture it was noted that the imagination at the third level could act like a spectroscope able to open the many different facets of life and, like a kaleidoscope, able to combine them in different ways. Values are not only possibilities, but also what we are committed to as being important. We can go still further to say that this is not only an intellectual assessment, but relates to our whole person. So if we have some values that are very important and see them being crassly denied and rejected, we say "this makes me sick", that is, I am repulsed and revolted by this situation. Our freedom then is not only an abstract intellectual concern, but a comprehensive relationship of our total personality to what it means to be good and to realize perfection. This is the heart of freedom.

Further values are not only individual preferences, but also are set socially. One's consciousness is always in relation to the other. Even in its prenatal state in the womb consciousness emerges as awareness of the heart beat of the mother, reflecting her peace or anxiety. To come alive consciously is always a matter of consciousness in relation to others. This appears especially in the importance of the home and neighborhood in moral upbringing.

As we begin to learn a language we assimilate an attitude toward life which has been developed by those in our language group. The considerable difference between a Spanish and a Germanic personality can be heard in the language they use. This is made still more specific and reinforced in the special historical circumstances of a people. For instance a revolution achieved with suffering and sacrifice can mark a people for centuries, specifying what they will seek as a matter of personal freedom and what they will avoid, such as government interference.

Like capabilities of knowledge, the values of a people can be compared the glasses which young persons receive and with which they are raised. As a result they perceive life in their community in a special way. These glasses or values orient their emotional and effective life: what they consider important, what they are committed to or weigh negatively, all this is oriented by the values which are common in their community.

To this notion of values should be added the notion of virtue. Given a pattern of values one tends to act in a particular way. If, for instance, patience is a very important value in my family or community then I develop a capability for being patient. Similarly, if in my particular group courage is considered to be an important value then from my earliest days I am encouraged to face up to difficult circumstances. There is much discussion about this in relation to women and men. If in particular societies women are expected to act in certain ways and to take certain responsibility while men are expected to act otherwise, the result is a distinct set of capabilities in the two groups.

The word for this in the Latin language is "virtues", for if we practice a particular way of acting we develop particular capabilities or strengths in this regard, and eventually a whole set of virtues.

In sum, we began with something very simple, the existence of a rock, plant or animal. Moving to the existence of a human person we saw this to be a conscious and willed search for self-realization or perfection according to a certain order of importance which we call "values". These, in turn, entail the development of particular competencies we call "virtues".

Culture

The combination of these values and virtues is called a culture in the sense that this is a good way to cultivate the human person and to act with others who share this pattern of values and virtues. Culture is not something imposed on a people from outside, but is rather the development and flowering of their exercise of freedom through time. Taken synchronically then culture can be considered the cumulative freedom of a people.

This suggests the importance of a culture to a people and of its recognition by others. For if a culture is the cumulative freedom of a people, then to negate or suppress that culture is to deny the freedom of the people, and to do so massively. It also takes away the prime basis for cultivating the next generation. Nothing could be more destructive of the identity and hopes of a people, and nothing is defended with greater passion.

In North America there was an operative social approach called "the melting pot" according to which people coming from different parts of the world were expected to forget their heritage and to become the same as everyone else. This did not take account of their cultures or value them, but rather worked against them in order to achieve an homogenous population.

It is said that the Soviet regime did not promote the identities of the various peoples and their cultures, but rather enforced the universal forms of its dialectical system. This could be seen as a deliberate political strategy, but then it is necessary to ask why this seemed desirable, or perhaps better, why the significance of the cultures of the multiple peoples were not able to be perceived and appreciated. In this regard the epistemological limitations of the first and even the second levels of freedom outlined in the previous lecture become determinative — at which point one must ask whether they are freedoms at all.

In any case it is now considered imperative for the multiple peoples to attempt to redevelop an awareness and appreciation of their culture and to bring that into the educational process.

It is a measure of the change going on in philosophy that culture was given no attention twenty years ago. When in 1980 culture was proposed as the theme for the 1983 World Congress of Philosophy in Montreal it was opposed very strongly by leading philosophers, especially from the analytic school. Today philosophical bibliographies list a vast number of works on culture — now, but not twenty years ago. There is a good philosophical reason for that, namely, that at that time philosophy still was focused on objective knowledge. One can trace this back to Aristotle where the concern was very much for the object as standing over against (ob-ject) the subject. At the opening of modern times this was reinforced by Descartes. Though he seemed to turn to the subject in his "cogito ergo sum", even here the subject was a new epistemological object.

What has happened in recent decades is the development of phenomenology by Husserl, Heidegger and others. They took up the intentionality of the self-conscious human subject and followed its deployment from its inner source in the person through. They brought to light (the etymology of "phe-nomen-ology) the effort of human consciousness to relate to other persons and

things by following the emergence of human experience from within. Once that happened it became possible to take proper account of values and cultures and their importance as guides in the exercise of our freedom. This emerged into general consciousness in the very last decades.

One can also reflect on recent experience in philosophy. In the past the two sides of the Cold War were thought of as two great campaigns which one wanted to join; suddenly these could no longer be appreciated. What had been a great human project of the 1920s suddenly became infeasible or even revolting in the 1980s. A similar total universion of consciousness now makes culture and subjectivity a central part of human growth, whereas objectivity alone had been recognized by the two sides of the Cold War. As human consciousness moves beyond mere objectivity to include subjectivity we entering a very different and potentially much more humane world at this turn of the millennium.

In sum, this suggests three central themes in appreciating the unfolding of freedom: culture, civilization and tradition.

The term "culture" is drawn from cultivation, as of a field. The soul that is not cultivated will yield only weeds; whereas good achievement requires cultivation. Similarly, as regards values and virtues, deprived of these life cannot develop toward human excellence, but rather takes on a brutish form, to use the term of Hume.

The second term, "civilization," is similar to culture, but has to do especially with the life of the city, "civis", and the ability to live in a more complex society. The third term, "tradition", requires a whole lecture in its own right — lecture IV below. Its basic nature is to pass on (*tradere* in Latin); hence, the term tradition means to pass on or that which is passed on. Each generation inherits the pattern of values and virtues which constitute its culture. Each generation must evaluate that and decide what they want to pass on as truly life giving for their children. In that way tradition is not something which points to a past which it simply repeats. Nor is it history which includes everything good and bad. Rather it is aimed toward the future and undergoes a continuing process of reevaluation and readaptation as the way in which we and our peoples can strive for human fulfillment.

On a horizontal level through time this can constitute a pattern of trial and error in which feedback mechanisms condition us to act in ways which lead to immediate satisfaction. There is more going on, however. On a vertical level we come gradually to learn what is really worth striving for, what we want to realize as a longer range life project and what contributes thereto. In this way we come to discovery what transcends the immediate and concrete and are enabled for a creative realization of life. This will be treated further below.

Chapter III
Civil Society and Culture

I. Greek Theory

There is another question here. If cultures as human are a work of freedom, this is not exercised by isolated individuals, but by persons acting in relation one to another, as was stressed by Buber and Marcel. As an essential character of human life this relationship cannot be random in sequence with each act negating the others. This would neutralize and destroy human existence, which by nature must be affirmative and cohesive. Ethics and politics, first authored by Aristotle, are the classical disciplines in which this is analyzed; more recently it has come to be identified as civil society.

This essentially is the question of how human beings can establish a social unity which promotes, rather than subverts, the unique dignity and self-realization of all who are its members. This remains the basic issue to our day. It could be expected that whoever would open the way to resolving this issue would be the father of the Greek, and hence the Western, tradition in philosophy. This proved to be Plato and Aristotle.

Plato opened the way to taking up the reality of the many members of society and their unity through his notion of participation. This envisaged the many as having their reality from, expressing, and ultimately being directed toward the one. This breakthrough was foundational for all of Western philosophy. Plato's sense of participation was expressed in the long Platonic tradition through the imagery of light coming from a simple exalted source, but shining down in ever-expanding, if diminished, ranks. In his famous allegory of the cave in the *Republic*1 Plato described the preparation of leaders as one of liberation from the darkness of the cave in order to ascend to the light and then, returning to the cave, to govern in an enlightened manner. This was not a role, but the center of one's reality. Hegel expressed this Platonic sense of the citizen as living in, with and for one's people, whose overall life is dedicated entirely to the public good.2

There was, however, a weakness which showed up in his description of the ideal state in his *Laws* (in some contrast to his *Republic*). In response to the chaotic situation of his times, Socrates had sought a pattern of virtues which could provide real guidance in the actual situations of human action. Plato, seeking greater clarity in their regard, reduced them to ideal forms in relation to which the many individual instances were but passive formal images. This made room for diversity between different forms, but left the many instances of any one form as basically identical — just as all number threes are the same among themselves and in relation to threeness itself. As a result, the ideal state he described in the *Laws* had a shocking absence of any sense of the uniqueness of human beings. It reduced social life to a communal form in which all was determined by, and for, the state.

To the degree possible, and in terms of the sense of reality had at the time, this image of society was corrected by Plato's pupil, Aristotle, who first mapped out the field of philosophy as a science and a wisdom. It is here that we shall attempt to advance our eidetic reduction of the notion of civil society and to observe the contribution that philosophy can make to the development of that notion.

With regard to civil society Aristotle took three preliminary steps. Speaking thematically, rather than chronologically, he first developed the science of logic in order to make it possible to control the steps of the mind in extended and complex reasoning. The result was the first

elaboration of the structure of scientific knowledge in both the theoretical and the practical orders. Second, he proceeded actually to design the sciences for the first time. He developed *Physics* as an appreciation of the active character of physical reality, and by implication of all being. In his *de Anima*, the science of living beings, he identified intelligence and freedom as the distinctive characteristics of human life. These not only found the proper dignity of individual human beings, but imply a civic union of communication and cooperation between persons. The practical creative work of developing and directing these cooperative unions is the topic of ethics and politics as sciences of the practical order.

In the practical order of making and doing, the principles of scientific understanding lie not in the object but in the subject — the agent or artist. Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* begins with the observation that every action aims at an end, and that the end sought by all is happiness or the good life. *Politics* as a science consists of the study of the search for the good life as a goal not only of an individuals, but of the whole integrated society. What must be understood here and expressed in language is the goal, meaning and modes of the realization of life in community. Phenomenology has been developed precisely as a mode of access to this interior life of meaning. This is not external to personal and social life, but its very essence as the human good. Hence Manfried Riedel suggests that, if reached by a process of eidetic reduction after the manner of Husserl,3 the language of Aristotle's politics can unveil the real meaning of civil society.

Generally, this is aided by Aristotle himself who begins most of his works with a description of how the matter in question has appeared historically through time, thereby gradually delineating the field whose scientific principles and structure he will seek to determine in the process of establishing the science of that field. Here Aristotle begins his politics not historically but thematically, delineating the elements in which political life consists.4 Both approaches bring us to the same point, namely, that to be political means to govern and be governed as a member of a community.

II. Freedom and Responsibility

Most properly the political bespeaks governance or directive action toward the goal. Significantly, this is expressed by the term *arché* which originally means beginning, origin or first source. Secondly, this is extended to governance in the sense of sovereignty, that is, of directing oneself and others toward a good or a goal, while not being necessitated by other persons or things. *Arché* is the point of beginning or origin of social action; as such it bespeaks responsibility for the overall enterprise. This exercise of freedom by individuals and groups in originating responsible action is characteristically human. Though most actions of humans at the different inorganic and organic levels can be performed by other physical realities, it is precisely as these actions are exercised under the aegis of freedom that they become properly human acts. This issue of corporate directive freedom — its nature and range — is then the decisive issue today. How this is needed and how it effectively can be exercised is the heart of the issue of civil society.

There is a second dimension to the issue of governance in Aristotle. It is indicated in what many have seen as a correction of his evaluation of types of governance. His first classification of modes of government was drawn up in terms of the quantity of those who shared in ruling. When ruling is seen as a search for material possessions or property, the best form of government would be an *oligarchy* or rule by the few. For generally only a few are rich and they could afford to give more concern to the public weal rather than only to personal enrichment. Democracy, in contrast, is rule by the masses who are poor and thus to be expected to be more concerned for their personal

gain.5 Aristotle needed to improve on this basically quantitative division founded empirically on the changing distribution of property, for conceptually there could be a society in which the majority is rich. Hence, he chose instead a normative criterion, namely, whether governance is exercised in terms of a search, not for goods chosen by a few out of self-interest, but for the common good in which all can participate.6In this light governance has its meaning as a species of a broader reality, namely, the community (*koinonia*) which comes together for its end, namely, happiness or the good life of the whole. Community supposes the free persons of which it is composed; formally it expresses their conscious and free union with a view to a common end, namely, the shared good they seek.

The polis is then a species of community. It is a group, which as human and hence free and self-responsible, comes together in governance to guide efforts toward the achievement of the good life. Community and governance are not the same or tautological, but they go together, for persons are united as a community by their common orientation to the same end, and as free they rightly guide or govern themselves toward that end. In this way Aristotle identifies the central nature of the socio-political order as that of a *koin nia politika* or "civil society".

Civil society then has three elements. First, there is governance: *arché*, the beginning of action or the taking of initiative toward an end; this is an exercise of human freedom. But as this pertains to persons in their various groups and subgroups there are two other elements, namely, communication or solidarity with other members of the groups and the participation or subsidiarity of these groups or communities within the whole. In their search for the goal or end, that is, for the common good, the participants form communities marked by solidarity and interrelated in subsidiarity. Thus, to understand a civil society we must seek to uncover the solidarity and subsidiarity of the community as its members participate in the governance of life toward the common good.

III. Solidarity

Through time societies have manifested an increasing diversity of parts; this constitutes their proper richness and strength. As the parts differ one from another, this increase is numerical, thereby bringing quantitative advantage as with an army. But it is even more important that the parts differ in kind so that each brings a distinctive concern and capability to the common task. Further, differing between themselves, one member is able to give and the other to receive in multiple and interrelated active and receptive modes. This means that the members of a society not only live alongside one another, but that their shared effort to realize the good life thrives through their mutual interaction.

Aristotle develops this theme richly in chapter 6 "On Friendship" in Book IX of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, stressing a theme which will reemerge later, namely, that the members of a civil society need to be of one mind and one heart. Toward the end of that chapter he evolves the importance of this for the common weal.7

Such solidarity of the members of society is one of its essential component characteristics. Plato would use the terms *methexis* and *mimesis* or participation for this. But Aristotle feared that if the individual were seen as but another instance of a specific type, or as but an image of the primary form, individuals would lose their reality. So he soon ceased to use this term; the term ‘solidarity’ which recognizes the distinctive reality of the parts seems to reflect better his thought.

In the human body, where there is but one substantial form, the many parts exist for the whole and the actions of the parts are actions of the whole (it is not my legs and feet which walk; I walk

by my legs and feet). Society also has many parts and their differentiation and mutuality pertains to the good of the whole. But in contrast to the body, the members of a community have their own proper form, finality and operation. Hence, their unity is an accidental one of order, that is, in terms of the relation or order of their capabilities and actions to the perfection of the body politic or civil society and the realization of its common good.

Aristotle does not hesitate to state strongly the dependence of the individual on the community in order to live a truly human life, concluding that the state is a creation of nature prior to the individual.8 Nevertheless, inasmuch as the parts are realities in their own right, outside of any orientation to the common good of the whole, society ultimately is for its parts: the society is for its members, not the contrary.

IV. Subsidiarity9

But there is more than solidarity to the constitution of a civil society. Community in general is constituted through the cooperation of many for the common goal or good, but the good or goal of a community can be extremely rich and textured. It can concern nourishment, health maintenance, environmental soundness; it includes education both informal and formal, both basic and advanced, initial and retraining; it extends to nutrition, culture, recreation, etc. — all the endless manners in which human beings fulfill their needs and capacities and seek "the good life". As each of these can and must be sought and shared through the cooperation of many, each is the basis of a group or subgroup in a vastly varied community.

When, however, one adds the elements of governance (*archê*), that is, the element of freedom determining what will be done and how the goal will be sought, then the dimension of subsidiarity emerges into view. Were we talking about things rather then people it would be possible to envisage a technology of mass production automatically moving and directing all the components automatically toward the final product. Where, however, we are concerned with a community and hence with the composite exercise of the freedom of the persons and groups which constitute its membership, then it is crucial that this not be substituted for by a command from outside or from above. Rather, governance in the community initiating and directing action toward the common end must be exercised in a cumulative manner beginning from the primary or basic group, the family, in relation to its common good, and moving up to the broader concerns or goals of more inclusive groups considered both quantitatively (neighborhood, city, nation, etc.), and qualitatively (education, health, religion) according to the hierarchy of goods which are their concerns.

Aristotle recognizes the many communities as parts of the political order when he treats justice and friendship, inasmuch as this seeks not particular advantage but that of the whole.10 Justice here, as distributive, is not arithmetic but proportionate to those involved according to the consideration and respect that is due to each.11 In his concern for the stability of the state in the *Politics* he stresses the need for a structured diversity. Groups such as the family and village differ qualitatively from the state. It is necessary to recognize this and promote them as such for the vitality of the whole.

The synergetic ordering of these groups, considered both quantitatively and qualitatively, and the realization of their varied needs and potentials is the stuff of the governance of civil society. The condition for success in this is that the freedom and hence responsible participation of all be actively present and promoted at each level. Thus, proper responsibility on the family level must not be taken away by the city, nor that of the city by the state. Rather the higher units either in the sense of larger numbers or more important order of goods must exercise their governance precisely

in order to promote the full and self-responsible action of the lower units and in the process enable them to achieve goals which acting alone they could not realize. Throughout, the concern is to maximize their participation in governance, that is, the exercise of freedom by the members of the community, thereby enabling them to live more fully as persons and groups so that the entire society flourishes. This is termed subsidiarity.

Thus, through considering phenomenologically Aristotle's analysis of the creative activity of persons striving consciously and freely toward their goals, it is possible to articulate the nature and constituent elements of civil society as a conscious goal of persons and peoples. It is a realm of persons in groups or community solidarities which, through a structure of subsidiarity, participate in self-governance.

This reflects also the main axes of the unfolding of the social process in Greece, namely:

(a) from the Platonic stress upon unity in relation to which the many are but repetitions, to the Aristotelian development of diversity as necessary for the unfolding and actualization of unity;

(b) from emphasis upon governance by authority located at the highest and most remote levels, to participation in the exercise of governance by persons and groups at every level and in relation to matters with which they are engaged and responsible;

(c) and from attention to one's own interests, to attention to the common good of the whole.

Progress along these axes will be the key to efforts to develop civil society and will provide guidance for efforts to promote a proper functioning of social life. This, in turn, is the concrete social manner in which people live their lives together.

These converge in the motion of subsidiarity where the pattern of groups and the higher decision making bodies are in principle to promote, rather than suppress, the smaller groups. Hence, it is no accident that when the European Union needed a way of understanding a union which would promote, rather than absorb, its members it took up the notion of subsidiarity, theretofore a characteristic element of Catholic social thought.

V. Governance in Civil Society

If, however, one can look to tradition in order to find general inspiration for life, will this be sufficient for civil society which must have not only a certain tenor or quality of life, but governance as well? In the past the solution has been to centralize authority which then became autocratic and voluntaristic. Under the cover of efficiency and equality this ruled by general decrees and subverted the rich differentiation of solidarity and subsidiarity essential to civil society. Is it possible for tradition as cumulative freedom to bear sufficient authority to provide, as an alternate, coordinated governance through freedom itself as this is exercised popularly in the various groups which people form for the realization of their lives.

In "The Idea of Confucian Tradition",12 A. S. Cua traces the attention in Anglo-Saxon ethics and theory regarding moral traditions employing Ludwig Wittgenstein's development of the notion of "forms of life" in his *Philosophical Investigations*.13 He notes its implicit presence in J. Rawls's relation of the sense of justice to one's history and traditions,14though formal attention to the role of tradition in ethics is found rather in A. MacIntyre's *After Virtue*.15 Its sociological role in providing regularities in social life had been observed earlier by Karl Popper.16 In the German tradition, in *Truth and Method*, Hans Georg Gadamer undertook, on the basis of the work of Martin Heidegger, to reconstruct the notion of a cultural heritage or tradition as possessed of authority.

Perhaps the greatest point of tension between a sense of one's heritage and the Enlightenment spirit relates to authority. Is it possible to recognize authority on the part of a tradition which perdures, while still asserting human freedom through time? Could it be that a cultural tradition, rather than being the negation of freedom and, hence, antithetic to democracy, is its cumulative expression, the reflection of our corporate access to the bases of all meaning, and even the positive condition for the discovery and realization of needed new developments?

One of the most important characteristics of human persons and societies is their capability for development and growth. One is born with open and unlimited powers for knowledge and for love. Life consists in developing, deploying and exercising these capabilities. Given the communitary character of human growth and learning, dependence upon others is not unnatural -- quite the contrary. Within, as well as beyond, our social group we depend upon other persons according as they possess abilities which we, as individuals and communities, need for our growth, self-realization and fulfillment.

This dependence is not primarily one of obedience to the will of others, but is based upon their comparative excellence in some dimension — whether this be the doctor's professional skill in healing or the wise person's insight and judgment in matters where profound understanding is required. The preeminence of wise persons in the community is not something they usurp or with which they are arbitrarily endowed; it is based rather upon their abilities as these are reasonably and freely acknowledged by others.

Further, this is not a matter of universal law imposed from above and uniformly repeated in univocal terms. Rather it is a matter of corporate learning developed by the components of a civil society each with its own special concerns and each related to the other in a pattern of subsidiarity.

All of these — the role of the community in learning, the contribution of extended historical experience regarding the horizontal and vertical axes of life and meaning, and the grounding of dependence in competency — combine to endow tradition with authority for subsequent ages. This is varied according to the different components of tradition and their interrelation.

There are reasons to believe, moreover, that tradition is not a passive storehouse of materials simply waiting upon the inquirer, but that its content of authentic wisdom plays a normative role for life in subsequent ages. On the one hand, without such a normative referent, prudence would be as relativistic and ineffective as muscular action without a skeletal substructure. Life would be merely a matter of compromise and accommodation on any terms, with no sense of the value either of what was being compromised or of that for which it was compromised. On the other hand, were the normative factor to reside simply in a transcendental or abstract vision the result would be devoid of existential content.

The fact that humans, no matter how different in culture, do not remain indifferent before the flow of events, but dispute — even bitterly — the direction of change appropriate for their community reflects that every humanism is committed actively to the realization of some common — if general — sense of perfection. Without this, even conflict would be impossible for there would be no intersection of the divergent positions and, hence, no debate or conflict.

Through history, communities discover vision which both transcends time and directs our life in all times, past, present and future. The content of that vision is a set of values which, by their fullness and harmony of measure, point the way to mature and perfect human formation and, thereby, orient life.17 Such a vision is historical because it arises in the life of a people in time. It is also normative, because it provides a basis upon which past historical ages, present options and future possibilities are judged; it presents an appropriate way of preserving that life through time. What begins to emerge is Heidegger's insight regarding Being and its characteristics of unity, truth

and justice, goodness and love. These are not simply empty ideals, but the ground, hidden or veiled, as it were, and erupting into time through the conscious personal and group life of free human beings in history. Seen in this light, the process of human search, discussion and decision — today called democracy — becomes more than a method for managing human affairs; more substantively, it is the mode of the emergence of being in time.

One's cultural heritage or tradition constitutes a specification of the general sense of being or perfection, but not as if this were chronologically distant in the past and, therefore, in need of being drawn forward by some artificial contrivance. Rather, being and its values live and act in the lives of all whom they inspire and judge. In its synchronic form, through time, tradition is the timeless dimension of history. Rather than reconstructing it, we belong to it — just as it belongs to us. Traditions then are, in effect, the ultimate communities of human striving, for human life and understanding are implemented, not by isolated individual acts of subjectivity — which Gadamer describes as flickerings in the closed circuits or personal consciousness18 — but by our situatedness in a tradition. By fusing both past and present, tradition enables the component groupings of civil society to determine the specific direction of their lives and to mobilize the consensus and mutual commitments of which true and progressive community is built.19

Conversely, it is this sense of the good or of value, which emerges through the concrete, lived experience of a people throughout its history and constitutes its cultural heritage, which enables society, in turn, to evaluate its life in order to pursue its true good and to avoid what is socially destructive. In the absence of tradition, present events would be simply facts to be succeeded by counter-facts. The succeeding waves of such disjointed happenings would constitute a history written in terms of violence. This, in turn, could be restrained only by some utopian abstraction built upon the reductivist limitations of modern rationalism. Such elimination of all expressions of democratic freedoms is the archetypal modern nightmare, *1984*.

All of that stands in stark contrast to one's heritage or tradition as the rich cumulative expression of meaning evolved by a people through the ages to a point of normative and classical perfection. Exemplified architecturally in a Parthenon or a Taj Mahal, it is embodied personally in a Confucius or Gandhi, a Bolivar or Lincoln, a Martin Luther King or a Mother Theresa. Variously termed "charismatic personalities" (Shils),20 "paradigmatic individuals" (Cua)21 or characters who meld role and personality in providing a cultural or moral ideal (MacIntyre),22 they supersede mere historical facts. As concrete universals, they express in the varied patterns of civil society that harmony and fullness of perfection which is at once classical and historical, ideal and personal, uplifting and dynamizing — in a word, liberating.

Nor is it accidental that as examples the founders of the great religious traditions come most spontaneously to mind. It is not, of course, that people cannot or do not form the component groups of civil society on the basis of their concrete concerns for education, ecology or life. But their motivation in this as fully human goes beyond pragmatic, external goals to the internal social commitment which in most cultures is religiously based.

VI. Medieval Thought: The Existential Sense of Person, Solidarity and Subsidiarity

If these be the original components of the notion of civil society, as first systemized philosophically by Aristotle, we should look to the major subsequent stages in the evolution of philosophy for the unfolding of this notion of civil society as the heart of social life. We shall do so first in the classical medieval synthesis of Aquinas, then in the turbulent reality of modern

thought. This should put us in position to look at the new avenues along which civil society can be pursued in our day.

Above we referred to Aristotle's speculative philosophy, and then especially to his ethics and politics, in order to uncover (or "unveil" in Heideggers terms) the basic and perennial components of social life and to come thereby to the meaning of civil society (*koin nia politika*). To appreciate the development of this meaning in the medieval Graeco-Christian synthesis it is helpful to begin with the shift in metaphysics, that is, the development in appreciation of the character and content of reality, which took place with the advent of Christianity. In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle noted that the most fundamental issue "which was raised of old and is raised now and always . . . is just the question what is substance," that is, what is reality in its strongest, foundational and primary sense.23 If humankind's appreciation of this were to shift then the whole vision of reality in all its ordering, relations and striving would evolve. This indeed is what occurred in, or better constituted the step from, Greek to Christian philosophy. The former had been concerned with forms, the essences or natures of things; the latter would be enlivened by the coming into consciousness of the existence, actuality or affirmation of things. It is the difference between knowing what a car is and driving one; some have described it as the difference between a dream about life and the actual process of making decision, bearing responsibilities and building a life. In biblical terms S. Kierkegaard and Paul Tillich would see it as the difference between the dreaming innocence of the Guarder of Eden and the difficult ambiguities of the exercise of freedom.

This development required transcending the Greek notion of being which had meant simply a specific type or kind to an explicit awareness of the act of existence (*esse*) in terms of which being could be appreciated in its active and self-assertive character. The precise basis for this expansion of the appreciation of being from form to existence is difficult to identify in a conclusive manner, but some things are known.

Because the Greeks had considered matter (*hyle* — the stuff of which things were made) to be eternal, no direct questions arose concerning the existence or non-existence of things. As there always had been matter, the only real questions for the Greeks concerned the shapes or forms under which it would exist. Only at the conclusion of the Greek and the beginning of the medieval period did Plotinus (205-270 A.D.), rather than simply presupposing matter, attempt the first philosophical explanation of its origin. After the Platonic image he explained the origin of matter as light coming from the One and, having been progressively attenuated as it emanated ever further from its source, finally turning into darkness.24 But whence this new sensitivity to reality which enabled him even to raise such a question?

It is known that shortly prior to Plotinus the Christian Fathers had such a sensitivity. They explicitly opposed the Greek's mere supposition of matter; affirming that, like form, it too needed to be explained, and traced the origin of both form and matter to the Pantocrator.25 In doing this they extended to matter the general principle of *Genesis* that all was dependent upon the One who created heaven and earth. In so doing two factors appear to have been significant.

First, it was a period of intensive attention to the Trinitarian character of the divine. To understand Christ to be God Incarnate it was necessary to understand Him to be Son sharing fully in the divine nature. The Son, like the Father, must be fully of one and same divine nature. This made it possible to clarify, by contrast, the formal effect of God's act in creating limited and differentiated beings as constituted in their own right. This pointed to the meaning of existence, which for humans means human life, and for society is issue of how life in community can truly be lived humanly.

Cornelio Fabro suggests that another factor in the development of this awareness of being as existence was reflection upon one's free response to the divine redemptive invitation. This response goes beyond any limited facet of one's reality, any particular consideration of time, occupation, or the like. It is a matter of the self-affirmation of one's total actuality. Its sacramental symbol, baptism, is not merely that of transformation or improvement, but of passage through death to radically new life. This directs the mind beyond my specific nature or individual role. It focuses rather upon the unique reality that I am as a self for whom living freely is to dispose of my act of existence and living socially is to do this in cooperation with others. This opens the way to a new seriousness and great potential progress as regards the realization of civil society.

It took many centuries for this evolution in philosophical awareness from essence to existence to emerge clearly and for its implications vis a vis the Christian Platonism, which had reigned from Augustine to Bonaventure, to be brought clearly to light.

The catalyst for this was the new availability of the texts of Aristotle in the 12th and 13th centuries. His work on civil society was taken up immediately by Thomas Aquinas and effectively elaborated upon in his commentary on Aristotle's*Nicomachean Ethics*.

Because man is naturally a social animal, since he needs many things for his life which he cannot provide for himself alone, the consequence is that man is naturally a part of some group, through which assistance toward the good life is furnished him. This assistance he needs for two purposes. First, for those things that are necessary to life, without which the present life cannot be maintained. In this respect the domestic group of which he is a part may be an aid to man, for each man receives generation and nourishment and training from his parents, and the individuals who are members of a domestic family assist one another to the necessaries of life.

In another way man is assisted towards the perfect sufficiency of life by the civil group of which he is a part: namely, that he may not only live, but live well, having all the things which suffice him for life. The civil group of which he is a part may be an aid to man in this respect, not only in regard to corporal goods, since there are many crafts in the state to which a single household is not adequate, but also in regard to morals, inasmuch as insolent youths, whom paternal admonition cannot correct, may be coerced through public power by the fear of punishment.

Moreover, it should be known that this whole — a civil multitude or a domestic family — has only the unity of order, according to which it is not one thing in the strict sense of the term. Therefore, a part of this whole can have an operation which is not the operation of the whole, even as a soldier in an army has an operation which is not that of the whole army. Nevertheless, the whole itself also has an operation which does not belong to any of the parts, but to the whole, as a battle belongs to the whole army, and as the rowing of a ship is an operation of the multitude or the oarsmen.

Now there is a kind of whole which has unity not only by order but by composition or connection, or even by continuity, according to which unity it is, in the strict sense of the term, one thing; and in this kind of whole there is no operation of the part which is not that of the whole, for in continuous things, the movement of the whole and of the part is the same. Likewise in things composed or connected the operation of the part is, in principle, that of the whole. Therefore, it is fitting that consideration of such wholes and consideration of their parts should belong to the same science.26

In a sense this is an insightful synthesis of Aristotle, but in the light of Thomas' existential emphasis it signifies considerably more. We saw above in Aristotle the principles of human freedom, solidarity and subsidiarity. We saw also how in terms of reality as primarily act, existence

and freedom came to be much more than the choice between different forms or contrasting natures; it became the creative affirmation by which things were made actual or brought into reality.

Thus, one was not simply taking part in a process of cyclical return such that no matter how hard one struggled all ultimately returned to its original state. Life is much more significant: it has history and directedness, radical newness and definitive meaning. It has a uniqueness and creativity, such that the exercise of human freedom is always momentous with sacred meaning which has eternal import. This is a vastly deepened sense of the dignity of human freedom and the reason why its exercise must be protected and promoted.

Further, in terms of existence this can be seen not only from the teleological point of view of the goal or end as with Aristotle, or from the formal point of view as with Plato, but from the point of view of its origin in, and from, existence itself. This did not take away the importance of natures in ordering to an appropriate end, which allowed the contribution of the Stoics regarding natural law to be integrated. But it transformed this from pattern to which we surrendered to a wise and loving source by which our more limited but yet decisive powers should be measured and inspired. The Stoics had seen moral life as simply a matter of following the laws of nature; Kant would see it as living up to laws which we ourselves autonomously decreed. But for Thomas to assimilate and act upon the laws of a God-given nature was to participate in and express the wisdom and love from which all came and toward which all was directed. Moral action in a civil society was creatively to mediate this ideal pattern into concrete cooperative action by the members of society in the many and myriad ways in which they intersected in their lives.

For human *solidarity* this had great import. In this light, community was even less than for the Greeks a matter merely of a shared specific form and of harvesting all human power in a quantitatively cumulative manner, as might an army. It was rather the enablement of each person to express this freely and hence in a thoroughly unique action, and to do this actively by contributing effectively as a cause to their life and its actuation. This takes us far beyond the notion of a unity merely of order which it evolves into a dynamic unity of action and graded interaction in patterns of subsidiarity.

But how is this not to destroy the uniqueness of each person but to intensify it, and in the process how is it not to destroy the unity of society but to intensify that? Thomas' answer is to redevelop Plato's notion of participation, but in the sense of Aristotle's notion of being as act and of its Christian sense as existence. In this light all exist by sharing in a common source of existence. This is reflected through time in their active conscious cooperative commitment to striving toward a common goal. This is inspired by conviction regarding their transcendent origin and purpose, and made actual in the hope and mutual love which this engenders.

The bonds of solidarity which this builds and which spread out, beyond family and blood relations, to strangers we meet and hopefully even to peoples afar are deep and vast. Indeed, from tribal to medieval times the great challenges of mankind have always been at the border of these felt unities where other persons or groups appear as markedly "other", alien, and threatening. Given present mobility, this defines the major problem of immigrant peoples who become aliens within. Hence, the transcendent and active principle of unity, solidarity and cooperation between persons and communities is the more necessary in our task of binding together increasingly different groups.

For *subsidiarity* too the deepening of the notion of reality opened a major new opportunity. For to the degree that reality could be seen in terms not of closed forms, but of the act of existence then the forms and structures could become, as it were, translucent one to the other. Each was constituted not in terms of its opposition to others, as are material blocks or contrasting forms such

as red and brown, but rather in terms of the degree to which the original source of existence was reflected in their actuality and through their efficient causality was communicated to others. The paradigm of an original gift of being in which all were created meant that the significance of life lies in sharing or giving in turn. In social terms this means that the significance of a level of society lies not in holding all exercise of governance to itself but in enlivening other groups and subgroups in the exercise of their own freedom.

For civil society this meant not deadening the initiative of other groups by holding power to oneself, but enlivening and empowering the multiple communities to direct or govern their own life or area of activity and to train people progressively in guilds and other forms of comity to live and exercise responsibility in their own sphere of community life.

Finally, without reducing the importance of material possessions, this kept the nature of social life from being understood as most basically a matter of possessing materials goods or products. It directed attention rather to the meaning of life and to the development of a social order in which all could contribute and share. This meant exercising their proper freedom in cooperation with others and with an eye to the common good of all.27 The implications of this for community and for the exercise of authority are developed by Yves Simon in his *Community of the Free*28 and *Theory of Authority, and Democratic Government*.29

VII. Civil Society in the Anglo-Saxon Enlightenment and Contemporary Liberal Theory

In order to take up the present challenge we need to look with special attention at the modern landscape with regard to civil society. If that concerns the way of governing and directing or, more basically, of humanly initiating our search for the good life as a community or society, then our attention must be directed basically to the nature of freedom and its exercise. When, some decades ago, Mortimer Adler and his team at the Institute for Philosophical Research undertook the most comprehensive review of philosophical literature in order to determine what humankind had discovered about freedom they found this highly differentiated field to be constituted of three clusters of meanings. 30

(a) Circumstantial freedom of self-realization: "To be free is to be able, under favorable circumstances, to act as one wishes for one's own individual good as one sees it;"

(b) Acquired freedom of self-perfection: "To be free is to be able, through acquired virtue or wisdom, to will or live as one ought in conformity to the moral law or an ideal befitting human nature;" and

(c) Natural freedom of self-determination: "To be free is to be able, by a power inherent in human nature, to change one's own character creatively by deciding for oneself what one shall do or shall become."

The suggestion which follows is that the Enlightenment explored the first two senses of freedom and in attempting to develop the notion of civil society has manifested its own limitation for the task. This will imply for our final section an exploration of ways of developing civil society at the third level of freedom, and doing so in a way which integrates and thereby humanizes, rather than simply dismisses, the earlier two levels of freedom.

The opening of modern times is marked by, and probably consists in, a characteristic shift in governance. This no longer was shared by all or at least by the notable number of free men as in the ideal of the Athenian *polis*, but had been concentrated in Roman Emperors, kings and nobles.

Later, while great empires emerged in the East, in the West governance was highly divided in small kingdoms led by local princes, as is reflected today in the abundance of castles in Italy, Austria, etc. They had broad responsibility, yet were held to moral standards, if not legal norms, with regard to the concerns, if not the rights, of the people they ruled.

The story of the emergence of the citizenry — from the Magna Carta to the American "Declaration of Independence", to the French "Rights of Man", to the Chinese Revolution of 1949 — is, of course, the defining context of the evolution of civil society in modern times. This can be followed in many terms such as population, health or sovereignty. But it is significant that in philosophy and political theory the modern age has been characterized above all as the Enlightenment or Age of Reason. This suggests that underneath, or at least in close and controlling tension with, the development of the notion of freedom there stands a development in the understanding of knowledge. We are faced then, as it were, with a series of boxes. To understand and prescribe philosophically regarding the notion of civil society we need the notion of the modern of freedom; but in order to grasp this notion of freedom we need to be aware in turn of developments in the meaning of understanding. Hence, in order to explore the development of the notion of civil society in modern times and to understand its present problematic we shall take three steps in both British and Continental enlightenment thought. First we shall investigate their sense of knowledge which enables the awareness of meaning and the interests of people; second we shall investigate their notion of freedom; thirdly we shall see how this defines the mode of governance in the society referred to as civil.

Knowledge as Empirical: the Lockean Tradition

Turning to the epistemological dimension it is important to note the difference between the more rationalist continental, and the more empirical British traditions.31 To follow this it is necessary to reach further back to John Locke and indeed to the Reformation.

On the one hand, as an ex-Augustinian friar Martin Luther was educated in a loosely Platonic, rather than an Aristotelian, tradition. As seen above, this favored the ideal pattern over the concrete and differentiated. On the other hand, as a follower of Ockham, and hence of nominalism, he held closely to knowledge of single things and rejected a capacity of the intellectual for knowledge of natures and universals. These came together to constitute a fideism in order to bring out the importance of faith in his commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans*. Luther focused upon the damage done to humankind by the Fall seeing it as not merely weakening, but corrupting human nature and its capacities for reason. On this theological, rather than philosophical, basis human reason was seen as no longer capable of knowing the divine or thinking in terms of being or existence as the proper effect of His causality. Suddenly, the world became very opaque. Knowledge of natures and hence of natural law was no longer possible, a study of human life could reveal at best what was, but not what ought to be. The morally good, could be known not from an understanding of the nature of things themselves, but only from the will of their creator, which, in turn, could be known only by special revelation as communicated in Scripture. In the important matters of life, faith firmly held was substituted for reason; theology replaced philosophy, which shrunk suddenly to external knowledge of accidental happenings.

The questions of the time, however, were not shrinking, but expanding and becoming more pervasive. They included not only what one could know, but how one could redevelop the socio-economic in view of the vastly expanded resources of a far flung empire and the newly invented industrial capabilities. No less importantly there was question of how all this could be managed by

the new parliamentarian manner of governance which soon would be institutionalized by the American and French revolutions. The issue of civil society (*the koin nia politika*) would have to be rethought on this new basis but by very narrow bands of knowledge and correspondingly narrow understandings of freedom.

Sense knowledge. Early on John Locke was an assistant to the Earl of Shaftsbury who would soon become the Lord Chancellor of the British Empire — and literally loose his head in the complex political edies of those changing times. In these circumstances, in a regular series of discussions with colleagues he came to see how progress on political and other issues required further clarification of what we could know. Thus, Locke's thought moved from issues of governance to community, and hence to knowledge. Facing the issue of how the *arché*, origination and sovereignty in political decision-making could reside not in the single person of the king, but in a group or parliament communication became central in importance. How could the members of such a group think together in order to come to agreement upon decisions on public policy and thereupon exercise their will in legislation? For Locke this meant that all needed to have equal access to the same foundations of knowledge.

To this end Locke designed for his colleagues his historical plain method. He proposed that we suppose the mind to be a white paper void of ideas, and then follow the way in which it comes to be furnished by ideas. These he traced from external things through the senses and onto the mind. To keep knowledge public, he insisted that only those ideas be recognized which followed this route of experience, either as sensation or as reflection upon the mind's work upon the materials derived from the senses.32 On this basis David Hume reduced all knowledge to either matters of fact or formal analytic tautologies derived therefrom. They could concern neither the existence or actuality of things nor their essences, but could be simply the determination of one from a pair of sensible contraries, e.g., red rather than brown, sweet rather than sour.33

The resulting ideas would be public in the sense that they could be traced back to their origin and thus could be replicated by anyone who would situate himself in order to make the same observation. The mind could proceed to make all kinds of combinations with such ideas, and Locke eventually worked out the intricate pattern of such possible associations and dissociations of ideas.34 But all ideas, no matter how complex, were always subject to a test of verification, namely, that in principle all content could be traced back to an origin in the simple ideas drawn directly from the senses. No distinctive order of intellectual knowledge was recognized; substance remained only an unknowable supposition soon to be dismissed by Hume. This 17th century epistemology was adopted broadly in the following century not only in England and in America, but in France where it became the context for the Enlightenment proper. It provided this thought with its systematic codification and imposed strict limits upon reason. From the passion to hold to its restrictive results the times would come to be denominated the age of reason.

Thus knowledge sedulously avoided any consideration of the nature of one's own reality or of other persons and things. Interpersonal bonds of civil society and human community based on an intimate appreciation of the nature of the person, and on respect for the dignity of other human beings were replaced by external observations of persons as single entities wrapped in self-interests. This lent itself to the construction only of external utilitarian relations based on everyone's self-interests. Mutual recognition constituted a public order of merely instrumental relations assured by legal judgements rendered by the courts. In this way there came to be established a system of rights and of justice to protect each one's field of self-interested choices and of action against incursion from without. This field was progressively defined through legal judgements and legislation and enforced by the coercive power of the state. Through the

combination of industrial and colonial expansion, property or wealth was vastly expanded as was the public impact of the self-interested decision making based thereupon. In turn, the state by legislating these private interests into public law and engaging its coercive power created a legal pattern which defined the meaning of justice for its time.

The restrictions implicit in this appear starkly in Rudolf Carnap's "Vienna Manifesto" which shrinks the scope of meaningful knowledge and significant discourse to describing "some state of affairs" in terms of empirical "sets of facts." This excludes speech about wholes, God, the unconscious or *entelechies*; the grounds of meaning, as well as all that transcends the immediate content of sense experience, are excluded. All of these would be absent from the construction of the public order.

Freedom as Choice

What then could be the meaning of freedom? Just as knowledge had been reduced to external matters of fact (red or brown), freedom was reduced to choices between external object. In empirical terms, it is not possible to speak of appropriate or inappropriate goals or even to evaluate choices in relation to self-fulfillment. The only concern is which objects among the sets of contraries I will choose by brute, changeable and even arbitrary will power and whether circumstances will allow me to carry out that choice. Such choices, of course, may not only differ from, but even contradict the immediate and long range objectives of other persons. This will require compromises and social contracts in the sense of Hobbes; John Rawles will even work out a formal set of such compromises.35 Throughout it all, however, the basic concern remains the ability to do as one pleases.

This includes two factors. The first is execution by which my will is translated into action. Thus, John Locke sees freedom as "being able to act or not act, according as we shall choose or will"36; Bertrand Russell sees it as "the absence of external obstacles to the realization of our desires."37 The second factor is individual self-realization understood simply as the accomplishment of one's good as one sees it. This reflects one's personal idiosyncracies and temperament, which in turn reflect each person's individual character.

In these terms, one's goal can be only what appeals to one, with no necessary relation to real goods or to duties which one ought to perform.38 "Liberty consists in doing what one desires,"39 and the freedom of a society is measured by the latitude it provides for the cultivation of individual patterns of life.40 If there is any ethical theory in this, it can be only utilitarian, hopefully with enough breadth to recognize other people and their good, as well as my own. In practice, over time this comes to constitute a black-hole of self-centered consumption of physical goods in which both nature and the person are consumed; it is the essence of consumerism.

This first level of freedom is reflected in the contemporary sense of "choice" in North America. As a theory, this is underwritten by a pervasive series of legal precedents following Justice Holmes' notion of privacy, which now has come to be recognized as a constitutional right. In the American legal system the meaning of freedom has been reduced to this. It should be noted that this derived from Locke's politically motivated decision (itself an exercise of freedom), not merely to focus upon empirical meaning, but to eliminate from public discourse any other knowledge. Its progressively rigorous implementation, which we have but sampled in the references to Hume and Carnap, constitutes an ideology in the sense of a selected and restrictive vision which controls minds and reduces freedom to willfulness. In this perspective, liberalism is grossly misnamed, and itself calls for a process of liberation and enrichment.

Here a strong and ever deepening gap opens between, on the one hand, what reason could ascertain, namely, a set of self-interested single agents interacting in the Hobbes manner as wolves to wolves, and, on the other hand, what would undergird the construction of a public social order.

Civil Society and Moral Sentiment

Where in this mechanism was civil society to be found? Due to the restriction of knowledge to the empirical reporting and managing of facts, the moral realm was no longer an effort at rational ordering of all toward the common good of the overall society and its variously articulated sub-groups. The newly restricted reason could provide no basis for a public moral order of duty and obligation. Instead, all moral life was located in the private, interior sphere as a matter not of reason, but of feeling, affectivity and emotions.

Further, when it came then to issues of the basic motivation for decisions in private or public life these could not be the result of reason, for there reason of itself is entirely incapable. "The ultimate ends of human action can never be accounted for by reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiment and affections of mankind."41

It would not be right to underestimate the power of this sentiment or its influence in humanizing the new social universe of Locke and Hume. The Cambridge Platonists had written eloquently of moral sentiment. Locke in his *Second Treatise on Government*42 invoked prominently the subordination of human self-seeking to a unifying and uplifting order of divine providence. The Scottish Common Sense Realists propounded this eloquently in Scotland and in the major Ivy League colleges in North America in an effort to articulate the moral dimension of life.

This articulation of the moral order in terms of affectivity is central to the work of Adam Smith as is evidenced by his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*43 and of Adam Ferguson in his landmark work: *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*.44

In this process two sources of motivations are noted. One is theological, namely, divine inspiration and its approbation of love, charity or benevolence as actions in accord with divinely approved law of nature. This is a strong and pervasive influence in Locke and it continues in such Scottish moralists as Francis Hutcheson. Aladair MacIntyre documents this at length in his *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*45

A second, more humanistic, source is the desire for social approbation developed in the work of Adam Ferguson. While recognizing the realm of self-interest, he defends the overriding reality of a moral sphere. "Mankind, we are told, are devoted to interest; and this, in all commercial nations, is undoubtedly true. But it does not follow that they are, by natural dispositions averse to society and natural affections." He expresses contempt for mere "fortune or interest" and looks rather to a benevolent heart with "courage, freedom and resolute choice of conduct" as directing us to act with a view to the good of society. This, in turn, is seen less as divinely mandated universal laws of action than as universal attributes of "moral sentiments and natural affections (discovered) through the study of particular human agents acting in society."46

In this manner the moral warrant for the civility of civil society is separated from reason, from the creator as source of society, and from the substance and end of society. Its warrant is left as self-justifying and self-motivating. While moral sentiment can generate a certain conception of a way of life and a conviction that this is a good way to live, these are hard pressed by the internalized motivation of self-interest based on the drive for material possessions. These even receive divine sanction in the complex convoluted puritan rationalization described by Max Weber.

Is this motivation for a separated civil society adequate to harmonize all the elements in the full breadth of human life? In the context of the first level of freedom as developed in early British empiricist philosophy following Locke, with its external utilitarian structure for human relationships, Adam Smith developed a corresponding economic theory. His goal was social promotion and protection of the economically disadvantaged. These, he thought, could best be achieved by the untrammelled development of economic forces under the guidance of their own inner logic, namely, free market interchange working as an invisible hand. Being blind to realities other than its material, economic self, however, it was inevitable that this would trammel inadvertently upon the broader human and social reality which needed and deserved to be protected. Hence he turned with full and equal seriousness, if with less success, to the elaboration of another realm — civil society. This was neither the economic order nor the state, but was needed in order to provide a "safety net" for those endangered or damaged by the interplay of market forces and the dislocation and unemployment which they generate.

It could and should be argued further that in this understanding civil society is not merely a matter of protecting the victims of the economic system, but even more of providing a human context for the lives of all who do participate in that system. It would be a field in which they could as community exercise their humanity and hence their freedom. Here the exercise of freedom need not be limited to its first level; thus the early modern Scotch theorists, responding to Locke, developed their theme of civil society as a realm of altruistic activity guided by moral affectivity. This stood in constant contrast to the self-interested and self-seeking management of property in terms of its own maximization. It was inspired both by such religious motifs as the example of divine providence and benevolence, and the desire to be seen and appreciated by one's peers as a good and morally sensitive person. Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sensitivity* was a natural, integral and typical part of this crucial early modern development, though he seemed over time to have moved to stress justice over benevolence.

Finally, it should be noted that civil society was conceived not only a refuge from the economic realm both for its victims and its participants, but also as a wellspring of economic abilities. Without health and basic education there cannot be a successful work force; without further education and communication there will not exist the creative inventiveness to generate more products and to compete successfully; without a sense of self-worth, human dignity and social concern the invisible hand will be left to destroy its own environment and the human potentialities it requires.

All of this argues for a civil society on the basis of economic interchange exercised not reductively at the first level of freedom, but essentially transcending that dimension. Even those who would attempt to hold reductively to the first level would refer to civil society in terms of "enlightened" self-interest play loosely with words, for in effect it means exercising self-interest with levels of insight and meaning which transcend the empirical and utilitarian. This is to say that for utility to be maximized and really succeed it needs to be situated in a context of meaning and a set of values which transcend it. The Scotts recognized this and drew insight from other, especially religious, sources in order to humanize their world and support their system.

But is this sufficient to ward off the deleterious effects of leaving the economic order of production and distribution to a non-human "hidden hand"? Marx's world shattering analysis of the conditions of mill workers in 19th century England was a resounding "no". While these condition have since been seriously attenuated, his indictment of the system itself that generated them, though fought over in wars hot and cold, has never been truly answered. The difficulties increase as the material stakes and self-interest increase, and as not only workers but management

becomes more distant from ownership and communication slips ever more toward the inadequate language of the economic balance sheet.

And what can be expected of this arrangement as we move from the industrial to the information age in which the focus of material self-interest will shift to competencies possessed by the technically sophisticated few? This promises to catapult large members of people out of industrial production, which previously had absorbed massive numbers, and thus out of the economic web leaving them to wander and search for their survival in that intermediate field called civil society?

The "liberal" response to this follows Hume's separation of "is" from "ought" to develop a bifurcation between the public realm ruled by justice and the realm of private morality ruled by virtue. John Rawls' *Theory of Justice*47 and its subsequent evolution in *Political Liberalism*48 follows this penchant. The so-called integrating visions of the meaning and exercise of life he relegates to a position behind "veil of ignorance" in order to constitute a "pluralistic" public domain charted by a minimum set of rules to which all would be expected to assent in order to be assured of a maximum range of action. The denizens of this domain, having deposited their basically identifying sense of meaning and commitment behind a veil of ignorance, remain denatured clones whose age, religion, race and sex must not be considered in the public domain.

This does not exclude that people might yet be inspired and motivated by values held in private behind the "veil of ignorance", but these are not a matter of public concern which is only that a field of action and equal competition be guaranteed by an agreed structure of rights protected by the state. This is the self-styled "the free world"; Kant would consider it a field of lawful right (*rechts*) worked out by practical reason concerned with defining its own prerequisites; in the common law areas it would be constituted by legislative or judicial will as exercised in resolving conflicts. In either case it would not be a properly moral field of ethical action, for that is relegated to the private and the personal.

But perhaps this exclusion of the ethical from the public arena and its relegation to the private realm is what is most important here for the issue of civil society. For if the point of civil society is to constitute a realm for the full exercise of a richly textured social life, this approach implies strong limitations. It creates a notion of the private, but does so in a negative manner, that is, not in terms of full personal self-expression but as that which is excluded from public expression and engagement. Further, even when defined as the realm of the private, civil society is in a precarious situation for the requirements that one abstract from gender, age, race, religion, etc., which the liberal approach imposes upon the public order, are continually extended to the private. More and more it becomes difficult to express one's identity in a school or club, all of which come under the strictures of the public domain if they participate in any public funding or have important for social or professional advancement. Recent anti-federal paranoia in Oklahoma is an aberrant sign of the sense of threat created by this invasive depersonalization not only of the public but of the private realm, as is fundamentalism in other lands.

In sum, certainly we need guarantees of equal participation by all in social life. The fight against discrimination and the calls for a society of law rather than of men have primarily that meaning. But where this has not already evolved over time what forces will generate it; and where it already exists is it sufficient? The critics of Rawls would note that his political liberalism does not provide the motivation for its own implementation, and thinkers ranging from Hobbes to Hegel and Marx would see what motivation there is as lying captive to self-interest in terms of material possessions and Adler's first level of freedom. Most serious this reflects their separation of morality and of religious and other integrating views of the meaning of life from the public sphere.

As this progressively expands it pervades all and promises to subvert the bases for civil society as well.

This suggests some important elements for any development of the notion and reality of civil society. First, it must not be relegated to a private realm defined by exclusion from an ever expanding domain of public life and meaning. Second, the ethical must not be separated from the public exercise of freedom lest social life be a mere voluntarism. Third, the ethical must not be separated from reason and hence from reasoned discourse or from the experience and shared traditions of a people. The last section of this paper must look for how this can be done.

VIII. Civil Society and Continental Rationalism: Kant, Hegel and Marx

In the previous section we saw how in the Anglo-American context the reduction of understanding to sense knowledge and the corresponding reduction of freedom to the choice among external objects first reduced civil society to the realm of sentiment and then marginalized it on public life. On the continent a more rationalist philosophical context had an analogous effect.

In Western cultures since Plato clarity of reason has been endowed with a special, almost fetishistic, value. Time after time this has led to a dismissal of what did not possess that clarity, or to its reduction to what could be presented with a high degree of rational clarity. This resulted in the marginalization of the insights of Pascal in favor of the search for rigorous clear and distinctive ideas following Descartes; the same was true of the insights of Kierkegaard in the aftermath of Kant. It is not surprising then to note that the proposals of a civil society based upon moral sentiment would not survive in the renewed rationalization of philosophy by Kant, Hegel and Marx.

Kant provided the basis for another, much richer notion of freedom, which Adler's team called "acquired freedom of self-perfection." This acknowledges the ability of man to transcend the empirical order and to envisage moral laws and ideals. Here, "to be free is to be able, through acquired virtue or wisdom, to will or live as one ought in conformity to the moral law or an ideal befitting human nature." This is the direction has been taken by such philosophers as Plotinus, Spinoza and Bradley who thought in terms of ideal patterns of reason and of nature. For Kant, freedom consists not in acting merely as one pleases, but in willing as one ought, whether or not this can be enacted.49 Moral standards are absolute and objective, not relative to individual or group preferences.50

But then we face the dilemma of freedom. If, in order to have value, it must be ordered, can freedom be truly autonomous and, hence, free; conversely, if to be free is to be autonomous will it be surely a value. In either cases, how can freedom be free? The dilemma is how persons can retain both meaning and value, on the one hand, and autonomy or freedom, on the other. One without the other — meaning without freedom, or freedom without meaning — would be a contradiction. This is the kind of question that takes us to the intimate nature of reality and makes possible new discovery. I will suggest in the last section that eventually this could allow us to appreciate from within the more intuitive insight of Confucius and, thereby, to engage this in new ways particularly adapted to present times. To see this, we must look at the structure of the three critiques which Kant wrote in the decade between 1781 and 1790.

Knowledge: the Critique of Pure Reason

It is unfortunate that the range of Kant's work has been so little appreciated. Until recently, the rationalist impact of Descartes directed almost exclusive attention to the first of Kant's critiques, the *Critique of Pure Reason,* which concerned the conditions of possibility of the physical sciences. Its rejection of metaphysics as a science was warmly greeted in empiricist, positivist and, hence, materialist circles, as a dispensation from any search beyond what was reductively sensible and, hence, phenomenal in the sense of inherently spatial and/or temporal.

Kant himself, however, quite insisted upon going further. If the terms of the sciences were inherently phenomenal, then his justification of the sciences was precisely to identify and to justify, through metaphysical and transcendental deductions respectively, the sets of categories which enable the phenomenal world to have intelligibility and scientific meaning. Since sense experience is always limited and partial, the universality and necessity of the laws of science must come from the human mind. Such *a priori* categories belong properly to the subject inasmuch as it is not material.

We are here at the essential turning point for the modern mind, where Kant takes a definitive step in identifying the subject as more than a wayfarer in a world encountered as a given and to which one can but react. Rather, he shows the subject to be an active force engaged in the creation even of the empirical world in which one lives. The meaning or intelligible order of things is due not only to their creation according to a divine intellect, but also to the work of the human intellect and its categories. If, however, man is to have such a central role in the constitution of his world, then certain elements will be required, and this requirement itself will be their justification.

First there must be an imagination which can bring together the flow of disparate sensations. This plays a reproductive role which consists in the empirical and psychological activity by which it reproduces within the mind the amorphous data received from without, according to the forms of space and time. This merely reproductive role is by no means sufficient, however, for, since the received data is amorphous, any mere reproduction would lack coherence and generate a chaotic world: "a blind play of representations less even than a dream".51 Hence, the imagination must have also a productive dimension which enables the multiple empirical intuitions to achieve some unity. This is ruled by "the principle of the unity of apperception" (understanding or intellection), namely, "that all appearances without exception, must so enter the mind or be apprehended, that they conform to the unity of apperception."52 This is done according to the abstract categories and concepts of the intellect, such as cause, substance and the like, which rule the work of the imagination at this level in accord with the principle of the unity of apperception.

Second, this process of association must have some foundation in order that the multiple sensations be related or even relatable one to another, and, hence, enter into the same unity of apperception. There must be some objective affinity of the multiple found in past experience — an "affinity of appearances" — in order for the reproductive or associative work of the imagination to be possible. However, this unity does not exist, as such, in past experiences. Rather, the unitive rule or principle of the reproductive activity of the imagination is its reproductive or transcendental work as "a spontaneous faculty not dependent upon empirical laws but rather constitutive of them and, hence, constitutive of empirical objects."53 That is, though the unity is not in the disparate phenomena, nevertheless they can be brought together by the imagination to form a unity only in certain particular manners if they are to be informed by the categories of the intellect.

Kant illustrates this by comparing the examples of perceiving a house and of a boat receding downstream.54 The parts of the house can be intuited successively in any order (door-roof-stairs

or stairs-door-roof), but my judgment must be of the house as having all of its parts simultaneously. Similarly, the boat is intuited successively as moving downstream. However, though I must judge its actual motion in that order, I could imagine the contrary. Hence, the imagination, in bringing together the many intuitions goes beyond the simple order of appearances and unifies phenomenal objects in an order to which concepts can be applied. "Objectivity is a product of cognition, not of apprehension,"55 for, though we can observe appearances in any sequence, they can be unified and, hence, thought only in certain orders as ruled by the categories of the mind.

In sum, it is the task of the reproductive imagination to bring together the multiple elements of sense intuition in some unity or order capable of being informed by a concept or category of the intellect with a view to making a judgment. On the part of the subject, the imagination here is active, authentically one's own and creative. Ultimately, however, its work is not free, but is necessitated by the categories or concepts as integral to the work of sciences which are characterized by necessity and universality.

How realistic is talk about freedom? Do we really have the choice of which so much is said? On the one hand, we are structured in a set of circumstances which circumscribe, develop and direct our actions. This is the actual experience of people which Marx and Hegel articulate when they note the importance of knowledge of the underlying pattern of economic and other laws and make freedom consist in conforming thereto.

On the other hand, we learn also from our experience that we do have a special responsibility in this world to work with the circumstances of nature, to harness and channel these forces toward greater harmony and human goals. A flood which kills thousands is not an occasion for murdering more, but for mobilizing to protect as many as possible, for determining what flood control projects need to be instituted for the future, and even for learning how to so construct them that they can generate electricity for power and irrigation for crops. All of this is properly the work of the human spirit which emerges therein. Similarly, in facing a trying day, I eat a larger breakfast rather than cut out part of my schedule; instead of ignoring the circumstances and laws of my physical being, I coordinate these and direct them for my human purposes.

This much can be said by pragmatism and utilitarianism. But it leaves unclear whether man remains merely an instrument of physical progress and, hence, whether his powers remain a function of matter. This is where Kant takes a decisive step in his second *Critique*.

Freedom: The Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals and the Critique of Practical Reason

Beyond the set of universal, necessary and ultimately material relations upon which he focuses in his first *Critique*, Kant points out the fact of human responsibility in the realm of practical reason. If one is responsible, then there must be about him a distinctive level of reality irreducible to the laws of physical nature. This is the reality of freedom and spirit; it is what characterizes and distinguishes the person. It is here that the bonds of matter are broken, that transcendence is affirmed, and that creativity is founded. Without this nature would remain a repetitive machine; peoples would prove incapable of sustaining their burgeoning populations, and the dynamic spirit required for modern life would die.

Once one crosses this divide, however, life unfolds a new set of requirements for reality. The definitiveness of human commitments and the unlimitedness required for its free creativity reflect characteristics of being which soar far beyond the limited, fixed and hypothetical relations of the physical order. They reflect rather the characteristics of knowledge and love: infinity, absoluteness and commitment. To understand the personal characteristics experienced in our own life, we need

to understand ourselves not as functions of matter, but as loving expressions of unlimited wisdom and creative generosity.

Locke had tried too hard to make everything public by reducing everything to the physical dimensions and concrete circumstances of human life. Instead, in order to understand the proper place of man in the universe, we must read ourselves and our situation from the opposite end, as expressions of conscious life, progressively unfolding and refining.

Many materialist philosophies of a reductionist character, such as positivism and other materialism, would remain at the level of Kant's first Critique. The necessity of the sciences provides control over one's life, while their universality extends this control to others. Once, by means of Kant's categories, the concrete Humean facts have been suffused with the clarity of the rationalist's simple natures, the positivist hopes with Descartes to be able to walk with confidence in the world.

For Kant, however, this simply will not do. Clarity which comes at the price of necessity may be acceptable and even desirable for works of nature, but it is an appalling way to envisage human life. Hence, in his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals,* Kant proceeds to identify that which is distinctive of the moral order. His analysis pushes forcefully beyond utilitarian goals, inner instincts and rational (scientific) relationships — precisely beyond the necessitated order which can be constructed in terms of his first *Critique*. None of these recognizes that which is distinctive of the human person, namely, freedom. For Kant, in order for an act to be moral, it must be based upon the will of the person as autonomous, not heteronomous or subject to others or to necessary external laws.

This becomes the basic touchstone of his philosophy; everything he writes thence forward will be adapted thereto, and what had been written before will be recontextualized in this new light. The remainder of his *Foundations* and his *Critique of Practical Reason* will be composed in terms of freedom, and in the following two years he would write the *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* in order to provide a context enabling the previous two critiques to be read in a way that protects human freedom.

In the *Foundations*, he recasts the whole notion of law or moral rule in terms of freedom. If all must be ruled or under law, and yet in order to be free the moral act must be autonomous, then my maxim must be something which as a moral agent I — and no other — give to myself. This, in turn, has surprising implications, for, if the moral order must be universal, then my maxim which I dictate must be fit to be also a universal law for all persons.56 On this basis, freedom emerges in a clearer light. It is not the self-centered whimsy of the circumstantial freedom of self-realization described above; but neither is it a despotic exercise of the power of the will; finally, it is not the clever, self-serving eye of Plato's rogue who can manipulate and cheat others.57 This would degrade that which is the highest reality in all creation. Rather, freedom is a power that is wise and caring, open to all and bent upon the realization of "the glorious ideal of a universal realm of ends-in-themselves." It is, in sum, free men living together in righteous harmony.58

Civil Society: Kant, Hegel and Marx

In one sense Kant would appear to agree with Hume by developing as two separate critiques his treatment of pure and practical reason. The first provided an epistemology for scientific reason which does not attain to the nature of things. According to this, one could not define a pattern of natural law nor determine a set of ends in relation to which one could construct a teleological ethics. In contrast, in the second critique he began afresh to develop a distinctive order of practical

reason and to define the formal conditions of such reason. It is precisely on this that principles such as never treating a person as a means rather than an end are formulated and founded.

In this way he makes a twofold transformation. One is to translate much of the content of the realm of moral sentiment, which had been the moral warrant for the virtues of civil society in the thought of the Scotts, into patterns of universal reason and thereby to provide them with rigor and universality. The second is to move these elements from the realm of the subjective and private to that of the objective and public. This was of central import for Kant, as it was through the civil structures of political interchange that his central notion of human autonomy was established. This was a noble effort, a landmark for the sense of the person, and for a high standard in the exercise of freedom. It enshrined as a condition of freedom the public right to rational debate and critique in the realm of civil society seen now as distinct from the state.

At first sight Kant seems to have translated civil society back into the public realm and strengthened it with rational clarity and rigor. But one does not find here the personal bonds of community which would move one to put into action the universal dicta of practical reason nor does one find its formal preconditions such as assuring equality of participation in public debate (more recently elaborated by J. Habermas).59 Neither does one find the free determination of, and commitment to, ends. The public order is not a "kingdom of ends", nor is it concerned with inner motives. Rights, and the laws which articulate them, require only that actions which outwardly affect others be done with their consent, actual or supposed.60 In this light the ethical, like religion, remains separated from the public order and is guarded jealously in the privacy of the human heart.

With regard to civil society this provides some cognitive preconditions for community and for participation, but it omits any actual meeting of hearts such as Aristotle considered central and it allows for only a selectively restricted meeting of minds. As to freedom and governance, especially in its basic sense of initiating and directing action, the concern for ends or goals and the motivation and conviction these evoke — all are left in the privacy of the heart. Natural sympathy has no place in the public order and virtue is seen to be a purely private. How could these elements be reintroduced? Efforts to do so are very significant for the issue of civil society today, because their success or failure will indicate the degree of sufficiency of the basic modern projects of knowledge and freedom. Even should these prove unsuccessful that fact may bear clues as to how we can proceed to the future. This is the special interest for us of the attempts of Hegel and Marx to respond to this challenge and thereby to save civil society, even if in Europe both seem in the end to have taken the notion down dangerous paths without exit.

Hegel attempted to reimbue with value civil society understood as the sector between family and state. In the characteristically holistic and dialectical manner of his *Phenomenology of the Spirit,*61 he followed the expansive unfolding of the idea. Just as the unity of the family would be based on love, so the unity of the civil society would be related to the satisfaction of needs and wants and hence based on property for it is in the exchange of property that the individual attains both self consciousness and mutual recognition.

For Hegel then this takes civil society beyond the realm of practical theory or of the "ought" and incarnates it as an "external" state and abstract universal. But there it is in grave difficulty, for when personal identity is tied to real property and possessions it comes to reflect not just greed, but the real needs of its members.62 In time this comes to include the extravagances and wants of the people with the physical and ethical degeneration this implies.63 The power of self-interest generates conflicts which remain insoluble in terms of particular persons or smaller grouping; hence the state is necessary, while the corporation mediates between the two. This state, however, is not an impersonal structure, but is the locus of the exercise of freedom and of the values and

virtues needed to overcome private self-interests and the conflicts they engender. It is a concrete rather than an abstract universal, and is diversified internally by the multiple classes into which people have chosen to group themselves.

However, civil society, having now become the state, is not only public but is suffused with the power of coercion and provides therefrom no protection or escape. "Individuals can attain their ends only insofar as they determine their knowing and willing and action in a universal way and make themselves links in a chain of social connections."64

For Marx the ideal of a civil society in which all participated fully in all pursuits, including governance, could be a matter only for the future a soteriological myth.65 For the present the private individual was dominated by his or her property and in turn treated others as means for its advancement. Only the state was concerned with the communal being. But as this took all governance to itself it became increasingly distanced from the people and their concerns. Thus, Marx predicted the end of the socialist state in a transformation to an ideal communist society. Where this has taken place, however, it has not been succeeded by the envisioned ideal communal state, but by a return to private property and less central control, thereby reestablishing the initial problematic of how to assure the solidarity and subsidiarity of civil society.

IX. Culture as the New Space for Civil Society

At the present juncture we find ourselves at the end of the cold war between the individualist and communalist ideologies and in search of ways to proceed. Civil society as understood in modern terms has experienced a check. But this may be more a check of the modern rationalist context itself. For it can be said that the individualist ideologies reflected the British tradition of working in empiricist terms (from Locke, the Scotts and Hume to Rawls) on the one hand, while the communalist ideologies reflect the continental traditions (of Hegel and especially Marx), on the other (both lines drawing on the first two critiques of Kant). From different perspectives they took up the perennial quest for ways to fulfill the human dignity of persons as free, self-determining and sharing in governance, not only in one mass society, but with respect to the variegated levels and modern of human comity. Both appear to have pushed the logic of their own positions and can be proud of real achievements. But the destructive and paralyzing isometrics into which they fell could be the judgement of history confirming the philosophical assessment above that neither line provided an adequate route for human progress. This perennial question returns now in the new and more potent circumstances of greater property, people and needs.

What strategy does this invoke for a response? Seligman’s assessment upon reviewing the modern field is that civil society is not sufficient for our times66 and Ernest Gellner would seem to agree.67 I believe Seligman to be correct in holding that the modern notions of civil society he investigates are insufficient for the future and have even been checkmated, but his work begins from the Stoics and ignores the rich dimensions of classical thought (Plato and Aristotle are referred to but once and together, p. 79). Others such as Cohen and Arato68 see civil society as a perennial task which must be taken up. But they would restrict its ambit to the realm between, but not including, the economy and the state. But should one simply strike a compromise by cutting off the dimensions of property/production, on the one hand, and of state, on the other, as areas to be guided by hidden hands or abstract laws of reason and their prerequisites. This would be to exclude where full humanness in order to be left in exchange with an intermediate realm of varied other forms of human comity. In that case the effort would be to suffuse this intermediate realm with ethical meaning and set it as a bulwark against supposed non-ethical realms of productive

property ruled by the hidden hand and the coercive powers of the state. Or more manipulatively, is it desirable, right or feasible to set these two powers against each other as non-ethical counter balances in order to create the private sphere of civil society for a properly human life? This would seem to be neither feasible nor desirable for to leave both these power centers devoid of ethical direction would be to leave two of the most pervasive dimensions of reality unrelated to human dignity as source or *arché* and as goal. Thus, Hegel and Marx were correct however in stressing the importance of the economic order for human self understanding and interaction in our times and to struggle to define a role of the state in this. We seem to have come to the end of the possibilities of the present order of things and to be in need of considering life at a deeper, less abstractive and reductive manner. What is needed is a level which is more integrative and potentially fulfilling. What could this be?

All of this, together with the existential and postmodern critiques of rationalism suggest that the task of developing a more adequate notion of civil society must be taken up, but on a new, more open and inclusive basis. To do so will require a richer notion of reason and of freedom capable of integrating the personal dimensions of moral sensitivity in a broader sense of human life and meaning such as is suggested by the new hermeneutics of culture.

If then there is agreement on the need for civil society in the broad terms cited in the introduction, but disagreement on its feasibility in the terms of modern rationalism, this suggests that we need to continue the effort to redevelop the notion of civil society, but to do so at a new level of freedom. Adler's third level natural freedom of self-determination is: "to be able, by a power inherent in human nature, to change one's own character creatively by deciding for oneself what one shall do or shall become." It is significant that it is to this, rather than the proceeding two levels of freedom that Adler adjoins political liberty and collective freedom.

But there are a number of indications that this new level of freedom will require and reflect a new level of knowing: the result of Adler's search of philosophical literature shows how closely the levels of freedom correspond to those of knowledge; modern times has been defined by technical reason above all; the enlightenment whether the 16th and 17th centuries have worked in terms of empirical knowledge and in the 18th century in terms of Kant's first two levels of reason; finally it is particularly significant that post-modern attention has shifted to the third critique of aesthetic reason. Following the pattern used to analyze the modern notions of civil society, let us look at this third level of knowledge or critique and proceed from there to the new ambit of freedom, and thence to what this can mean for the development of civil society. Above the progression followed that of the earlier British-French Enlightenment in which the limitations of knowledge implied a corresponding limitation on freedom. This meant, in turn, that civil society was a realm of moral sentiment separated from economic and political life. For the later continental Enlightenment, it was constituted of necessary prerequisites of reason, whether the properly ethical was relegated to the private inner life of individuals. Here we shall look once again to Kant for indications of new dimensions of meaning for social life which will draw upon the resources of the culture of a people and find there moral authority for governance. This will be based upon the rich store of their cumulative experience and free commitments and reflect the solidarity and subsidiarity of their society.

The Critique of Aesthetic Judgement

In initiating the decade in which he wrote his three critiques Kant did not have the third one in view. He wrote the first critique in order to provide methodologically for the universality and

necessarity of the categories found in scientific knowledge. He developed the second critique to provide for the reality of human freedom. It was only when both of these had been written that he could see that in order to protect and promote freedom in the material world there was need for a third set of categories, namely, those of aesthetic judgement integrating the realms of matter and spirit in a harmony which can be appreciated in terms not of a science of nature as in the first critique nor of society as can be worked out from the second, but of human creativity working with the many elements of human life to create human life and meaning which can be lived as an expanding and enriching reality.

This can be seen through a comparison of the work of the imagination which he provides in the first and the third critiques. Kant is facing squarely a most urgent question for modern times, namely: how can the newly uncovered freedom of the second critique survive when confronted with the necessity and universality of the realm of science as understood in the*Critique of Pure Reason*?

- Will the scientific interpretation of nature restrict freedom to the inner realm of each person's heart, where it is reduced at best to good intentions or to feelings towards others?
- When we attempt to act in this world or to reach out to others, must all our categories be universal and hence insensitive to that which marks others as unique and personal?
- Must they be necessary, and, hence, leave no room for creative freedom, which would be entrapped and then entombed in the human mind? If so, then public life can be only impersonal, necessitated, repetitive and stagnant.
- Or must the human spirit be reduced to the sterile content of empirical facts or to the necessitated modes of scientific laws? If so, then philosophers cannot escape forcing upon wisdom a suicidal choice between either being traffic directors in the jungle of unfettered competition or being tragically complicit in setting a predetermined order for the human spirit.

Freedom then would, indeed, have been killed; it would pulse no more as the heart of mankind.

Before these alternatives, Kant's answer is a resounding No! Taking as his basis the reality of freedom — so passionately and often tragically affirmed in our lifetime by Ghandi and Martin Luther King — Kant proceeded to develop his third*Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* as a context within which freedom and scientific necessity could coexist, indeed, in which necessity would be the support and instrument of freedom. Recently, this has become more manifest as human sensibilities have opened to awareness that being itself is emergent in time through the human spirit and hence to the significance of culture.

To provide for this context, Kant found it necessary to distinguish two issues, reflected in the two parts of his third *Critique*. In the "Critique of Teleological Judgment",69 he acknowledges that nature and all reality must be teleological. This was a basic component of the classical view which enabled all to be integrated within the context of a society of free men working according to a developed order of reason. For Kant, if there is to be room for human freedom in a cosmos in which man can make use of necessary laws, if science is to contribute to the exercise of human freedom, then nature too must be directed toward a transcendent goal and manifested throughout a teleology within which free human purpose can be integrated. In these terms, nature, even in its necessary and universal laws, is no longer alien to freedom, but expresses divine freedom and is conciliable with human freedom. The same might be said of the economic order and its "hidden hand." The structure of his first *Critique* will not allow Kant to affirm this teleological character as an absolute and self-sufficient metaphysical reality, but he recognizes that we must proceed "as

if" all reality is teleological precisely because of the undeniable reality of human freedom in an ordered universe.

If, however, teleology, in principle, provides the needed space, there remains a second issue of how freedom is exercised, namely, what mediates it to the necessary and universal laws of science? This is the task of his "Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment",70 and it is here that the imagination reemerges to play its key integrating role in human life. From the point of view of the human person, the task is to explain how one can live in freedom with nature for which the first critique had discovered only laws of universality and necessity and especially with structures of society in a way that is neither necessitated nor necessitating?

There is something similar here to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In both, the work of the imagination in assembling the phenomena is not simply to register, but to produce an objective order. As in the first critique, the approach is not from a set of *a priori* principles which are clear all by themselves and used in order to bind the multiple phenomena into a unity. On the contrary, under the rule of unity, the imagination orders and reorders the multiple phenomena until they are ready to be informed by a unifying principle whose appropriateness emerges from the reordering carried out by the productive imagination.

In the first *Critique*, however, the productive work was done in relation to the abstract and universal categories of the intellect and carried out under a law which dictated that phenomena must form a unity. The *Critique of Pure Reason* saw the work of the imagination in assembling the phenomena as not simply registering, but producing the objective order. The approach was not from *a priori* principles which are clear all by themselves and are used to bind the multiple phenomena into a unity. On the contrary, in the first Critique, under the rule of unity, the imagination moves to order and reorder the multiple phenomena until they are ready to be informed by a unifying principle on the part of the intellect, the appropriateness of which emerges from the reordering carried out by the reproductive imagination.

However, this reproductive work took place in relation to the abstract and universal categories of the intellect and was carried out under a law of unity which dictated that such phenomena as a house or a receding boat must form a unity — which they could do only if assembled in a certain order. Hence, although it was a human product, the objective order was universal and necessary and the related sciences were valid both for all things and for all people.71

Here in "The Critique of the Aesthetic Judgment," the imagination has a similar task of constructing the object, but not in a manner necessitated by universal categories or concepts. In contrast, here the imagination, in working toward an integrating unity, is not confined by the necessitating structures of categories and concepts, but ranges freely over the full sweep of reality in all its dimensions to see whether and wherein relatedness and purposiveness or teleology can emerge and the world and our personal and social life can achieve its meaning and value. Hence, in standing before a work of nature or of art, the imagination might focus upon light or form, sound or word, economic or interpersonal relations — or, indeed, upon any combination of these in a natural environment or a society, whether encountered concretely or expressed in symbols.

Throughout all of this, the ordering and reordering by the imagination can bring about numberless unities. Unrestricted by any *a priori* categories, it can nevertheless integrate necessary dialectical patterns within its own free and, therefore, creative production and scientific universals within its unique concrete harmonies. This is properly creative work. More than merely evaluating all according to a set pattern in one’s culture, it chooses the values and orders reality accordingly. This is the very constitution of the culture itself.

It is the productive rather than merely reproductive work of the human person as living in his or her physical world. Here, I use the possessive form advisedly. Without this capacity man would exist in the physical universe as another object, not only subject to its laws but restricted and possessed by them. He/She would be not a free citizen of the material world, but a mere function or servant. In his third Critique Kant unfolds how man can truly be master of his/her life in this world, not in an arbitrary and destructive manner, but precisely as creative artists bring being to new realization in ways which make possible new growth in freedom.

In the third Critique, the productive imagination constructs a true unity by bringing the elements into an authentic harmony. This cannot be identified through reference to a category, because freedom then would be restricted within the laws of necessity of the first Critique, but must be recognizable by something free. In order for the realm of human freedom to be extended to the whole of reality, this harmony must be able to be appreciated, not purely intellectually in relation to a concept (for then we would be reduced to the universal and necessary as in the first critique), but aesthetically, by the pleasure or displeasure, the attraction or repulsion of the free response it generates. Our contemplation or reflection upon this which shows whether a proper and authentic ordering has or has not been achieved. This is not a concept,72 but the pleasure or displeasure, the elation at the beautiful and sublime or the disgust at the ugly and revolting, which flows from our contemplation or reflection.

The Aesthetic and Social Harmony

One could miss the integrating character of this pleasure or displeasure and its related judgment of taste73 by looking at it ideologically, as simply a repetition of past tastes in order to promote stability. Or one might see it reductively as a merely interior and purely private matter at a level of consciousness available only to an elite class and related only to an esoteric band of reality. That would ignore the structure which Kant laid out at length in his first "Introduction" to his third Critique74which he conceived not as merely juxtaposed to the first two Critiques of pure and practical reason, but as integrating both in a richer whole.

Developing the level of aesthetic sensitivity enables one to take into account ever greater dimensions of reality and creativity and to imagine responses which are more rich in purpose, more adapted to present circumstances and more creative in promise for the future. This is manifest in a good leader such as a Churchill or Roosevelt — and, supereminently, in a Confucius or Christ. Their power to mobilize a people lies especially in their rare ability to assess the overall situation, to express it in a manner which rings true to the great variety of persons in their many groupings in a pattern of the subsidiarity characteristic of a civil society, and thereby to evoke appropriate and varied responses from each according to the circumstances. The danger is that the example of such genius will be reduced to formulae, become an ideology and exclude innovation. In reality, as personable, free and creative, and understood as the work of the aesthetic judgment, their example is inclusive in content and application as well as in the new responses it continually evokes from others.

When aesthetic experiences are passed on as part of a tradition, they gradually constitute a culture. Some thinkers, such as William James and Jürgen Habermas,75 fearing that attending to these free creations of a cultural tradition might distract from the concrete needs of the people, have urged a turn rather to the social sciences for social analysis and critique as a means to identify pragmatic responses. But these point back to the necessary laws of the first *Critique;* in many

countries now engaging in reforms, such "scientific" laws of history have come to be seen as having stifled creativity and paralyzed the populace.

Kant's third Critique points in another direction. Though it integrates scientifically universal and necessary social relations, it does not focus upon them, nor does it focus directly upon the beauty or ugliness of concrete relations, or even directly upon beauty or ugliness as things in themselves. Its focus is rather upon our contemplation of the integrating images of these which we imaginatively create, that is, our culture as manifesting the many facets of beauty and ugliness, actual and potential. Here Marx makes an important contribution in insisting that this not be left as an ideal image, but that it be taken in its concrete realization of a pattern of social relations. As we appreciate more and more the ambit of free activity in the market and other levels of life, this comes to include those many modes of solidarity and their subsidiary relations which constitute civil society. In turn, we evaluate these in terms of the free and integrating response of pleasure or displeasure, the enjoyment or revulsion they generate most deeply within our whole person and society according to the character of our culture.

Confucius probably would feel very comfortable with this if articulated according to the sense of peace generated by an appreciation or feeling of harmony. In this way, he could see the sensibility of which the Scotts spoke as freedom at the height of its sensibility, not merely as an instrument of a moral life, but as serving through the imagination as a lens or means for presenting the richness of reality in varied and intensified ways. Freedom as social sensibility, understood not only morally but aesthetically, is both spectroscope and kaleidoscope of being. As spectroscope it unfolds the full range of the possiblities of social freedom, so that all can be examined, evaluated and admired. As kaleidoscope, it continually works out the endless combinations and patterns of reality so that the beauty of each can be examined, reflected upon and chosen when desired. Freely, purposively and creatively, imagination weaves through reality focusing now upon certain dimensions, now reversing its flow, now making new connections and interrelations. In the process reality manifests not only scientific forms and their potential interrelations, but its power to evoke our free and socially varied responses of love and admiration or of hate and disgust.

In this manner harmony becomes at once the creative source, the manifestation, the evaluation and the arbiter of all that imaginatively we can propose. It is *goal*, namely to realize social life as rational and free, united and peaceful in this world; it is *creative source*, for with the imagination it unfolds the endless possibilities for social expression; it is *manifestation,*because it presents these to our consciousness in ways appropriate to our capabilities for knowledge of limited realities and relates these to the circumstances of our life; it is *criterion*, because its response manifests a possible mode of action to be variously desirable or not in terms of a total social response of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion; and it is*arbiter,* because it provides the basis upon which our freedom chooses to affirm or reject, realize or avoid this way of self-realization. In this way, freedom emerges as the dynamic center of the creation of civil society.

Confucius and Social Harmony

There is much in the above which evokes the deep Confucian sense of the harmony and the role of the gentleman in society in unfolding its implications for daily life. This uncovers new significance in the thought of Confucius for the work of implementing in a mutually fruitful manner science and democracy in our times. Looking to the aesthetic sense of harmony as a context for uniting both ancient capabilities in agriculture with new powers of industrialization and for applying these to the work of building society is a task, not only for an isolated individual, but for

an entire people. Over time, a people develops its own specific sensibilities and through the ages forms a tradition and a culture, which is the humane capital for such a project. In this sense, one can look to the Confucian cultural heritage for its aesthetic sense of harmony as a way to carry forward civil society in our day.

The Confucian sense of harmony is not a rationalist law whose unfolding would suggest an attempt to read all in an *a priori*and necessitarian manner. Its sense of life and progress is not that of a scientific view of history after the dialectic of Hegel and Marx. Rather, the Confucian way of understanding humans brings people together in relation to other persons and in the concrete circumstances of everyday life. In this sense, it is not massively programmatic in the sense of a rationalist scientific theory of history. This may be very much to the good, for it protects against efforts to define and delimit all beforehand, after the manner of an ideology.

Further, one must not underestimate the cumulative power which the Confucian sense of harmony and resonance can have when it brings together creatively the many persons with knowledge of their circumstances and in an effort together or socially to provide for life in its many modes. This extends from those farmers who know and love their land intimately and are committed to its rich potentialities (and analogously from all phases of productive economic life), to family members and villagers — teachers, storekeepers and health workers — who love their kin and neighbors, to citizens who are willing to work ardently for the welfare of their people and nation. If the exercise of freedom is a concrete and unique expression of the distinctive reality of its authors, then the task is not how to define these by abstractive and personally stifling universal laws as in some enlightenment theories, but how to enliven all persons to engage actively in solidarity in the multiple dimensions of their lives.

Philosophically, the Confucian attitude is of great importance. For if harmony and resonance enable a more adapted and fruitful mode of the realization of being, then the identity and truth, dynamism and goodness of being are thereby manifest and proclaimed. In this light, the laws of nature emerge, not as desiccated universals best read technically and negatively as prohibitions, but as rich and unfolding modes of being and of actualization best read through an appreciation of the concrete harmony and beauty of their active development in patterns of social subsidiarity. This, rather than the details of etiquette, is the deeper Confucian sense of the gentleman and sage; it can be grasped and exercised only with a corresponding aesthetic, rather than merely pragmatic, sensibility.

Nor is this beyond people's experience. Few can carry out the precise process of conceptualization and definition required for the technical dialectics of Platonic and Aristotelian reasoning. But all share an overall sensibility to situations as pleasing and attractive or as generating unease or even revulsion. Inevitably, in earlier times, the aesthetic Confucian mode lacked the technical precision which is now available regarding surface characteristics of physical phenomena. But, in its sense of harmony, it possessed the deep human and social sensibility and ability to take into account and integrate all aspects of its object. This is essential for the contemporary humanization of our technical capabilities for the physical and social mobilization of a richly textured and harmonious civil society.

From this it appears that it is not reason as working according to the necessary laws of the physical world (as in the first critique) or as working out the necessary order of the prerequisites and conditions of freedom (as in the second critique), but the active and creative work of freedom which takes up the constructive work which must be done in the social order and which focuses upon the work of freedom in governance as that constitutes the origin or sources (*arché*) of the pattern of social interaction of which civil society is constituted.

Ernest Gellner stumbles upon this, without recognizing it in his *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* when he speaks of the deep commitments of a people which generate strong emotive responses when touched, such as patriotism which unites and mobilizes a country for a revolution as in 1777 and 1949, or outrage at a patently unjust judicial decision as in the first case of Rodney King (significantly, it could not be the last).

R.T. Allen sensed this as early as 197676 when he pointed out that human nature when lived in society is itself an object of aesthetic appreciation for this must constitute a harmony which proclaims an order or form. In this light he cites from Burke's *Reflections* his critique of the sufficiency of enlightenment reason to understand or adequately promote civil society:

> But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.77

In the same context Burke developed the conditions of reform:

> Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world . . . wherein . . . the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve, we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obsolete.78
>
> Nothing is more beautiful in the theory of parliaments, than that principle of renovation, and union of permanence and change, that are happily mixed in their constitution: That in all our changes we are never either wholly old or wholly new.79

In a sense he mocks Locke by calling it a criminal presumption to treat one's country as a blank sheet on which one may scribble whatever one will. The social life of human kind is much deeper and richer than that.

Here Burke raises some important issues for the development of the notion of civil society in aesthetic terms. If as Manfred Riedel suggested the components of civil society are best manifest through an eidetic reduction that leads to meaning then how do patterns of meaning come together socially; if civil society requires governance then how can these patterns of meaning be endowed with the authority needed in order that governance not be arbitrary and wilful; and if times change, how can this pattern of meaning which constitutes a culture adapt to new times and be articulated with an appropriate order of sociability and subsidiarity.

These questions point to the new hermeneutic sensibility opened by the work of Husserl, and developed by Heidegger and especially Gadamer (to cite the key figures over three generations) as a new road to the appreciation of civil society for our time.

This phenomenologically based approach would takes account of the free and creative work of inspiring, social cooperation. Working on the aesthetic level it promises to be able to harmonize and direct social cooperation. And as with Kant's third critique, it would integrate rather than omit the natural basis and political coordination of social life. This directs us therefore to a hermeneutic procedure interpretating the human social creativity of civil society though time.

The elements for this have been developed in Chapter I which identified the existential level of freedom and in Chapter II on values, virtues, cultures and cultural traditions.

Beyond this there is need to take account of the diversity of these (Chapter IV) and their overarching global unity (Chapter V).

Notes

1. *Republic* VI, 509-527.
2. Cfr. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), nn. 183-187, pp. 123-124.
3. Manfred Riedel, "In Search of a Civil Union: The Political Theme of European Democracy and its Primordial Foundation in Greek Philosophy," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal*, 10 (1983), 101-102.
4. *Politics*, I, 1, 1252a22.
5. *Ibid.*, III, 7.
6. *Ibid.*, III, 8.
7. *Nichomachean Ethics*, IX, 6, 1167b13.
8. *Politics*, I, 2, 1253a20-37.
9. John Movone, "The Division of Parts of Society According to Plato and Aristotle," *Philosophical Studies*, 6 (1956), 113-122.
10. *Nichomachean Ethics*, VII, 9, 1159b25-1160a30.
11. *Ibid.*, V, 3.
12. *The Review of Metaphysics*, XLV (June, 1992).
13. (New York: Macmillan, 1965).
14. *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University of Press, 1971).
15. (Notre Dame University Press, 1981).
16. "Toward a Rational Theory of Tradition," in K. Popper, *Conjectures and Refutation: The Growth of Scientific Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1963), p. 123.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 254.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 245.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
20. Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 12-13.
21. *Dimensions of Moral Creativity: Paradigms, Principles and Ideals* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978).
22. *After Virtue*, 29-30.
23. *Metaphysics*, VII, i, 1028a29-b4.
24. Plotinus, *Enneads*, II 5 (25), ch. v.

25. Maurizio Flick and Zoltan Alszeghy, *Il Creatore, l' inizio della salvezza* (Firenze: Lib. Ed. Fiorentina, 1961), pp. 32-49.

26. *In X libros Ethicorum ad Nichomacum*, I, l1 (*Opera*, XXI, p.2).

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Community of the Free*, trans. W. Trask (New York: Holt, 1947).

29. *A General Theory of Authority* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1962).

30. Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 187.

31. Seligman, pp. 36-41.

32. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Under-standing* (New York: Dover, 1959), Book II, Chap. I, Vol. I, 121-124.

33. David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Under-standing* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960).

34. Locke, *An Essay*, Book II.

35. *The Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).

36. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, A.C. Fraser, ed. (New York: Dover, 1959), II, ch. 21, sec 27; vol. I, p. 329.

37. *Skeptical Essays* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 169.

38. Adler, p. 187.

39. J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 5, p. 15.

40. Adler, p. 193.

41. A. MacIntyre, "An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals" in *Hume's Ethical Writings* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), appendix I, p. 131.

42. *Two Treatises of Government* (Cambridge: University Press, 1960).

43. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

44. (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1767); (New York: Garland, 1971).

45. (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

46. *An Essay on the History of Civil Society*. See Seligman, pp. 31-36.

47. (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ., 1971).

48. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

49. *Ibid.*, p. 253.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

51. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A 112; cf. A 121.

52. *Ibid.*, A. 121.

53. Donald W. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1974), pp. 87-90.

54. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 192-93.

55. Crawford, pp. 83-84.

56. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. R.W. Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), Part II, pp. 38-58 [421-441].

57. Plato, *Republic*, 519.

58. *Foundations*, III, p. 82 [463].

59. *The Theory of Communicative Action* vol. I and II, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1981 and 1987); cfr. R. Badillo, *The Emancipative Theory of Jürgen Habermas and metaphysics* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991), ch. IV.

60. Susan Meld Shell, *Rights of Reason* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 83.

61. *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller and G.N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

62. *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), n. 183, p. 123.

63. *Ibid.*, n. 185, p. 123.

64. *Ibid.*, n. 187, p. 124.

65. L. Kolakowski, "The Myth of Human Self-Identity" in L. Kolakowski and S. Hampshire, eds., *The Socialist Idea: A Reappraisal* (New York: Basic, 1975).

66. *The Idea of a Civil Society*, 199-206.

67. *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (London: Penguin,1994); "The Civil and the Sacred" in *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press), XII, 301-349.

68. J.L. Colen and Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mas.: MIT, 1992).

69. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1968), pp. 205-339.

70. *Ibid*., pp. 37-200.

71. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A112, 121, 192-193. Donald J. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1974), pp. 83-84, 87-90.

72. See Kant's development and solution to the problem of the autonomy of taste, *Critique of Judgment*, nn. 57-58, pp. 182-192, where he treats the need for a concept; Crawford, pp. 63-66.

73. See the chapter by Wilhelm S. Wurzer "On the Art of Moral Imagination" in G. McLean, ed., *Moral Imagination and Character Development* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, in preparation) for an elaboration of the essential notions of the beautiful, the sublime and taste in Kant's aesthetic theory.

74. Immanuel Kant, *First Introduction to the Critique of Judgment*, trans. J. Haden (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965).

75. William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Washington Square, 1963), Ch. I, pp. 3-40. For notes on the critical hermeneutics of J. Habermas see G. McLean, "Cultural Heritage, Social Critique and Future Construction" in *Culture, Human Rights and Peace in Central America*, R. Molina, T. Readdy and G. McLean, eds. (Washington: Council for Research in Values, 1988), Ch. I. Critical distance is an essential element and requires analysis by the social sciences of the historical social structures as a basis for liberation from determination and dependence upon unjust interests. The concrete psycho- and socio-pathology deriving from such dependencies and the corresponding steps toward liberation are the subject of the chapters by J. Loiacono and H. Ferrand de Piazza in *The Social Context and Values: Perspectives of the Americas*, G. McLean and O. Pegoraro, eds. (Washington: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1988), Chs. III and IV.

76. "The State and Civil Society as Objects of Aesthetic Appreciation", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 16 (1976), 237-242.

77. Edmund Burke, *Reflections* in *Works* (London: Bohn, 1954-57), II, 349.

78. *Ibid.*, II, 307.

79. *Correspondence (1844)*, *Works* IV, 465.

Lecture III
Civil Society and the Emergence of the People

Let us begin by reviewing once again the three levels of freedom introduced in the first lecture above.

The first level is to choose as I want. It is related epistemologically to empirical or sense knowledge, which concerns material things and presents only their surface or external characteristics. Here the choice is between contraries. Further as material things cannot be possessed by more than one person at a time, the basis is laid for conflict in the search for these possessions. This has been the history of wars in the past in search of land or resources.

The second level of freedom is that found in Kant; it is the freedom to choose as I ought or should. It is ruled by the categorical imperative, the formal law to act in such a way as one would want others to act in relation to oneself. This is a universal formal law; it does not take account of the concrete, the personal, or the motivation to act.

The third level regards the free exercise of existence in building one's life. This was the concern of the previous lecture. This is shaped more stably into values, virtues and cultural traditions. This is one's life project which one undertakes in relation to others.

To test these levels of freedom one might consider marriage. Is marriage a loss of freedom or its real engagement. One moves beyond the first level of freedom as choice between partners, but there emerges definitive personal commitment. In fact our life begins not with the period of adolescence in which one is simply making acquaintances with all kinds of people, but at the point at which we engage our freedom with another as a project to be lived through difficulties and triumphs. That is the point at which one commits one's existence freely and definitively in a life project and begins to engage all of one's competencies toward its successful realization.

What is then the relation between the first and the third level of freedom, or of the first and the second with the third? Is it that one gives up the first when one undertakes the third or does this give to the first (the choices) their definitive significance. The danger is that we may take the first level of freedom and, in order to protect that, exclude the second sense of acting according to patterns of moral laws, and the third level of freedom which consists in definitive commitment and consistent mobilization and application of my person with its concerns and resources.

This should include and inspire the earlier two levels of freedom. If the opposite proves true, whereby one of the earlier levels dominates and controls the third level then one is being subjected to an ideology as was the case in the Cold War either of capitalism when the first level is dominant, or of communism when the second level dominates. The Cold War was essentially a competition between the two in which the person was suppressed. Hence, if now we emerge from that period and are intent on restoring socially the exercise of the third level of freedom then the task is the establishment of civil society.

Civil Society

In the situation of the development of a new nation, one has new possibilities for freedom and there is a great challenge to understand how these different notions of freedom can come together and reinforce one another. As this is very much a philosophical problem, work in philosophy is particularly crucial in the development of new nations with a new sense of freedom.

This lecture concerns civil society as a mode of realizing freedom especially in need of development in our times. We are now at a point of great change from the earlier part of this century when life was coordinated by the systems of fascism, communism and capitalism. We have seen the end of fascism and communism, and there is a sense that capitalism has been so conflictual that it threatens to establish a new form of domination of the economically strong or aggressive over the whole world. Now new attention is paid to minorities, to women, to the environment and to culture; conflict and exploitation are rejected. Socially this coalesces in the development of what is referred to as civil society, that is, not a hegemony of the political order or state, and not of the economy, but active participation by groupings of people in their own particular spheres of interest and competency.

The importance of this was brought to attention by Chinese philosophers just after a discussion of their newly emergent market economy. If the market economy was not to be a jumble of attacks of one against the other, there was need for some direction and orientation. However, were this to come simply from the state, one returned to state centralization. Hence, one needed something beyond the state and the economy in order to provide coordination and direction to the working of the market and the broader society.

In other words, to have only the political order, with its tendencies to increased centralization and bureaucratization, does not favor the freedom of the people. But if one passes from that to the economic order one is subjected to even more impersonal, if not blind, economic laws. What is important is that the people of a country come together with their particular interests and competencies — for instance, those who are engaged in education as parents with teachers, or those who know health care with those who are concerned about it for their parents. Whether on issues of labor or health, religion or education, people need to come together and exercise a voice in relation to the political and economic order, not as opponents, but rather as dialogical partners.

In order to sort out what is involved in this I would like to turn to Aristotle who is called "The Philosopher" because he developed logic and hence was able first to organize knowledge into the pattern of scientific reasoning with the concomitant control and certitude. He distinguished the speculative sciences, such as physics, in which the principles are in the object from the practical sciences, such as ethics, where the principles are in the subject. Our attention here will be on ethics as a practical science. We will focus not so much on ethics as a discussion of the personal exercise of freedom, but on its extension into politics as the social or community exercise of freedom. The heart of this is governance in, of and by the community.

Here the key notion is *arché,* the Greek term for beginning, origin or source. Being the *arché* of action is the essence of the exercise of human freedom as governance in the political order. As source it is not determined by anything prior; though effected by the circumstances it is not necessitated by anything else. It is the initiation of human action and the determination of its nature. In this sense we can speak of governance as "authorship", the author being the source of a work. This, in turn, entails responsibility as an implication of being the source of an action.

There are a number of ways of misinterpretating this. Given the modern concern for power as control of life we think of authority too often in terms of suppression of others. Thus, authority comes to be seen as a negation of freedom. This, in turn, invites an-archy as the rejection of authority. The notion of the *arché* as source and responsibility should imply rather the promotion of people's freedom (as we shall see in the notion of subsidiarity).

There is another way of misinterpreting this which would seem to be found in Aristotle himself. In speaking of the best form of government, he affirms this to be oligarchy, that is, rule by the few who are supposed to be rich and therefore less impelled to exploit the people.

In the next chapter — which may not have been written in sequence — he seems to correct that by saying that there is a way in which the broad populace could be engaged in governance, that is, provided the governance is done not for personal gain but for the common good. Thus, concern for the common good becomes the condition for the broad participation in governance that is central to democracy. For Aristotle, effective democracy is not a matter of conflicted self-interest, but of cooperation for the common good.

Solidarity

Other factors are important for the implementation of freedom as civil society; one is solidarity and the other is subsidiarity. If in thinking of civil society one begins from the notion of *arché* as responsible governance, it becomes necessary next to recognize the many people who are engaged. When to freedom is added the multiplicity of persons in the group one has the notion of solidarity as many unite for the effective exercise of their responsible freedom.

Some would like to understand solidarity as being adequately provided for by a legal or formal framework. But if freedom is the active exercise of a person's existence it must be much more than an external formal structure. It is rather interaction in the exercise of freedom by a people or a group. This must not simply be conflict, but must engage the cooperative initiative of the people. It can set them in a certain sense of emulation — one trying to do as well or better than the other; but conflict tends to negate or paralyze constructive action. Solidarity bespeaks cooperation rather than competition, and especially rather than conflict.

This is not merely a technique for external cooperation toward practical or utilitarian goals, but an issue of what we are as persons and peoples, and it is particularly related to the history and traditions of Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Looking back into the history of the traditions of that people one finds in its Zoroastrian base a firm sense of unity. The way in which unity could be lived in freedom was fundamentally enriched by the Christian Fathers during the four centuries prior to Islam. Their reasoning proceeded along two paths, one philosophical and the other theological. Philosophically they noted, prior to Plotinus, that since all was under the dominion of God matter could not be simply supposed as had the Greeks, but needed its own explanation. This meant that the basic philosophical issue was made more radical. It was no longer how forms were had by matter. Rather if even matter depended upon God for its reality, whether in or beyond time, then the issue was the very existence of all and anything, whether matter, form or the synolon (union) of the two. In this light a new sense of human persons emerged: they were created by God and in his image; they exist in their own right with their own freedom and dignity; and they are bound together in the unity of children of God on a pilgrimage toward reunion in love with their one source and goal. For a human the responsible exercise of one's existence was the basic issue.

Later it was the genius of Ibn Sina of the region of Uzbekistan to employ the structures of Greek thought carrying forward work on the meaning of existence for the constitution and execution of human life. On this combined Greek, Christian and Islamic basis the existential reality of freedom could be richly articulated. After the *Munqid* of al-Ghazali, the Greek heritage and the systematic work of Ibn Sina was continued by Western Christian scholars rather than in the East. A century and a half later Thomas Aquinas took up the issue and by working out the relation of existence and essence as act and potency made it possible to solidify work out systematically the philosophy of the free exercise of existence. Attention to this philosophy was renewed in Catholic circles by Pope Leo XIII later in the 19th century in the face of the emerging totalitarian systems which were soon to suppress freedom even to the extreme of genocide.

One element was still lacking. The previous work had been objective in character. The human subject was the observer and what was observed was carefully noted and systematized. What was not focused upon was the subjectivity of the observer, that is, human consciousness itself and its free exercise. This required entering into the self in order to be aware of how we perceive life and internally initiate, shape and direct our actions. For this a new method was needed, which came to be called phenomenology, as the way of bringing to light the interior human consciousness. Phenomenology as developed during the 1930s could provide a way to bring the Uzbek heritage to bear on the new problems of its people. That heritage of Zoroastrian unity, Christian existence and Avicennian system which had been exported to the West, integrated and systematized by Aquinas, came together in Poland and thence returned geopolitically in the form of the new independence of Uzbekistan. The way in which this happened is the history of how the notion of solidarity, built upon the Uzbek components described above, returned to set free Uzbekistan and the other newly independent states of Central Asia. This happened as follows.

One is familiar with the term "solidarity" through the Polish term *solidarnosc*. This reflects the philosophical work of Cardinal Wojtyla in Krakow who now is the Pope in Rome. He had been trained in the existential philosophy of Thomas Aquinas in Rome and was much impressed by the work in phenomenology of his compatriot Roman Ingarden. As Cardinal, Karol Wojtyla spent extended time each morning writing on the philosophy of the person and of solidarity, considering, as he told me, that the only way to overcome the repressive character of the Marxism was to develop a better philosophical anthropology — a better sense of the freedom of the person and of how this is exercised in community. The surprise came in the middle of the 1970s when the situation was most repressive in Eastern Europe: Cardinal Wojtyla from the middle of Soviet Empire was elected to be Pope of the universal Church. It was the first time in 400 years that a non-Italian had been chosen for this post. Within two years, the next time there was a labor dispute in Poland, a movement was formed called, not incidentally, *Solidarnosc*. Immediately, the intellectuals, workers and farmers joined solidarity, which became the mass movement of the country. During the following ten years the government first declared martial law and then offered various concessions to the people, some of them very good. All were refused on one principle, namely, that for the government to give something to the people does not respect their dignity. The people must be part of the decision making process. Finally, in 1988 the government agreed to have a conference in which *Solidarnosc* would be a participant in order to work out the future of the country.

When they began to discuss how the conference would be held, however, the idea of the government was the standard long table with the government in one side and solidarity representing the people in the other. But that would mean that the people were petitioners before a government which controlled all. *Soledarnosc* insisted that the table be round so that all were present as Poles exercising their responsible freedom as citizens for the common good of the country. Hence, those meetings came to be called the "round table" talks. In them it was decided that there would be an election, the first free election in Central and Eastern Europe since World War II. Held in the summer of 1989, this unclenched a dramatic sequence of national changes throughout the region. Within six months East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Lithuania and Bulgaria, all had declared their independence. Two years later the same was true of Uzbekistan, the Central Asian Republics and even Russia.

It would be possible to go further into the long background of this sense of existence and freedom, the importance of such philosophers of Uzbekistan as Ibn Sina in that development and

the challenge for Uzbek philosophers in our day. Indeed, doing so is the major task of Uzbek philosophers for their people as for the world in our times.

Subsidiarity

The other notion essential to civil society is subsidiarity. From the viewpoint of objective structures this should mean that the smaller units helped the larger unit. In fact, subsidiarity means the opposite, that is, that the larger unit has as its major concern to help the smaller units to exercise their creative freedom. Here the entire perspective evidently has shifted to the subjectivity and freedom as an exercise of uniquely personal human wills.

If there are many groups (solidarities) there is need for a process of coordination by which their efforts are brought into relation one with another. Unfortunately, the drive to simplify and to control generates a tendency for the larger group to take all of the decision making authority to itself instead of leaving that to the differentiated initiative of the various smaller groups.

The notion of subsidiarity is rather that the higher should take only that authority which is necessary in order to promote the activity and engagement of the smaller groups. This means bringing the whole country alive with all of its various competencies and interests and to engage all of that in the national life. The deleterious effect of central planning was that it did not encourage the engagement of the people, so that in the end they were not able to take care of themselves. The sense of subsidiarity, on the contrary, is to enliven and promote the responsible and creative freedom of all the people.

This notion of subsidiarity was developed in the Catholic Church earlier in this century in response to the developing totalitarian orientations of Fascism and Marxism. Until recently, it was found only in the Catholic social teaching and encyclicals. With the development of the European Union, however, it became necessary to theorize the character of the cooperation of the European states as sovereign but within the unity that is Europe. For this Jacques Delors took the term and philosophy of subsidiarity from the Catholic documents and developed them as the philosophy of the European Union. Accordingly, the Union does not supplant France, Germany and England, but rather becomes a context within which they can thrive or live more fully and cooperate more effectively. A development of these matters with references can be found in the work of Carlos Maldonado, *Civil Society, Solidarity and Subsidiarity*, in this series (Washington: The Council for Research in Vales and Philosophy, 1997).

In Catholic doctrine subsidiarity is built upon the notion of all persons as created in the image of God, on which basis they have their own proper dignity and freedom, which is to be recognized by all.

Two subsidiary notes: first Heidegger speaks of being thrown into existence without our will. This is characteristic of the existential philosophers and can be understood in different ways, namely, negatively as ignoring our will or positively as the gift to us of our will. Positively, we are thrown not just into a jungle or an environment, but into a world with a language, social system and culture. This is our inheritance. For Heidegger the big question becomes our project: as something which is cast, thrown or propelled ahead (etymologically: *pro* for ahead; and *ject* for thrown). What we do with that existence, how we exercise and direct it is the distinctive work of our responsible freedom — which is the specific focus of these lectures.

Second, while responsibility means also willingness to follow the national coordination of the leader, subsidiarity means that the leader can best exercise his or her leadership through promoting the freedom and creative responsibility of the people in their different groups for the different

sectors of national life. For instance my sister, Agnes, is a teacher in kindergarten. She belongs to a union of teachers. No legislation regarding education can be made in Washington without consultation with her national association of teachers.

We need to work together under the leadership of the nation, but the particular contribution of civil society is that it enables the insights, competencies and initiatives of the people in their different spheres to be nurtured, harvested and applied.

My sister's complaint about her union is that often it is too much concerned about the teacher, and not enough about the educational welfare of the students. We must then have better people; structure alone will not suffice. It is necessary to develop a more vivid sense of service and of the common good. For this there is need to reground the structures of civil society in the responsible freedom, values and traditions of the people in a way that is creative and progressive. This will be the subject of the next lecture.

Chapter IV
Progress and Pluralism

We have seen thusfar that the fundamental issue is freedom and that this implies responsibility (Chapter I); that the social exercise of freedom constitutes a cultural tradition (Chapter II); and that the living of social freedom in a cultural tradition generates a civil society which enables the people to exercise their freedom responsibly for the common welfare.

Two issues confront this thesis, first, if civil society is based on tradition will it be captured by the past and regressive rather than progressive; and second, if traditions are developed by specific people will such a civil society founded on tradition be open to diverse peoples.

I. Progress as Application of Cultural Tradition

a. Tradition and Its Application: Renewal in Civil Society

Anton T. Cua1 traces to Vico2 attention to the unreflective cognitive consensus on common needs and to Shaftesbury3 the affective sense of common partnership with others that this entails. The result is the synchronic constitution of a community of memory whose members revere and commemorate the same saints and personages who have sacrificed to build or exemplify the community's self image. This results in a community of vision or self-understanding, as well as of hope and expectation. A cultural tradition, in this sense, is the context of the conscious life and striving of a person and of the communities of which one is a member; it is life in its fullest meaning, as past and future, ground and aspiration.

In this light, Cua notes that in his *Great Learning* Chu Hsi stresses the importance of investigating the principles at great length until one achieves "a wide and far-reaching penetration (*kuan-t'ung)*." Read as *Kuan-chuan,* this suggests an aesthetic grasp of the unique interconnection of the various components of the *tao* as the unique unifying perspective of the culture. This is not only a contemplative understanding, however, but implies active engagement in the conduct of life. If this be varied by subgroups structured in the patterns of solidarity and subsidiarity of civil society then the accumulation of cooperate life experience, lived according to *li* or ritual propriety and *i* or sense of rightness, emerges from the life of a people as a whole. "For the adherents of the Confucian tradition, the tradition is an object of affection and reverence, largely because the tradition is perceived as an embodiment of wisdom (*chih*), which for Chu Hsi is a repository of insights available for personal and interpersonal appropriation, for coping with present problems and changing circumstances."4

The truly important battle at the present time is, then, not between, on the one hand, a chaotic liberalism in which the abstract laws of the marketplace dictate and at the lives of persons, peoples and nations or, on the other hand, a depersonalizing sense of community in which the dignity of the person is suppressed for an equally abstract utopia. A victory of either would spell disaster. The central battle is, rather, to enable peoples to draw on their heritage, constituted of personal and social assessments and free decisions, and elaborated through the ages by the varied communities as they work out their response to their concrete circumstances. That these circumstances are often shifting and difficult in the extreme is important, but it is of definite importance that a people's response be truly their own in all their variety and of their society with all its interrelated sub-units. That is, that it be part of their history, of the way they have chosen to order and pattern their social

life, and in these terms to shape their free response to the good. This is the character of authority exercised in and by a civil society. It reflects, and indeed is, the freedom being exercised by a people in all the varied groupings in which they have chosen to live and to act.

A first requisite for this is a dimension of transcendence. If what we find in the empirical world or even in ourselves is all that there is, if this be the extent of being, then our life cannot consist in more than rearranging the elements at our disposition — newness could only be of an accidental character. It is, however, the decisive reality of our life that it is lived in a transcendent context which goes beyond anything finite and indeed is inexhaustible by anything finite. Hence we are always drawn forward and called to radical newness. A tradition then is not a matter of the past, but of new applications. As reflecting the infinite creator and goal this is the decisively religious characteristic of human life.

As an active process tradition transforms what is received, lives it in a creative manner and passes it on as a leaven for the future. Let us turn then from the cumulative meaning and value in tradition, its synchronic aspect, to its diachronic or particular meaning for each new time, receiving from the past, ordering the present and constructing the future. This is a matter, first of all, of taking time seriously, that is, of recognizing that reality includes authentic novelty. This contrasts to the perspective of Plato for whom the real is the ideal and unchangeable forms or ideas transcending matter and time, of which physical things and temporal events are but shadows. It also goes beyond rationalism's search for clear and distinct knowledge of eternal and simple natures and their relations in terms of which all might be controlled, as well as beyond romanticism's attention to a primordial unchanging nature hidden in the dimly sensed past. *A fortiori*, it goes beyond method alone without content.

In contrast to all these, the notion of application5 is based upon an awareness that "reality is temporal and unfolding". This means that tradition, with its inherent authority or normative force, achieves its perfection in the temporal unfolding of reality. Secondly, it shows human persons and social groups, not as detached intellects, but as incarnate and hence enabled by, and formative of, their changing social universe. Thirdly, in the area of socio-political values and action, it expresses directly the striving of persons and groups to realize their lives and the development of this striving into attitudes (*hexis*) and institutions. Hence, as distinct from the physical order, human action is a situation neither of law nor of lawlessness, but of human and, therefore, developing institutions and attitudes. These do not determine and hence destroy human freedom, but regulate and promote its exercise.6 This is the heart of civil society for it shows how community and governance can come together.

Certain broad guidelines for the area of ethics and politics serve in the application of tradition as a guide for historical practice and vice-versa. The concrete exercise of human freedom as unique personal decisions made with others in the process of their social life through time constitutes a distinctive and on-going process. Historicity means that responses to the good are made always in concrete and ever-changing circumstances. Hence, the general principles of ethics and politics as a philosophic science of action cannot be purely theoretical knowledge or a simple accounting from the past. Instead, they must help people consciously exercise their freedom in concrete historical circumstances and groups which change and are renewed.

Here, an important distinction must be made from *techné* where action is governed by an idea as an exemplary cause that is fully determined and known by objective theoretical knowledge (*epistéme*). As in the case of an architect's blueprints, skill, such as that of the engineer, consists in knowing how to act according to that idea or plan. When it cannot be carried out perfectly, some parts of it simply are omitted in the execution. In contrast, civil society and its ethics and politics,

though similar in the possession of a practical guide and its application to a particular task, differ in important ways. First, by shared action toward a common goal subjects and especially societies themselves are as much constituted themselves as is the object they produce: if agents are differentiated by their action, societies are formed or destroyed by their inner interaction. Hence, moral knowledge, as an understanding of the appropriateness of human action, cannot be fully determined independently of the societies in their situation and in action.

Secondly, adaptation by societies and social groups in their application of the law does not diminish, but rather corrects and perfects the law. In relation to a world which is less ordered, the laws, rules and regulations of groups are imperfect for they cannot contain in any explicit manner the adequate response to the concrete possibilities which arise in history. It is precisely here that the creative freedom of a people is located. It does not consist in arbitrariness, for Kant is right in saying that without law freedom has no meaning. Nor does it consist in an automatic response determined by the historical situation, for then determinism and relativism would compete for the crown in undermining human freedom. Freedom consists, rather, in shaping the present according to the sense of what is just and good which we have from our cultural tradition. This we do in a way which manifests and indeed creates for the first time more of what justice and goodness mean.

The law then is not diminished by distinctive and discrete application to the varied parts of a complex civil society, but corrected and enriched. *Epoché* and equity do not diminish, but perfect the law; without them the law would be simply a mechanical replication, doing the work not of justice, but of injustice. Ethics, politics and especially aesthetics which takes account of the unique is then not only knowledge of what is right in general, but the search for what is right for this group or sub-group with its goal and in its situation. Adaptation of the means by the social group, whether occupational, religious or ethnic, is then not a matter of mere expediency. Rather, it is the essence of the search for a more perfect application of a law or tradition in the given situation and therefore the fulfillment of moral knowledge.7

It is important to note that this rule of the concrete (of what the situation is asking of us) is not known by sense knowledge, which simply registers a set of concrete facts on the horizontal level. In order to know what is morally required, the situation must be understood in the light of what is right, that is, in the light of what has been discovered vertically through tradition with its normative character about appropriate human action. Only in this light can moral consciousness as the work of intellect (*nous*), rather than of sensation, go about its job of choosing the right means.

Therefore, to proceed simply in reaction to concrete injustices, rather than in the light of one's tradition, is ultimately destructive. It inverts the order just mentioned and results in manipulation of our hopes for the good. Destructive or repressive structures would lead us to the use of correspondingly evil means, suited only to producing evil results. The true response to evil can be worked out only in terms of the good as the highest discovery by a people, passed on in tradition and applied by it in each time and place.

The importance of application implies a central role for the virtue of prudence (*phronesis*) or thoughtful reflection which enables one to discover the appropriate means for the circumstances. This must include, also, the virtue of sagacity (*sunesis*), that is, of understanding or concern for the other. For what is required as a guide for the agent is not only the technical knowledge of an abstract ideal, but knowledge that takes account of the agent in relation to other persons. One can assess the situation adequately only inasmuch as one, in a sense, undergoes the situation with the affected parties, living and suffering with them. Aristotle rightly describes as "terrible" the one who is capable of manipulating the situation, but is without orientation towards moral ends and without concern for the good of others in their concrete situations.

In sum, application is not a subsequent or accidental part of understanding, added on after perfect understanding has been achieved; rather it co-determines this understanding from the beginning. Moral consciousness must seek to understand the good, not as an ideal to be known and then applied, but rather through discerning the good for concrete peoples in their relations with others.

Cua finds similar notions in the distinctions of Chu Hsi in the neo-Confucian tradition regarding the diachronic sense of *tao*as residing between the substantial (*t'i*) and the operational (*yung*), the stable basic or latent schemata and its operational sense in changing circumstances (*fei*). Hsün Tzu distinguishes the constant (*ch'ang)* and the changing (*pien)*, and Mencius the constant rule (*ching*) and the sliding scale (*ch'üuan)*. Use of the latter as an exercise of moral discretion based on *li* is essential for moral life due to the imperfections of our knowledge and the urgent complexity of life. In these circumstances, to hold to a static mean would undermine the realization of the holistic goal of the *tao*.

Creativity in the application of the tradition in the concrete circumstances of life thus becomes essential. In this context Cua cites J. Pelican's deft aphorism: "Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."8

b. The Metaphysical Roots: Being as Living

The notion of application can help in sorting out the human dilemma between an absolutism insensitive to persons in their concrete circumstances and a relativism which leaves the person subject to expediency in public and private life. Indeed, the very statement of the dilemma reflects the deleterious aspect of the Platonic view of ideas. He was right to ground changing and historical being in the unchanging and eternal. This had been Parmenides's first insight in metaphysics and has been richly developed in relation to human action through the medievals' notion of an eternal law in the divine mind.

But it seems inappropriate to speak directly in these terms regarding human life, for in all things individual human persons and humankind as a whole are subject to time, growth and development. As we become increasingly conscious of this, the personal character even of our abstract ideals becomes manifest and their adapted application in time can be seen, not as their rejection, but as their perfection. In this, justice loses none of its force as an absolute requirement of human action. Rather, the concrete modes of its application in particular circumstances add to what might have been articulated in merely abstract and universal terms. A hermeneutic approach directs attention precisely to these unfoldings of the meaning of abstract principles through time. This is not an abandonment of absolutes, but a recognition of the human condition and of the way in which this continually and, in endlessly marvelous manners, unfolds the ultimate richness of the source and principle of social life.

For Confucius, the aesthetic vision is integrated in drama, of which dance is one moment. In the actual performance of *li* (ritual or liturgy), there is a combination of poetry, liturgical action and music. Confucius saw that in the poem our spirit can rise and stand in reality to achieve complete transcendence in the ecstasy of the spirit. This gives access in aesthetic terms to a source, not only of inspiration, but of vision that both draws one to aspire to greater perfection and opens the way for creative thought regarding ways in which this can be achieved.

Some suggest, however, that Confucius may have looked upon aesthetics more as a matter of appreciation and conservation, rather than as original, creative and free expression. This suggests

that, in the works of Confucius, there are resources important for developing a modern vision which were unmined by Confucius himself and his schools.

If so what should be the attitude of a philosopher in our day to this mode of aesthetics? If it be itself appreciative and conservative, is one who interprets it subject to the same approach and limited to the same content, or can interpretation legitimately open up new meaning in old texts? In other words, must ancient texts be read only with an ancient outlook? Indeed, is it even possible today to have an authentically ancient outlook—to see with eyes long closed—or does the attempt to do so require so much make-believe as to be in effect impossible? Even if one were to succeed in reconstituting the past, would one be faithful to the text which was written as a vital expression of the process of life, or would one instead be rendering lifeless a living text9 (not unlike the biologist who makes a slide of once living tissue)?

It would seem, therefore, that our goal should be not simply to reiterate ancient times in reading ancient texts, but to recognize that we come to them from new times, with new horizons and new questions. We should allow them to speak anew to us; in so doing, the texts and philosophies are living rather than dead—and, therefore, more true. Texts read in this sense are part of living tradition in which is situated our struggle to face the problems of life and build a future worthy of those who follow.

Some would fear that to give such importance to the horizon of the reader of a text might constitute a relativism and lose the permanent significance of the insights of the author. But this would seem to reflect a material and mechanical model ruled by successive discrete moments of time in which universality is a function only of abstraction. This leaves what is universally applicable as relatively vacuous and reduces one to pragmatism as one's only response to concrete and changing circumstances.

Here, the real issue regards one's metaphysics: what is the nature of being, what does it mean to be? If the answer, as the Confucian sense of community would be the first to suggest, is not that reality is reductively matter trapped in time but at least the human spirit living through time, then to look for meaning in terms of the reaches of the spirit across time is not to lose but to find meaning. This is the sense of being emerging through the consciousness of Heidegger's person as *dasein*. Being is not merely what was, but what blossoms ever fresh in the human heart. In the same way, philosophy in reading ancient texts is not archeology but, like every human act, a creative unfolding of being in time. This creative freedom is the essential characteristic of the person.10

What, then, should we conclude regarding the root of the actuality, the good or the perfection of reality which mankind has discovered, in which we have been raised, which gives us dominion over our actions, and which enables us to be free and creative? Does it come from God or from man, from eternity or from history? Chakravarti Rajagopalachari of Madras answered:

> Whether the epics and songs of a nation spring from the faith and ideas of the common folk, or whether a nation's faith and ideas are produced by its literature is a question which one is free to answer as one likes. . . . Did clouds rise from the sea or was the sea filled by waters from the sky? All such inquiries take us to the feet of God transcending speech and thought.11

II. Pluralism as Dialogue of Cultural Traditions

Thus far, we have treated the character and importance of tradition as bearing the long experience of persons interacting with their world, with other persons and with God. It is made up

not only of chronological facts, but of insights regarding human perfection and its foundations which have been forged by human efforts in concrete circumstances, e.g., the Greek notion of democracy and the enlightenment notions of equality and freedom. By their internal value, these stand as normative of the aspirations of a people.

Secondly, we have seen the implication of historicity for novelty within the context of tradition, namely, that the continually unfolding circumstances of historical development not merely extend or repeat what went before, but constitute an emerging manifestation of the dynamic character of being that is articulated by the art, religion, literature and political structures of a cultural tradition.

It remains for us now to treat the third element in this study of tradition, namely, the hermeneutic method. How can earlier sources which express the great achievements of human awareness be understood or unfolded in a way that is relevant, indicative and directive of our life in present circumstances? In a word, how can we interpret or draw out the significance of tradition for present action?

a. Interpretation

If we take time and culture seriously, then we must recognize that we are situated in a particular culture and at a particular time. All that can be seen from this vantage point constitutes one's horizon. This would be lifeless and dead, determined rather than free, if our vantage point were to be fixed by its circumstances and closed. Hence we need to meet other minds and hearts not simply to add information incrementally, but to be challenged in our basic assumptions and enabled thereby to delve more deeply into our tradition and draw forth deeper and more pervasive truth. How can this be done?

First of all, it is necessary to note that only a unity of meaning, that is, an identity, is intelligible.12 Just as it is not possible to understand a number five if we include only four units rather than five, no act of understanding is possible unless it is directed to an identity or whole of meaning. This brings us to the classic issue of the hermeneutic circle in which knowledge of the whole depends upon knowledge of the parts, and vice versa. How can this work for, rather than against, the development of social life?

The experience of reading a text might be suggestive. As we read we construe the meaning of a sentence before grasping all its individual parts. What we construe is dependent upon our expectation of the meaning of the sentence, which we derived from its first words, the prior context, or more likely, from a combination of the two. In turn, our expectation or construal of the meaning of the text is adjusted according to the requirements of its various parts as we proceed to read through the parts of the sentence, the paragraph, etc., continually reassessing the whole in terms of the parts and the parts in terms of the whole. This basically circular movement continues until all appears to fit and to be clear.

Similarly, in regard to our cultural tradition and values, we develop a prior conception of its content. This anticipation of meaning is not simply of the tradition as an objective past or fixed content to which we come; it is rather what we produce as we participate in the evolution of the tradition and, thereby, further determine ourselves. This is a creative stance reflecting the content, not only of the past, but of the time in which I stand and of the life project in which I am engaged. It is a creative unveiling of the content of the tradition as this comes progressively and historically into the present and through the present, passes into the future.

In this light, time is not a barrier, separation or abyss, but rather a bridge and opportunity for the process of understanding, a fertile ground filled with experience, custom and tradition. The importance of the historical distance it provides is not that it enables the subjective reality of persons to disappear so that the objectivity of the situation can emerge. On the contrary, it makes possible a more complete meaning of the tradition, less by removing falsifying factors than by opening new sources of self-understanding which reveal in the tradition unsuspected implications and even new dimensions of meaning.13

b. Openness to Being Questioned

Of course, not all our acts of understanding about the meaning of a text from another culture, a dimension of a shared tradition, a set of goals or a plan for future action are sufficient. Hence, it becomes particularly important that they not be adhered to fixedly, but be put at risk in dialogue with others.

In this, the basic elements remain the substances or persons which Aristotle described in terms of autonomy and, by implication, of identity. Hermeneutics would expand this to reflect as well the historical and hermeneutic situation of each person in the dialogue, that is, their horizon or particular possibility for understanding. As an horizon is all that can be seen from one's vantage point(s), in dialogue with others it is necessary to be aware of our horizon, as well as that of others. For it is precisely when our initial projection of their meaning will not bear up under the progressive dialogue that we are required to make needed adjustments in our projection of their meaning.

This enables one to adjust one's prior understanding not only of the horizon of the other with whom one is in dialogue, but especially of one's own horizon. Hence, one need not fear being trapped; horizons are vantage points of a mind which in principle is open and mobile, capable of being aware of its own limits and of transcending them through acknowledging the horizons of others. The flow of history implies that we are not bound by our horizons, but move in and out of them. It is in making us aware of our horizons that hermeneutic consciousness accomplishes our liberation.14

For this, we must maintain a questioning attitude. Rather than simply following through with our previous ideas until a change is forced upon us, we must remain sensitive to new meanings in true openness. This is neither neutrality as regards the meaning of the tradition, nor an extinction of passionate concerns regarding action towards the future. Rather, being aware of our own biases or prejudices and adjusting them in dialogue with others implies rejecting what impedes our understanding of others or of traditions. Our attitude in approaching dialogue must be one of willingness continually to revise our initial projection or expectation of meaning.

The way out of the hermeneutic circle is then not by ignoring or denying our horizons and initial judgments or prejudices, but by recognizing them as inevitable and making them work for us in drawing out, not the meaning of the text for its author,15 but its application for the present. Through this process of application we serve as midwife for culture as historical or tradition, enabling it to give birth to the future.16 The logical structure of this process is the exchange of question and answer. A question is required in order to determine just what issue we are engaging—whether it is this issue or that—so that we might give direction to our attention. Without this, no meaningful answer can be given or received. As a question, however, it requires that the answer not be settled or determined. In sum, progress or discovery requires an openness which is

not simple indeterminacy, but a question which gives specific direction to our attention and enables us to consider significant evidence.

If discovery depends upon the question, then the art of discovery is the art of questioning. Consequently, in working in conjunction with others, the heart of the democratic process is not to suppress, but to reinforce and unfold the questions of others. To the degree that these probabilities are built up and intensified they can serve as a searchlight. This is the opposite of both opinion which tends to suppress questions, and of arguing which searches out the weakness in the other's positions. Instead, in democracy, understood as conversation and dialogue directed toward governance, one enters upon a mutual search to maximize the possibilities of the question, even by speaking at cross purposes, for it is by mutually eliminating errors and working out a common meaning that we discover truth.17

In this there appears the importance of intercultural dialogue. Rather than being merely an external act of mutual acknowledgement, in view of what has been said above it is a true requisite if our cultures are to be open and develop. As religion is that basic conscious recognition of the transcendent horizon which invites progress, interchange between religions is essential in order that cultures remain open and be renewed, rather than closing in upon themselves. As will be seen below in the present context of globalization such interchange is the only alternative to the much feared conflict of civilizations predicted by S. Huntington.

III. Pluralism and Progress

Further, it should not be presupposed that a text, such as a tradition, law or constitution, will hold the answer to but one question or can have but one horizon which must be identified by the reader. On the contrary, the full horizon of the author(s) is never available to the reader, nor can it be expected that there is but one question to which a tradition or document holds an answer. The sense of texts reaches beyond what their authors intended because the dynamic character of being as it emerges in time means that the horizon is never fixed but is continually opening. This constitutes the effective historical element in understanding a text or a tradition. At each step new dimensions of its potentialities open to understanding, so that the meaning of a text or tradition lives with the consciousness and hence the horizons—not of its author—but of people in dialogue with others through time and history. This is the essence of democracy as a process. It is the process of broadening horizons, through fusion with the horizons of others in dialogue, that makes it possible to receive from one's cultural tradition and its values answers which are ever new.18

In this, one's personal attitudes and interests remain important. If our interest in developing new horizons is simply the promotion of our own understanding then we could be interested solely in achieving knowledge, and thereby in domination over others. This would lock one into an absoluteness of one's prejudices; being fixed or closed in the past, they would disallow new life in the present. In this manner, powerful new insights can become with time deadening pre-judgments which suppress freedom.

In contrast, an attitude of authentic democratic openness appreciates the nature of one's own finiteness. On this basis, it both respects the past and is open to discerning the future. Such openness is a matter, not merely of new information, but of recognizing the historical nature of man and his basis in an Absolute that transcends and grounds time. This enables us to escape what had deceived us and held us captive and to learn deeply from new experiences.19

This suggests that democratic openness does not consist in surveying others objectively, obeying them in a slavish and unquestioning manner or simply juxtaposing their ideas and

traditions to our own. Rather, it is directed primarily to ourselves, for our ability to listen to others is correlatively our ability to assimilate the implications of their answers for delving more deeply into the meaning of our own traditions and drawing out new and even more rich insights. In other words, it is an acknowledgement that our cultural heritage has something new to say to us.

The characteristic hermeneutic attitude of effective historical consciousness is, then, not methodological sureness, readiness for new compromises or new techniques of social organization, for these are subject to social critique and manipulation on the horizontal level. Instead, it is readiness to draw out in democratic dialogue new meaning from a common tradition.20Seen in these terms our heritage of culture and values is not closed or dead, but, through a democratic life, remains ever new by becoming even more inclusive and more rich.

This takes us beyond the rigid rationalism of the civil society of the later Enlightenment and the too fluid moral sentiment of the earlier enlightenment. It enables us to respond to the emerging sense of the identity of peoples and to protect and promote this in a civil society marked by solidarity and subsidiarity.

In this as a social work one guiding principle is to maintain a harmony or social equilibrium through time. In addition the notion of application allows the tradition to provide resources and guidance in facing new issues and in developing new responses to changing times. Moreover, with rising numbers and expectations, economic development becomes an urgent need. But its very success could turn into defeat if this is not oriented and applied with a pervasive but subtle and adaptive human governance sensitive to all forms of human comity. This is required for orienting all suavely to the social good in which the goal of civil society consists.

This will require new advances in science and economics, in education and psychology, in the humanities and social services, that is, across the full range of social life. All these dimensions, and many more, must spring to new life, but in a basic convergence and harmony. The values and virtues emerging from tradition applied in a freedom exercised in solidarity and subsidiarity can provide needed guidance along new and ever evolving paths. In this way the life of civil society can constitute a new birth of freedom.

Notes

1. "The Idea of Confucian Tradition," *The Review of Meta-physics,* XLV (1992), 803-840.

2. Giambattista Vico, *The New Science,* trans. T. Bergin and M Fisch (Ithica: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988).

3. *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* ed. Robertson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), Vol. I, p. 72.

4. "Confucian Tradition" and "Hsun Tsu and the Unity of Virtues," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 14 (1978), 92-94.

5. Gadamer, pp. 281-286.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 281-286.

8. Jaroslav Pelican, *Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 65.

9. Musa Dibady, *The Authenticity of the Text in Hermeneu-tics* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998).

10. *Ramayana* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1976), p. 312.

11. B. Tatar, *Interpretation and the Problem of the Intention of the Author: H.-G. Gadamer vs E.D. Hirsch* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998).
12. Gadamer, p. 262.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 263-64.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 235-242, 267-271.
15. B. Tatar.
16. Gadamer, pp. 235-332.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 225-332.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 336-340.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 327-324.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 324-325.

Lecture IV

Cultural Tradition as Prospective and Progressive: The Diachronic Dimension

Tradition as Synchronic

The first lecture distinguished three levels of freedom: to choose as I want, to choose as I ought, and to construct one's life project in the common good. The second lecture focused upon the third or existential project of a creative life project and the way in which for a people over time this developed a culture and a cultural tradition. This was seen synchronically as involving the exercise of freedom in concrete circumstances and the development of a pattern of values and of virtues which coalesced to constitute a consistent whole. This is the tradition taken synchronically. The ethics of Aristotle may be thought of as just this — a pattern of virtues constituting a consistent whole for practical action and the exercise of life.

His study of the social application and implementation of this ethics constitutes his *Politics*. There he developed the notion of governance as basically a matter of freedom understood as *arché*, to which he adds the virtues of friendship for solidarity and subsidiarity. This provides for the basic architecture of the social life of a culture in which people coalesce in groups according to their interests and capabilities for the common good. The result as passed through time constitutes a tradition into which people are born and which they receive as a good way to live.

In modern times the notion of civil society was developed especially by the Scottish philosophers, Adam Smith and Adam Ferguson. Today civil society often is thought of in terms of those Scottish origins or in terms of its theoretical elaboration on the continent by Hegel and Marx. The issue of civil society was raised by the Chinese philosophers in the series of annual joint colloquia sponsored jointly with The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy. But if they sensed the need to follow the opening of the market by a corresponding development of civil society, it is not probable that they can or would want to model themselves on the Scots of two centuries ago or on the Europeans a bit later. If civil society is to be an exercise of the freedom of a people it must be developed on their own basis, in terms of their own values and virtues, and hence of their own cultural tradition. Hence the opening paper for the colloquium with the Chinese on civil society began with Aristotle and followed with a history of the modern European notions of civil society. But the second half of the paper was entitled: "Opening a new space for civil society". This developed the sense of the cultural tradition of a people as providing the basis for the orientation of its public life.

Its implication is that each people must look into its own tradition as the basis for the development of its pattern of civil life. That begins from below in the groupings of the people and on the basis of their exercise of freedom gradually builds a pattern for democratic participation.

But here a central question emerges: Is tradition a barrier to progress? Indeed, if one sees life only in terms of the first level of freedom as consisting in random choices between external objects any prior commitments or orientations can be seen as impediments. Hence, it becomes the not too subtle project of a liberal market economy, which would totally control peoples lives, to see that nothing orients the choice of objects to be purchased other than the advertising media. Any advance to further levels of freedom concerned with choosing as I ought or allowing for the concerns of a life project that goes beyond economic profit is considered by that ideology a threat to be

suppressed by all means. Perceived in these terms it is possible for some to see the development of a cultural tradition as a barrier to "progress."

In reality, it is the task of an enlightened business ethics to see how the values and social concerns of a people relate positively to economic progress. Here our task will be to confront the issue directly and to reexamine the notion of tradition, this time not only as a synchronic pattern of cumulative freedom, but as a diachronic project for a people and a society. Hence I would turn now to tradition as the basis for progress.

Tradition as Diachronic and Prospective

Our problem today is how to move from a strong concentration of power which seemed to depersonalize life without moving to the other side of the Cold War, namely, to a chaotic struggle ruled by the equally depersonalizing laws of the market. In other words can we engage the exercise of freedom in the development of values and virtues by a people based on their history with their commitments, and yet do so in a way that does not point into the past, but rather provides a basis for a creative and prospective project for the future.

This is a philosophical problem on which your work as Uzbek and Central Asian philosophers today is indispensable and urgent. It is the issue of time as a characteristic of human life lived not ideologically but existentially. It is the appreciation that time means not just an empty frame that measures anything, nor mere repetition of the same events, but the development of authentic newness or novelty that is the essence of human life as project. Human tradition has its perfection not in the past as something fixed and static, but as the unfolding or blossoming of reality through the free exercise of life in our time and by our creativity.

What is important here is recognition of the reality of the temporal, that is, of authentic novelty. One would think that for us temporal beings this would be obvious. But as humans we are in the ambiguous position of being at once responsible to the whole and engaged in the particular. Indeed it might be said that this is the heart of the human reality and of the whole of creation. Our glory is that we can reach out to the whole of being and meaning in its highest, eternal and infinite realization and in these terms engaged in the delicate yet momentous uniqueness of the exercise of responsible freedom in time.

For this many steps in philosophy, while of vital importance in themselves, remain insufficient. For Plato’s unchangeable forms the temporal was only a shadow. For rationalism’s search for the clear and distinct what was real was the abstract, eternal and unchangeable natures and laws. For the romantic it was the ideal past. For yet others, most common in our day, it is method or process without content.

In contrast, human tradition has its perfection not in the past, but as the temporal unfolding of reality. Human persons and groups are not detached intellects grasping abstractly at laws or patterns, but are incarnate in matter and time, both forming and enabled by their changing social universe. Hence, socio-political values express the striving of people to realize their lives. These must be formed into institutions which do not destroy human freedom, but regulate and promote its exercise.

In this light the reality and reason of human freedom is not arbitrary choice — as Kant noted freedom requires law for its rational orientation — nor is it determinism either from the historical or economic situation or even from tradition. Instead the work of freedom is the shaping of the present according to the sense of what is just and good. This is discovered in and from the cultural

tradition, considered not so much as a horizontal project of sequential trial and error, but as a vertical ever deeper penetration into what justice and goodness mean.

You are probably very familiar with this notion because Marx's focus was the ongoing dialectical process. But Marx may have tried too hard to develop a scientific notion of progress. For this he identified necessary laws of human history, but did not allow adequately for the distinctive activity of each person and people to contribute to this ongoing process.

This is not a new phenomenon. Spinoza tried to develop freedom in a rationalist context; Leibriz tried again. Both failed because they tried too hard to impose the clarity of human reason on a human life which was much more creative, rich and varied. Hence, they did not succeed in allowing for the full dynamism of human freedom.

The task of the third sense of human freedom, that is, freedom as an existential project is then not to develop either a realm of arbitrary choice or one of determinism. It is rather to shape the present according to the sense of what is just and what is good which has been discovered by a people in their cultural tradition, and to do this in a way that enables them to continue to manifest more of what justice and goodness mean.

In the hermeneutics made possible by the recent development of phenomenology there are helpful ideas regarding the application to the present of vision developed in the past. This does not mean that we have a clearly defined objective notion of justice which like a blue print we simply replicate in the same way at each time, no matter what the circumstance. Rather we have a sense of the all pervading importance of justice which is not an empirical observation, but truly the work of the intellect. Through time and the experience of humankind, human consciousness goes more deeply into what life is about and finds the importance of it being lived with justice, love, etc.

This is not the same as seeing ahead of time all that life implies and entails — to do so would kill freedom and make human life simply the automatic unfolding of an abstract formula. That was the limitation of even dialectical utopias which suppressed freedom. It is the limitation as well of attempts to spell out marriage agreements in legal documents. Instead marriage is contracted in opposite terms — in sickness or health, for richer or poorer — that is, whatever be the circumstances one promises to love and cherish one's partner.

Thus justice and love are appreciated, honored and cherished and can be a strong directive force in the social exercise of freedom whenever they can be convincingly appealed to and applied.

An example in Washington is the memorial to Abraham Lincoln, who signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing the slaves almost 150 years ago. Hence, his Memorial expresses the ideal of justice and equality inherent in the whole American experience. In the 1960s when the black people of the country felt that they had not received justice and were unfairly treated and demeaned, Martin Luther King assembled a huge group, black and white, before the Lincoln Memorial. There he gave a speech, at the end of which he said:

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal."

. . .

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to

transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with a new meaning, "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So

let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire. Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that; let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia!

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee!

Let freedom ring from every hill and every molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last! free at last! thank God Almighty, we are free at last!"

Those words will remain always in the heart, perhaps even more than in my mind; they are words that move to actions that reform life.

Once I visited this Lincoln Memorial with Janusz Kukzynski, then editor of the *Polish Philosophical Review*. As we walked around the memorial and could see in the distance the Capital in which the legislature sits, beside which is the Supreme Court he turned to me and said: "This Memorial is more important than the Capital and the Supreme Court; Congress and the Court can make a mistake, this building, which embodies the country's principles of equality and justice for all never makes a mistake."

This illustrates the way in which a tradition can bear a deep sense of the values by which a people lives. This is not a specific determinant of the particular decisions of a legislature or of the rulings of the Supreme Court. Rather it proclaims visibly and with great aesthetic powers the values in terms of which a people lives and strives, that according to which laws are made and interpreted, and in the end that to which one appeals when the system does not live up to, or keep up with, the ongoing aspirations of a people. One could appeal to an abstract principle, but as abstract that would leave out and be indifferent to the particular and the concrete. One could think of this as of the past, but that would not take account of its power in the present. The sense of justice, as of the other values and the culture as a whole, is rather a living reality which transcends any particular time or instance, and inspires and rules the living action of a people simply and as a whole. This is cultural tradition as diachronic moving through time and helping to shape the future.

For the application of this to the particular case hermeneutics, as developed by H.G. Gadamer, points to two important virtues. One is *phronesis*, the ability to adjust one's existential concerns to the circumstances. The other is *sunesis*, that is, the ability to understand the other person and to be concerned for him or her, the ability to undergo or to live with other persons the difficulties they are experiencing. It is not just an abstract law, but is crucial for free cooperation between persons

and groups including today, ethnic groups, in society. It is necessary if that society is to be truly personal and personalizing, rather than depersonalizing.

Application is not a subsequent or accidental addition to an ideal that is perfectly known and then applied, as with techné. The notion of justice is not laid out as an architect's plans. There, when difficulties are encountered in exactly replicating the architect's plans, the builder simply omits some parts. Rather it is a matter of discerning the good of concrete persons and peoples in their complex and evolving relations to others. This is not a matter of expediency, compromise or diminishment, but rather of the more perfect concrete application of the law. Justice is realized only in application which takes account of personal experiences and circumstances. Justice flowers and is fulfilled in such application.

Metaphysics of Interpretation and Transcendence in Being

Lecture II showed both that living through time we naturally create cultures, and the above shows that these must be not only synchronic but diachronic, that is, cultural traditions. But whence the authentic newness that this requires. Hermeneutics as developed by such philosophers as Paul Ricouer and H-.G. Gadamer points up the importance of the metaphysics which undergirds one's understanding.

Hermeneutics is basically the interpretation of texts such as the Qu'ran or the writings of Plato, but it can be as well the interpretation of the traditions of a country. In Africa the tradition is not written, but oral and found in proverbs and popular stories, as well as in rituals and dances.

If tradition and cultural heritage are taken as texts, then the question is how they are to be interpreted. To read the cultural tradition developed by a people as an object that is out there, fixed and immobile, is to go about killing something, which, in fact, was realized in and as life. On the other hand, can we proceed simply in terms of the subject and ask, for example, what was going on in the mind of a Plato when he wrote his texts? This would be to try to see with the eyes of Plato which have long been closed in death. To see a cultural tradition as living we must see it with our eyes, living now and in our circumstances, asking our question. This brings the text to life by developing new and creative applications for our world. As noted above, Jaroslav Pelican has said this famously: "Traditionalism is the dead faith of the living; tradition is the living faith of the dead."

Our tradition can be living only if we are living; it can be creative only if we are creative. We must approach our tradition then, not retrospectively as something from the past to which we must conform, but rather as a wealth of vision which is a resource for the future we are now building.

A basic difficulty in doing this is that we often think wrongly of being. One cannot do without a sense of what it means to be; as we live and act we operate on the basis of what we see that it means to be. Unfortunately, we often think not only of our tradition as dead; we think of everything as dead. That is, we think in terms of a set of atoms fixed and immobile, able simply to collide one with another as was thought by Hobbes, Descartes and their traditions. In that case everything is a separate moment, confusing, chaotic and conflictual. The best one can do is to join the conflict or struggle. Some see this as the nature of the market economy or of democracy. Indeed, it is the only way democracy or anything else could be seen by Democritus, and the subsequent atomistic, individualistic, positivist and nominalist traditions of the first level of freedom. But that is not the major tradition of philosophy from Aristotle to Gadamer.

Being is not something dead, chaotic or conflictual. Being needs to be thought of, not in its least realization, but in its highest realization. If we experience ourselves not as mechanical robots,

but as living beings, then our notion of what it means to be real must primarily be that of a being unfolding in time. We need to appreciate our freedom not merely as a random collection of objects, but as a creative project unfolding the meaning of being through our time and for our children.

Nicholas Chavchavadze was long the Director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Georgian Academy of Science. In the early 1900, his father, Ilya Chavchavadze was the founder of Georgia as an independent state, before being assassinated as Georgia was absorbed by Russia. Another Ilya Chavchavadze was, it is said, assassinated in a car collision when he began to call for the independence of Georgia in the 1980s. Paul Peachey, who had visited the Soviet Union many times, when he asked where he could find thinking about the human person, was directed to Prof. Chavchavadze and his Institute of Philosophy in Tbilisi because of its tradition of work in phenomenology. The authorities, knowing that Paul was coming, sent home all of the members of the Institute. Nevertheless, Prof. Chavchavadze invited him to a Georgian banquet held under trees on a hilltop where they had the fabled ritual toasts of a Georgian banquet. As they were coming down the hill Paul received his answer. Prince Chavchavadze turned to him and said "You know, Paul, without a transcendent man is definitively a slave."

We have the principles now to see why Chavchavadze, Director of the major school of phenomenology of the USSR, would come to that conclusion. In order for our traditions to be open and creative we need an understanding of being that is open, living and creative. The sense of the transcendent, discovered in tradition as synchronic and reinforced by religion, does not leave us fixed in the way in which things were in the past, but assures that there is radical newness, new ways and new possibilities to be lived. It draws us forward into possibilities of human life which have not yet been realized. It founds life and inspires it creatively because it means that we need not merely repeat what has already been done, but that it is possible for us to do things absolutely new, never before done or even thought. It makes possible radical newness in a cultural tradition. Tradition then is not a matter of the past, but an invitation to our creativity to develop new applications; it is not retrospective but prospective; it is not only synchronic but diachronic.

Awareness of transcendence is developed through two types of learning. The first is horizontal learning or trial and error by which we learn how to get what we want. Primarily, this is a question of practical means which can be realized by specific human tactics to achieve specific goals. Beyond or perhaps through these many tactical moves, however, there emerges a broader and deeper sense of what life is about. We learn to distinguish between what is destructive or only temporarily satisfying, in contrast to that which fulfills or perfects in the sense described in Lecture II above.

This is not remote from the experience of life. It is noted that in comparison to animals and birds humans are born quite prematurely. When born, an infant is totally dependent upon family and remains so for years. There is required on the part of others a commitment to love and care that is without preset limits and conditions. Indeed, as noted above, it is precisely by uttering such words — "in sickness or in health, for richer or poorer" — that one engages oneself in marriage from which children emerge. That is to say, human life is and must be lived in terms not of utilitarian calculation, but of open and limitless commitment which transcends anything we can define, contrast or distinguish over against others. Paradoxically, the only thing that is clear about human life is what is not distinct in terms of Descartes's notion of the components of science which are able to be distinguished and contrasted to all else.

This can be appreciated only in terms that are not fixed as formal, abstract or ideal, but of reality or being that is living, creative and loving. This is rooted in, by and as the act of creation by which we are made to be or to exist, In these terms our mind and heart is open to the

transcendent by which we are and are loved, and to which we respond in love. This is what is understood as religion, and is diversely symbolized and ritualized in the various cultures and at the various stages of the emerging human consciousness.

We have here the great paradox of humanity and of philosophy, namely, that a philosophy of the human person becomes dehumanizing unless we think of the human person as able to transcended itself. That is, the human person by him- or herself or as a group, is not adequately human. What distinguishes human life is its ability to transcend and live in a positive relation of love to what is beyond oneself — to others and to the absolute Other. This is the ambit of freedom. To be human is to transcend in heart and mind; to be closed in oneself is to atrophy.

The notion of Chavchavadze should be extended not only to the political order, but also to tradition. In order, for a political order or a tradition to be truly life-giving they need to be lived in an open sense of being as living and transcending. This invites and urges us to move ahead in the sense of commitment to our family and to our people; it is the key to the creation of civil society and nation building.

Chapter V
Globalization as Diversity in Unity

Thusfar we have been analyzing progressively the unfolding of social life. Chapter I studied the levels of personal freedom, chapter II investigated the way in which over time existential freedom constitutes cultural traditions; and Chapter III saw how synchronically this constructs a civil society. In the present circumstances this broad human project encounters two major diachronic challenges.

Hence Chapter IV was concerned with how tradition plays a role in the progressive development of society, especially through a democratic dialogue between cultures and traditions. Here in Chapter V we shall look at this in the emerging global context which promises to mark the new millenium.

I. Global Concerns

During the 1950s and 1960s the development of technological capabilities made it possible to design vehicles with sufficient thrust and precision to be able to break the bonds of earth and soar towards the planets. By the end of the 60s, as projected by President Kennedy, Neil Armstrong landed on the moon. What he saw *there* was of little interest — a barren rocky terrain, alternating between great heat and frigid cold. But what he saw *from there* was of the greatest consequence. With a few of his predecessor in space exploration, he was able for the first time in human history to look at the Earth and see it whole. Throughout the millennia humankind had always seen fragments, piece by piece; now for the first time the earth was seen globally.

At the time, astronomers sought avidly to learn about the moon. But for philosophers the questions were rather what would be found about humankind, about relations between peoples and about their presence in nature. More importantly, they wondered if this would change the way in which people understood themselves in all these regards: Would this intensify the trend to see all and everyone as an object? Or could it contribute to overcoming alienation and *anomie*, to transforming antipathies into bonds of friendship? But, if this were to take place, would life be reduced to a deadly stasis? Though the stakes were high, the philosophical questioning at first was languid. Now, at the end of this millennium these questions of globalization emerge with a full and fascinating force.

Why now rather than then? This would seem to relate notably to the end of the Cold War, especially if this be traced deeply to the roots of the modern outlook as a whole. Prof. Lu Xiaohe1 has pointed out how, at the very beginnings of modern times, Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1744) identified the limitations of the then new modern way of thinking as bearing the potential to lead to violent opposition for lack of an adequate capability to take account of the unity of the whole. If the cold war was the final denouement of this fatal flaw, and the world is no longer structured in a bipolar fashion, then it is no longer the parts which give sense to the whole, but the converse: the global is the basis of the meaning of its participants.

Proximately, this is a matter of communication and commercial interchange, but their full deployment depends in turn upon a politique of positive human cooperation in an integral human project. Thus today we reread Kennedy's words about bearing any burden in defence of freedom in terms of his positive context, namely, his invitation to all humankind to transcend limiting divisions and join together to make real progress. Of this his promise to break beyond a divided

planet and go to the noon by the end of that decade was symbol and harbinger. The process of globalization transcends regional concerns. This is not to deny them, but to respond to them from a more inclusive vantage point in term of which all can have their full meaning and the opportunity to work together to determine their own destiny. This is the heart of the issue of globalization and cultural identities.

Until recently the term 'globalization' was so little used that it warranted only two lines in Webster unabridged international dictionary.2 For the term 'global,' however, three meanings are listed:

- first, geometric, namely, a spherical shape;
- second, geographic, namely, the entire world, with the connotation of being complete. This was extended by the ancient Greeks to signify perfection itself: Parmenides spoke of the One, eternal and unchanging as being spherical; and
- third, qualitative, namely, the state of being comprehensive, unified or integrated.

It is interesting to note that Webster's saw this third character of global as implying "lacking in particularizing detail" or "highly undifferentiated". Today's challenge is more complex and more rich, namely, to achieve a comprehensive vision whose integration is not at the expense of the components, but their enhancement and full appreciation.

For insight on these issues I would turn to Nicholas of Cusa, born almost six hundred years ago (1401-1464) at a special juncture in Western thought. Often he is described as the last of the medievals and the first of the moderns. In the high Middle ages Thomas Aquinas and others had reunited the traditions of Plato and Aristotle on the basis of the Christian discovery of the special significance of existence. In this synthesis primacy was given to Aristotle whose structure for the sciences began with *Physics* as specified by multiple and changing things, whence it ascended to its culmination in the unity of the divine life at the end of his *Metaphysics*.3 The ladder between the two constituted a richly diversified hierarchy of being

John Dewey4 stressed — perhaps to strongly — the relation of that ancient hierarchic world view to the Ptolemaic system in which the earth is the center around which the sun and the planets revolve at a series of levels in a finite universe. He traced the development of the modern outlook to the change to the Copernican heliocentric model of an infinite but undifferentiated universe.

Nicholas of Cusa bridged the two. He continued the sense of a hierarchical differentiation of being from the minimal to the infinite, but almost a century before Copernicus (1473-1543) he saw the earth as but one of the spheres revolving around the sun.

His outlook with regard to the relations between peoples was equally pioneering. As Papal legate to Constantinople shortly after this had been taken by the Turks — much to the shock of all Europe — Cusa was able to see the diversity of peoples not as negating, but as promoting unity.

His broad and ranging political, scientific, philosophical and theological interests qualified him as a fully Renaissance man. In time he was made a Cardinal in Rome, where he is buried. The dissertation of Dr. David De Leonardis, *Ethical Implications of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa*,5 expanded by the addition of sections on economic, social and religious unity, was published by The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy in 1998. This chapter emerges from that exploration which I directed.

It will proceed by looking first at the manner of thinking involved and second at Cusa's reconciliation of unity and diversity in a harmony which Confucius might be expected to find of special interest. Thirdly, on these bases, it will look at the special dynamism with which this

endows his sense of being. Fourth, it will sample briefly some of the implications which this global vision could have for contemporary problems of economic, social and religious life sketched in figures IV-VII.

II. Global Thinking

Any understanding of the work of the mind in the thought of Nicholas of Cusa must be situated in the context of the Platonic notion of participation (*mimesis* or image) whereby the many forms fundamentally are images of the one idea. For Plato, whose sense of reality was relatively passive, this meant that the many mirrored or were like (assimilated to) the one archetype or idea. Correspondingly, in knowing multiple things the mind, as it were, remembers having encountered and been impressed by, or assimilated to, the one archetypic idea which they image, all converging progressively toward a supreme One. For Cusa, with Plato, this appreciation of the one remains foundational for the knowledge of any particular. Here it is important to note how Cusa reconceives the nature of this one — not only, but also — in global terms.

To this Aristotle, whose thought began from the active processes of physical change, added a more active role for mind. This not only mirrors, but actively shapes the character, if not the content, of its knowledge. As an Aristotelian Aquinas too considered the mind to be active, but in the end the objectivity of its knowledge depended upon a passive relation to its object: beings "can by their very nature bring about a true apprehension of themselves in the human intellects which, as is said in the *Metaphysics*, is measured by things."6

Cusa's sense of mind unites both emphases: the original measures the image, which in turn becomes like, or is assimilated to, the original. Sense knowledge is measured by the object; this is even part of its process of assimilation to the divine mind.7 But, as E. Cassirer8 notes, Cusa shifts the initiative to the mind operating through the senses, imagination, reason and intellect. Rather than being simply formed by sense data, the mind actively informs the senses and conforms and configures their data in order that the mind might be assimilated to the object. Thus both "extramental objects and the human mind are measures of cognitive assimilation, that is to say, we become like the non-mental things we know, and we fashion the conceptual and judgmental tools whereby we take them into ourselves as known."9

But in saying this Miller seems not to have reached the key point for our concerns for global awareness — or of Cusa's, for that matter. This is not merely the classical realist distinction between what is known, which is on the part of the thing, and the way in which it is known, which reflects the mind by which the thing is known. Cusa has added two moves. First, the One of Plato is not an ideal form, but the universe of reality (and this in the image of God as the absolute One); second, the human mind (also in the image of the divine mind) is essentially concerned with this totality of reality, in terms of which global awareness all its knowledge is carried out.

a. Discursive Reasoning

In his study on mind,10 Cusa distinguishes three levels of knowledge, the first two are discursive reasoning, the third is intellection. The first begins from sense knowledge of particular material objects. This is incremental as our experiences occur one by one and we begin to construct a map of the region, to use a simile of L. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.11

But for Cusa the knowledge of the multiple physical things by the lower powers of sensation and imagination raises the question of the unity of things which must be treated in terms of the

concepts of reason and intellect.12 For the forms in things are not the true forms, but are clouded by the changeableness of matter.13 The exact nature of anything then is unattainable by us except in analogies and figures grounded essentially in the global sense had by our higher powers.14

But while sense knowledge is inadequate for a global vision Cusa considers innate knowledge or a separated world of ideas to be unnecessary and distractive. Hence, he concludes: (a) that sense knowledge is required; (b) that both the physical object and the mind are active in the assimilation or shaping of the mind, (c) that in this process the mind with its global matrix is superior in that it informs or shapes the work of the senses, and (d) that it is unable fully to grasp the nature of the object in itself.

As a result discursive reasoning as regards physical objects is limited in a number of ways. First, it is piecemeal in that it develops only step by step, one thing at a time, in an ongoing temporal progression. Hence, on the macro level discursive reasoning can never know the entirety of reality. On the micro level it cannot comprehend any single entity completely in its nature or quality. This is true especially of the uniqueness or identity, which for humans are their personal and cultural identities.

The paradox of attempting to think globally in these terms is that as we try to form overall unities we abstract more and more from what distinguishes or characterizes free and unique persons so that the process becomes essentially depersonalizing. Hence the drama of globalization as the central phenomenon of the present change of the millennia.

In the 20th century the technological implementation of depersonalization reached such a crises that millions were crushed or exterminated — hundreds of thousands in pogroms, 6 million in the holocaust, 50 million in the Second World War, entire continents impoverished and exploited. In effect the limitations Cusa identifies in discursive reasoning now are simply no longer tolerable and new modes of thinking are required in order to enable life to continue in our times.

Cusa recognizes a second type of discursive reasoning, namely, that of mathematics, which does not share the limitations noted above. But here the objects are not living beings, but mental objects of the same nature as mind. Hence the mind can pivot on itself using its own resources to construct and process concepts and to make judgements which are exact because concerned with what is not changing or material.15 This is Humes's world of relations between ideas.16 But as it deals only with the formal, rather than the existential, it cannot resolve the above human problems, but serves to exacerbate them to the degree that its mode of discursive reasoning becomes exclusive.

b. Intellection

Hence Nicholas of Cusa turns to a third mode of mental assimilation, which is beyond the work of discursive reason, namely, intellection. Eugene Rice contrasts the two approaches to knowledge by likening discursive reasoning to a wayfarer walking through a valley and encountering things one by one, whereas intellection is like being on a hill whence one surveys the entire valley all at once.17 The latter view is global and the particulars are understood as component parts; each thing has its proper realty, but is also an integral constituent of the whole. It is important to note that the unity of the scene as known by intellection is constituted not by a mere assemblage of single entities juxtaposed in space or time, but as multiple participations in a unity. (Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the multiple things in the physical order are also limited images of the whole.)

To express this in terms of he modern distinction of analytic and synthetic modes of thought would help, but not at all suffice. With Descartes moderns undertook a search for knowledge that was clear in the sense of identifying the simple natures of each thing, and distinct in the sense that such knowledge should be sufficient at least to be able to distinguish one type of thing from all others.18 This gave primacy to the analytic process of distinguishing all into its component set of simple natures. The supposition was that these were finite in number, that they could all be identified clearly and distinctly by the mind, and that they could then be reassembled by equally clear and distinct links in a process of synthesis.

This has marked the modern mind and set its goals and its limitations. Having determined that only what was clear and distinct to the human mind could qualify for inclusion, due to the limitations of the human mind it was inevitable that the uniqueness of each entity would be omitted as not clear to the human mind. Further, any organic character of the whole also would be omitted, for synthesis could assemble only what was clear and distinct.

For Cusa in contrast, intellection is knowledge in terms not of the parts, but of the whole in which all participate. Here the intellect grasps the meaning and value of the whole. It works with the imagination and reason to work out the full range of possibilities and to grasp how the many fit together: it "depends not upon the number of things which are known, but upon the imaginative thrust of the mind" to be able to know "all the multifarious possibilities which are open to being."19 Finally it is guided by the senses to know which of these possibilities are actual. The significance of the actual beings is not merely what we can garner by the senses, but what is known primarily in terms of the whole by the intellect.

The Aristotelians build knowledge from concrete, changing and hence limited things. Cusa's more Platonic heritage has him build knowledge rather in the global terms of the whole, and ultimately of the One of which the mind as well as things are the images. Where these were but form for Plato, for Cusa they are existents sharing in the active power of being.

The Enlightenment was so intent upon knowledge that it wound up tailoring all to what it could know clearly and distinctly. As with the Procrustean bed, what did not fit these specification was lopped off and discarded as hypothetical or superstition. Cusa's attitude is notably different for it includes humility before reality which it recognizes, and even reveres, above all where it exceeds the human capacity for clarity of conception and power of control.

The human mind, he would recognize, has limitations at both ends of the scale of being. Even a minimal being cannot be exhaustively known. Like attempting to approach a polygon to a circle, no matter how many sides are added, more remain always possible; a circular shape can never be attained in this manner. Such knowledge though partial and incomplete, is valid as far as it goes, but it always can be improved upon. One can only project the circle by the thrust of the imagination.

Knowledge of the absolute, in contrast, cannot be improved upon. Moreover, it is basically unreliable for there is nothing to which the Absolute can be compared.20 Hence, the negative way of saying what God is not and the recognition of our ignorance in that regard constitute the relevant real knowledge, for which reason Cusa entitled a major work: *On Learned Ignorance*.21

We have seen the limitations of knowledge constructed on the basis of multiple limited beings understood as opposed one to another. Unity constructed thereupon not only never manages to grasp such beings fully but simply discards what is not known. Thus the uniqueness of the person cannot be recognized and is lost. Conversely the unities which can be constructed of such contrasting realities remains external and antithetical. Hence, to the degree that it succeeds discursive reasoning is in danger of oppressing the uniqueness of the participants. This is the

classical dilemma of the one and the many; it is the particular challenge of globalization in our day and the basic reason why it is feared as a new mode of (economic) imperialism and oppression.

Cusa's suggestion of another mode of thinking whereby we think in terms of the whole is promising, indeed essential for our new age. But it faces a great test. Can it take account of diversity, and if so how can this be understood as within, rather than in opposition to, unity: Is it possible to conceive diversity as a contribution to unity, rather than as its negation?

Parmenides had shown unity to be the first characteristic of being by opposing being to non being. In these terms each being was itself and nothing less. But such reasoning in terms of the opposition of being to non being bespoke also contrast and opposition between beings, each of which in being itself was precisely not any other being. Today the global reality makes it necessary to ask whether there are more positive and relational modes of conceiving multiplicity.

III. Global Structures of Diversity in Unity

To summarize then we have seen the new global political, cultural and economic phenomena in which we are situated and in terms of which we are called to act. In looking toward the thought of Nicholas of Cusa we saw that such a global response requires a new dimension of thinking. The characteristic modern discursive reasoning with its analytic approach of breaking all down into its minimum components and reassembling them synthetically, proposed by Descartes in his *Discourse on Method*, proceeds essentially in terms of parts rather than of the whole, of the discrete components without taking account of the overall unity.

As pointed out by Dr. De Leonardis, this entails that relations between peoples and conflict resolution can be carried out only in terms of compromises which leave no one satisfied and plant the seeds of further conflicts. If now the means for conflict are so powerful as to be capable of overwhelming the means for survival, we are faced with the imperative of finding how to proceed in terms of a capacity to grasp the whole.

This pointed to Cusa's power of intellection, joined with that of the imagination, to project what we cannot clearly conceive of the individual person and the divine, to protect what we can only acknowledge of our creative freedom and that of others, and to promote the growth of which we are capable but which lies hidden in a future which is not yet.

As such knowledge is directed toward an ordered reality — ours and that of the entire globe — the central questions are not merely epistemological, but ontological and ethical, namely, what is the global whole in which we exist, and how can we act in relation to others peoples and cultures in ways that promote a collaborative realization of global community in our times?

a. The Unity of the Whole

In response to this question Cusa would begin by identifying four types or levels of unity:

1. Individual unity — the identity by which each existing as itself in contrast to others.
2. The unity of each individual being as within the whole of being. This is important in grappling with the issue of globalization in our times and is within the focus of the remainder of this chapter.
3. The unity of the universe by which the individuals together form not merely a conglomeration of single entities, as with a pile of rocks, but a unified whole which expresses the

fullness of being. This may be the central contribution of Cusa's thought for a study of globalization.

4. Absolute Unity — the One, God or Being Itself, which, being without distinction, plurality or potentiality, is all that being can be, the fullness of being, and hence not subject to greater of lesser degree.22

The fourth is central and foundational for religions and for a metaphysics of the issue of globalization. Here, however, we shall focus rather on the ontology and its ethical implication. This directs our attention to the second and especially the third of Cusa's senses of unity to which the recent development of a global awareness corresponds, namely, to the whole or total universe in which we have our being, live and intersect with nature and with others.

This has been appreciated in various ways in the past: in the totem which was the unifier for the life and universe of the primitive peoples, in the myths which united gods and nature in a genetic whole, in the One of Parmenides as the natural first step for metaphysics, and in the eschatologies and the classical hierarchies of being, to cite but a few. Now, however, after a long period of analytic and atomic thinking, under the impact of technologies which make conflict too costly and inundate us with global communications, there is special need to take up once again this sense of unity.

b. Diversity as Contraction

The situation is delicate however, for in so doing it is imperative to avoid the kind of abstractive thinking described above in which personal uniqueness is dismissed and only the universal remains.23

Cusa's solution is found in the notion of contraction, that is, to begin from the significance of the whole and to recognize it in the very reality of every individual, so that the individual shares in something of the ultimate or definitive reality of the whole of being. One is not then an insignificant speck, as would be the case were I to be measured quantitatively and contrasted to the broad expanse of the globe. Rather I have the importance of the whole as it exists in and as me — and the same is true of other persons and of the parts of nature.

The import of this can be seen through comparison with other attempts to state this participation of the part in the whole. For Plato this was a repetition or imaging by each of that type of the one ideal form. Aristotle soon ceased to employ the term participation as image (*mimesis*) because of the danger it entailed of reducing the individual to but a shadow of what was truly real. Cusa too rejected the separately existing ideas or ideal forms. Instead what had been developed in the Christian cultures was a positive notion of existence as act24 whereby each participant in being was made to be or exist in itself. This is retained by Nicholas of Cusa.

But he would emphasize that the being in which this person or thing participates is the whole of being.25 This does not mean that in a being there is anything alien to its own identity, but that the reality of each being has precisely the meaning of the whole as contracted to this unique instance. To be then is not simply to fall in some minimal way on this side of nothingness, but rather to partake of the totality of being and the meaning of the whole of being and indeed to be a realization of the whole in this unique contraction or instance. It retains its identity, but does so in and of the whole.

De Leonardis formulates this in two principles:

- Principle of Individuality: Each individual contraction uniquely imparts to each entity an inherent value which marks it as indispensable to the whole.

- Principle of Community: Contraction of being makes each thing to be everything in a contracted sense. This creates a community of beings relating all entities on an ontological level.26

Let us stop at this insight to explore its implications for diversity. Generally multiplicity and diversity are seen as opposed to unity: what is one is not many and vice versa; to have many beings is to imply contrast and even possible conflict. When, however, each individual is appreciated as a unique contraction of the whole, others which are distinct and different are complementary rather than contradictory; they are the missing elements toward which one aspires and which can help one grow and live more fully; they are the remainder of the whole of which I am part, which supports and promotes me, and toward whose overall good my life is directed. Taken together they enhance, rather than destroy, the unity. This, of course, is true not of Parmenidean absolute and unlimited One which is the complete and full perfection of being, the fourth instance of unity cited above. But it is true of the third of the above unities which are precisely the reality of global unity, and the second type of unity which is its components seen precisely as members of the global whole.

c. Forms of Relation

1. Hierarchy. After the manner of the medievals Cusa saw the plurality of beings of the universe as constituting a hierarchy of being. Each being was equal in that it constituted a contraction of the whole, but not all were equally contracted. Thus an inorganic being was more contracted than a living organism, and a conscious being was less contracted than either of them. This constituted a hierarchy or gradation of beings. By thinking globally or in terms of the whole, Cusa was able to appreciate the diversity of being in a way that heightened this ordered sense of unity.

Lovejoy wrote classically of *The Great Claim of Being*27 in which each being was situated between, and in relation to, the next lower and the next higher in the hierarchy. We had, in other words, our neighbors with whom we shared, but there was always the danger that we were correspondingly distanced from other beings. Thus the sense of the human as "lord of nature" could and did turn into exploitation and depredation. Cusa's sense of beings as contractions of the whole unites each one intimately to all other realities in one's being, one's realization, and hence one's concerns. This converts the sense of master into that of steward for the welfare of the parts of nature which do not possess consciousness or freedom. These become the ecological concerns of humankind.

Another approach, built upon this sense of each distinct being as equal inasmuch as each participates in the whole, would image overall reality as a mosaic. But Cusa's sense of each of those piece as also a contraction of the whole went further by adding the importance not only of each to the whole as in a mosaic, but of the whole in and by each being. Unity then is enhanced and is the concern of each being to the full extent of its own reality understood as an integral participant in the whole.

However, both these metaphors of a chain of being and of a mosaic are static. They leave the particular or individual beings as juxtaposed externally one to the other. Neither takes account of the way in which beings interact with the others or, more deeply, are even constituted internally

by these relations to others. What Cusa sees for the realm of being is relationships which are not externally juxtaposed, but internal to the very make up of the individuals.

2. Internal Relations. This internal relationship is made possible precisely by a global sense of the whole.28 For this Cusa may have drawn more directly from the Trinity, but this in turn is conceived through analogy to the family of which individuals are contractions, especially as this is lived as the interpersonal relations of a culture grounded in such a theology. The philosopher can look into that social life as a point of manifestation of being. Indeed, hermeneutics29 would suggest that this constitutes not only a *locus philosophicus* whence insight can be drawn, but the prejudgments of philosophers which constitute the basic philosophical insights themselves. The critical scientific interchange of philosophy is a process of controlled adjustment and perfection of these insights.

In a family all the persons are fully members and in that sense fully of the same nature. But the father generates the son while the son proceeds from the father. Hence, while mutually constituted by the same relation of one to the other, the father and son are distinct precisely as generator and generated. Life and all that the father is and has is given from the father to the son. Correspondingly, all that the son is and has is received from the father. As giver and receiver the two are distinguished in the family precisely as the different terms of the one relation. Hence each shares in the very definition of the other: the father is father only by the son, and vice versa.

Further, generation is not a negative relation of exclusion or opposition; just the opposite — it is a positive relation of love, generosity and sharing. Hence, the unity or identity of each is via relation (the second unity), rather than opposition or negation as was the case in the first level of unity. In this way the whole that is the family is included in the definition of the father and of the son each of whom are particular contractions of the whole.

To highlight this internal and active sense of contraction and hierarchy Cusa uses also the analogy of a seed.30 This is able to develop and grow only by heat from the sun, water from the clouds and nourishment from the earth. Hence, all of these elements of the whole are interrelated in mutual dependence. Moreover, thereby the seed brings new being into existence — which in turn will be creative, etc. Finally, by this action of the sun and clouds, the seed and the earth, precisely as contractions of the whole, the universe itself is made fruitful and unfolds. But this is identically to perfect and fulfill the universe. Hence, the plurality of beings, far from being detrimental to the unity and perfection of the universe, is the key thereto.

3. Explicatio-Complicatio. Cusa speaks of this as an *explicatio* or unfolding of the perfection of being, to which corresponds the converse, namely, by folding together (*complicatio*) the various levels of being constitute the perfection of the whole. Hence Cusa's hierarchy of being has special richness when taken in the light of his sense of a global unity. The classical hierarchy was a sequence of distinct levels of beings, each external to the other. The great gap between the multiple physical or material beings and the absolute One was filled in by an order of spiritual or angelic beings. As limited these were not the absolute, yet as spiritual they were not physical or material. This left the material or physical dimension of being out of the point of integration.

In contrast, Cusa, while continuing the overall graduation, sees it rather in terms of mutual inclusion, rather than of exclusion. Thus inorganic material beings do not contain the perfection of animate or conscious being, but plants include the perfections of the material as well as life. Animals are not self-conscious, but they do integrate material, animate and conscious perfection. Humans include all four: inorganic, animate and conscious and spiritual life.

In this light, the relation to all others through the contraction of being is intensified as beings include more levels of being in their nature. On this scale humans as material and as alive on all three levels of life: plant, animal and spirit, play a uniquely unitive and comprehensive role in the hierarchy of being. If the issue is not simple individuality by negative and exclusive contrast to others (the first level of unity), but uniqueness by positive and inclusive relation to others, then human persons and the human community are truly the nucleus of a unity that is global.

IV. The Dynamism of a Global Order

Thus far we have been speaking especially in terms of existence and formal causality by which the various beings within the global reality are to specific degrees contractions of the whole. To this, however, should be added efficient and final causality by which the ordered universe of reality takes on a dynamic and even developmental character. This has a number of implications: directedness, dynamism, cohesion, complementarity and harmony.31 Cusa's global vision is of a uniquely active universe of being.

1. *Direction to the Perfection of the Global Whole*: As contractions of the whole, finite beings are not merely products ejected by and from the universe of being, but rather are limited expressions of the whole. Their entire reality is a limited image of the whole from which they derive their being, without which they cannot exist, and in which they find their true end or purpose. As changing, developing, living and moving they are integral to the universe in which they find their perfection or realization and to the perfection of which they contribute by the full actuality and activity of their reality.

This cannot be simply random or chaotic, oriented equally to being and its destruction, for then nothing would survive. Rather there is in being a directedness to its realization and perfection, rather then to its contrary. A rock resists annihilation; a plant will grow if given water and nutrition; an animal will seek these out and defend itself vigorously when necessary. All this when brought into cooperative causal interaction has a direction, namely, to the perfection of the whole.

2. *Dynamic Unfolding of the Global Whole*: As an unfolding (*explicatio*) of the whole, the diverse beings (the second type of unity) are opposed neither to the whole (the third type of unity) or to the absolute One (the fourth type of unity). Rather, after the Platonic insight, all unfolds from the One and returns thereto.

To this Cusa makes an important addition. In his global vision this is not merely a matter of individual forms; beings are directed to the One as a whole, that is, by interacting with others (unity 3). Further, this is not a matter only of external interaction between aliens. Seen in the light of reality as a whole, each being is a unique and indispensable contraction of the whole. Hence finite realities interact not merely as a multiplicity, but as an internally related and constituted community with shared and interdependent goals and powers.

3. *Cohesion and Complementarity in a Global Unity*: Every being is then related to every other in this grand community almost as parts of one body. Each depends upon the other in order to survive and by each the whole realizes its goal. But a global vision, such as that of Cusa, takes a step further, for if each part is a contraction of the whole then, as with the DNA for the individual cell, "in order for anything to be what it is it must also be in a certain sense everything which exists."32The other is not alien, but part of my own definition.

From this it follows that the realization of each is required for the realization of the whole, just as each team member must perform well for the success of the whole. But in Cusa's global view the reverse is also true, namely, it is by acting with others and indeed in the service of others or for their good that one reaches one's full realization. This again is not far from the experience of the family and civil society, but tends to be lost sight of in other human and commercial relations. It is by interacting with, and for, others that one activates one's creative possibilities and most approximates the full realization of being. Thus, "the goal of each is to become harmoniously integrated into the whole of being and thereby to achieve the fullest development of its own unique nature."33

Notes

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28. *Of Learned Ignorance*, I, 9-10.

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30. *Dato Patris Luminum* in Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's Metaphors of Contraction* (Minneapolis: Banning, 1983), p. 25.

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Lecture V
Pluralism and Globalization

If everything humans can do they can do badly then the same is true with regard to tradition. On the one hand, some would hold to it slavishly, seeing the ideal as the past and lacking confidence in the ability of human reason, often because of a sense of human nature as corrupted by sin. The result is holding to the past and an attempt to replicate it without deviation or development. This attitude where found among Christians has been called fundamentalism, a term which has been applied, perhaps by dubious analogy, to other branches of Christianity and to some Islamic groups as well.

Others would respond by seeing fidelity to a tradition as at best not important and hence destined to atrophy with time, or at worst a deterrent to progress which must be suppressed and removed. They miss the vital importance of culture and tradition for human life and are surprised when peoples defend their cultures as they defend their lives, indeed their souls. Both attitudes can be expected to exacerbate the problem.

Instead, there is need to recognize the vital importance of identity for a people and at the same time to show that this is not static or retrospective, but rather living and prospective. That is, cultural traditions must be engaged consciously in the projects of persons, peoples and nations.

Such consideration of tradition not synchronically, but diachronically through time has important implications for two key issues of our day; one reflects the multiplicity of peoples and tradition, namely, pluralism, the other is the interaction of so diverse a world with the emerging global horizon.

Pluralism

In the previous lectures we have seen how a tradition grows from the experience of a people and how it includes not only horizontal pragmatic discoveries about the means for living or what works, but also vertical discoveries regarding limitless transcendent meaning and values. This implies that I have not yet exhausted the meaning of such terms as justice or love, nor have my people. If that is the case, then the question is how I can discover more of what my tradition means, and of the value included in my tradition.

This is the positive importance of pluralism, that is, of being able to meet people who share a different tradition and have different stories and texts. To hear repeatedly only one's own stories leaves one within the confines, not only of one's own tradition, but of what is generally already appreciated of that tradition. Thus, to meet someone of a different tradition with different stories enables one to look with fresh eyes into one's own tradition. This stimulates one's imagination in its work as spectroscope and kaleidoscope as described above and thereby enables one to draw out more of one's own tradition. Rather than being a circumstance in which my tradition is compromised or limited, meeting a person or people from a different tradition gives one the possibility of going more deeply into one's own tradition and drawing out more of its meaning.

This was my conscious intent when I had a first sabbatical opportunity to spend time in research away from teaching. It seemed at that time that it would be helpful to go outside of the Western tradition to a totally different culture, which I did by going to India. The intent was not to find there something strange which I would juxtapose to my own tradition, horizon or studies, but

rather to be stimulated by Hindu insights in order to go more deeply into my own metaphysical tradition, the better to understand its meaning.

The results for me were striking. I had always followed the Aristotelian pattern of beginning from the physical as that which was most obvious to the senses and proceeding from that to God. On contrary, I found Shankara and the Sutras beginning from the Absolute which was self-sufficient and self-evident as the basis for the reality and intelligibility of all else. Upon reflection I came to understand this to be the essential message of Thomas Aquinas' classical five ways to God. The effect was not to invert my order of teaching and of discovering, but to deepen immeasurably my understanding of the nature and role of Thomas' five ways to God as a key to metaphysical meaning and to the relation (*re-ligatio* or religion) of all things to God.

Similarly, hermeneutics speaks of the importance of dialogue as the interchange between persons and peoples. This is not at all the same as argument. In an argument one looks for the weakness in the position of the other in order to be able to reject it as a threat to one's own position. In contrast, in hermeneutics one looks for the element of truth in the other's position in order to be able to take account of it. Indeed one looks for how that can be strengthened and extended. For even if that position is not entirely true, whatever element of truth is there is very important and precious for me. It suggests ways to go more deeply into my own tradition and bring out more if what it means to be, e.g., just, peaceful, truthful, etc.

But even this would not be truly liberative if it meant only going in search of means by which I might overcome other persons in order to gain some advantage and control. This would be still to proceed in terms of contraries as characteristic of the first level of freedom. I would be attempting not to free myself from my limitations, but to solidify them by imposing them on others.

Moreover, to assume a more positive attitude toward other cultures does not suppose that one rejects one's own tradition or considers one's own position to be wrong. It suggests only that one's appreciation of one's tradition is limited, that I have appreciated and made explicit only part of my tradition. This is to honor one's own tradition by the conviction that it has more to say to me than thusfar I have unveiled. In other words, other persons with other experiences are precious in order to liberate me from my restrictions in relation to my own tradition in my circumstances. They enable me to get beyond these limitations, to escape what has deceived me or held me captive and to learn from new experiences. This is to be liberated or free most deeply and personally and in that way to progress. The ability to listen to others is the ability to assimilate the implications of their answers for unfolding my own tradition.

This is the strength of a democracy which allows for the expression of different ideas. A pluralistic society is rich in the cumulative potentialities of peoples with different traditions. Democracy is a situation in which the many come together and interchange their ideas, thereby sharing different horizons and approaches to meaning. Again, it is not to imply that my tradition is deficient, but only that it is historical and that at this moment I have managed to bring to light only part of what my tradition contains and implies.

In sum, this means that to be faithful to my tradition I should work with others, listen to others, live with others. To dialogue with others is not to compromise my commitment to my tradition, but only to recognize that I am limited and that with my people, however rich our vision, we have failed to exhaust the full richness of our tradition. By listening to someone from another tradition one is enabled to go more deeply into the resources of one's own tradition and draw on it in new ways for new times.

Globalization

There is another contemporary condition which I would like to add in conclusion to this series of lectures, namely, globalization. This is especially significant for our own times as we escape earlier limitations.

Until recently the world had been divided between various absolute nations or great empires which were often at war one with another. Gradually these coalesced in ideological terms until there was but the bipolar world structure of the cold war. With that now ended we find ourselves in a single geopolitical world system. Some read this in the economic terms of material profit, others in the political terms of power and control. Both are limited essentially to the first level of freedom as competition and conflict. In these terms a global unity essentially suppresses freedom and imposes domination and control. It is necessary, indeed essential, then for freedom in our time to open to the third level of existential freedom in which unity does not mean suppression of difference.

This may have been stimulated as well by the development of space exploration and the ability to go beyond the world and to look back upon it as one. In launching the program to go to the moon by the end of that decade, President Kennedy spoke of going beyond the divisions of the world and uniting all in this great adventure. Technically this was a great achievement, but philosophically the challenge it produced may be even greater. What does it mean for humankind to be able to look at the globe as a whole; what does it mean philosophically to be able to look at this world whole and entire.

There is a thinker I would like to point to in this regard, namely, Nicholas of Cusa who lived in the mid-1400s. This was the time at which the Islamic peoples first took possession of Constantinople, which in the West was seen as a great catastrophe. The Pope sent Nicholas of Cusa, a young lay lawyer from Germany, to Constanti-nople as his legate. He returned to Rome suggesting that perhaps it might not be so bad, in fact it might be good. We might ask what kind of thinking was going on in the mind of Nicholas of Cusa and whether this would be helpful to us today in thinking about a world become increasingly one.

Knowledge: Nicholas of Cusa distinguished two capabilities of the human mind. The first is discursive reasoning in which the mind moves from one thing to another. As one observes some one thing and moves to another object, one could leave out or abstract the distinctiveness of one vis-a-vis the other in order to obtain a certain unity. But this would be to leave out what is most unique. In particular it would leave out the uniqueness essential in the exercise of freedom by the various persons, and simply add individuals together endlessly without ever really arriving at a whole.

In contrast Cusa would identify another capability of the human mind. It is not locked to the senses and hence to the district sequence of the realities one encounters, but rather grasps the total reality of the whole in which we stand. In the order of intellect it would be similar to observing a city from a tall building and grasping it as one, with the particulars being perceived as participants in the overall scene.

In this, however, it is necessary to find the correct balance; on the one hand, were one to think of this as providing comprehensive or exhaustive knowledge of each thing, that knowledge would be available only to a divine mind. On the other hand, were one to think only in the empirical terms of the first level of freedom one could gather and combine only a few things. Instead Cusa refers to a knowledge which he describes as a learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*).

In simple ignorance one does not know; one simply does not recognize that something is there. In *docta égnoratia*, in contrast, one knows that one cannot attain something. This consideration is very important for freedom, because freedom is so personal that it is unique to each person and not available directly to anyone else. Hence, one's thinking does not comprehend the freedom of another. To act on simple ignorance, would be to ignore and override the other's freedom, treating others as if they were not free. Learned ignorance by contrast takes account of the other's uniqueness and freedom while recognizing that I cannot comprehend this but must leave room for it.

Here I know both that you are unique and that I cannot exhaustively appreciate that uniqueness. Hence, I recognize your freedom and value, protect and promote it. I project what I cannot conceive clearly, namely, your freedom, the whole and the Absolute. This protects what one can only acknowledge, namely, the creative freedom both of myself and of others as well. It promotes the potential growth which still is hidden in our future.

This notion is not that distant from us. One might consider one's children as having no understanding, importance or will and then treat them as things or objects of manipulation. It has been the experience of people in our times that various great systems have ignored the distinctive moral freedom of people either by understanding only the community and not recognizing the significance of the person, or by recognizing the individual but not taking account of community.

Increasingly, however, people are now recognized as free, whose will, experience and concerns are very important. Raising children is now seen essentially as the delicate process of enabling the exercise of freedom to evolve in a unique manner in each young person. Only God can make someone to be free; humans, however, can evoke this freedom by love.

Being: Nicholas of Cusa had distinguished from discursive reasoning which grasped being serially, intellection which was able to appreciate the whole, in terms of which individuals are integrated as participations. To this corresponds a new sense of the reality of multiple things. As in the simile of observing a city from a high building, the many realities are seen in terms of the whole.

In this light, individuals are not only singles juxtaposed to others in order to constitute an external composite. Instead the individuals are conceived from the beginning in terms of the whole, each being a unique contraction of the whole.

This implies not only that each is important for what it alone is, but that each in itself contains the whole and thus its relation to each and all of the others, and of the whole to each.

Consequently multiple realities are not contradictory one to another, but are essentially complementary. That is to say, each provides an element of the whole which is missing to all the others. Thereby each helps the others to live more fully; the particulars are enhanced by the whole and by each of the other members of that whole.

In this light the reality of the many components is essentially relational to the whole and hence to the other components, just as the father is not father except in relation to the son and vice verse. Here the differences are by definition relative both to the whole and to the others.

Hence the particular person or peoples are not simply different and contrary to each other, but stand in positive relations of complementarity one to another. We are not contradictory or indifferent to others, but positively interrelated and complementary. One is concerned about the other and shares with the other. Our relations are more positive than conflictual or even competitive, for they are marked not by opposition, but by love and generosity, sharing and unity.

One acts then not only with the others as in a football team, but for others. This is a deep moral and humane relationship. We saw how Aristotle spoke of democracy as requiring the cooperation of many for the common good. Cusa sees this relation as inherent and constitutive of the many. It is not a matter of self-interest or self-seeking as understood in an empiricist individualism at the first level of freedom. This would not be a democracy, but a situation of violent competition and of exploitation of the weak by the strong. Rather, a culture and civilization is a way of living with, not against, each other. The metaphysics of Nicholas of Cusa provides a way of understanding one's reality or being as complementary to others and as sharing their concerns.

Moreover, whereas at the level of the absolute and infinite perfection of the divine it is unity that is essential, it is the opposite among finite beings. Just as time is required for the unfolding of human life, so multiplicity is necessary for the more ample realization of being at the finite level. The whole is made fruitful by multiplicity; plurality is not detrimental to unity and the whole, but perfective thereof.

Finally, considered not only formally but existentially, being unfolds through efficient causality whereby it realizes new reality, and through final causality or teleology whereby this new reality is ordered toward the realization and perfection of being. This dynamism is stimulated by the contrast between the limited character of the whole as a point of departure and the more perfect realization of the whole toward which things are directed and drawn.

This seems fully consistent with, but perhaps a deeper sense of, what Aristotle spoke of when he noted that a democracy was conceivably a good form of government provided each was acting for the common good. In this light the thought of Cusa can be a foundational contribution to the development of democracy, not as a mere matter of expediency or of structure, but as a basic issue of being human and its realization in and as community.

Conclusion

In the past philosophy emerged from the integral life of the people and constituted its reflective dimension. Cumulatively, it was said that philosophers stood on the shoulders of their predecessors.

At the time of the Renaissance a new experiment was undertaken with extremely varied results. The attempt was made to establish absolute control of life by human persons while they restricted themselves to clear and distinct ideas and rejected the significance of anything else. The result was a precise and rich technical analysis for implementing human life. Done in terms of the senses in the Anglo-Saxon manner, this generates the first level of freedom according to which democracy is a matter of reconciling or engaging conflicting individual interests. Done in terms of the intellect in the continental manner this led to a sense of community and of scientific laws of history in which personal freedom counted little, indeed anything else other than the system can only be irrational. It became evident soon after 1989 that freedom could not be lived if philosophers continued to remain within that structure of earlier rationalism and continued to refer to all else as irrational.

It is then the heart of liberation that the mind now broadens its interests and engages fruitfully new dimensions of life. This is shown by the rapid unfolding of interest in values and culture, in minorities and women, and in freedom. The result is the unique yet convergent exercise of existence by individuals and across the globe. This calls now for the development of aesthetic capabilities to integrate the new appreciation of the whole as constituted progressively by the persons and peoples of the entire globe.