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Persons, Peoples and Cultures: Living Together in a Global Age

by
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Introduction

We venture into the new millennium at a point of great change. If we turn in retrospect to the development of modern times, we see a period marked by scientific reason. Whether it be the countryside green with scientifically engineered crops, the cities supporting and coordinating the lives and activities of millions, or the universities leading an educational effort to train up a new generation of leaders—all reflect an intensive and transforming engagement of rational understanding and rationalized action or practice. Modern times rightly have been called "The Age of Reason."

There are, however, inherent dangers in attempting to apply rationality beyond its proper sphere. These appear from the history of philosophy, where philosophers are seen to achieve brilliant new breakthroughs, only to turn them to destruction by attempting to reduce all understanding to the new insight. Thus, Marx's renewed awareness of matter engendered a reductive materialism, while Hegel's brilliant insights regarding the spirit engendered a reductive idealism. Perhaps the ultimate temptation is to turn reason itself from a manner of opening to all—or in Aristotle's terms even of "becoming all things"—into a mode of closure, soon followed by suppression. Liberal democracy is thereby transformed into democratic imperialism.

Roots of this perverse dynamism can be traced to no less central a philosopher than Plato, who transformed Parmenides' correspondence between being and thought into a tailoring of reality to intellect. This invited the human mind to soar, but where it met its human limits—not only with respect to transcendent ideas, but more concretely in taking account of concrete realities and the exercise of human freedom—it generated a classic blueprint for a suppressive communal state.

The temptation of all-controlling reason is characteristic above all of modern times as dominated by Descartes' requirements of clarity and distinctness for human reason. The effect in his own philosophy was to split the human person between the extended substance or body and the nonextended substance or spirit. The natural next step would seem to have been the reunion of these in the unity of the human person; but, much as he tried, he could not do this in the clear and distinct terms he himself required of reason. As philosophers, and then whole cultures, moved ahead according to either body or spirit, their work polarized between the nominalist Anglo-Saxon atomism of discrete sensations and the ever greater continental unities perceived by the spirit. It often is rightly said that the English channel is the broadest sea in the philosophical atlas.

What is particularly frightening is the way in which the penchant upon each of these separated isolates proceeded by a fairly mechanical pattern of reason to translate philosophical hypotheses into public policy. It is fine for a thinker to employ game theory and give free range to the constructive possibilities of his or her mind by saying, e.g., "*let's suppose that* all are isolated singles in search of survival" and then see what this entails and what rules will make survival possible. But when this was done by a Hobbes people began to look at themselves as wolves to others and then to act according to some variation of that theme as with the Straussian preemptive doctrine at the beginning of this new millennium.

Over time it is possible to become accustomed to such a game and forget the nature of the instincts by which it is played. All the more reason to listen when colonial peoples throughout the World—in 1777 for the US, in the last half of the 20th century for colonial Africa, and in the 21st century for Islam and the marginalized peoples—condemn the resulting system, and by implication its philosophical bases, as predatory, brutish and mean.

Similarly, it could be helpful for a thinker to hypothesize that all is matter and then attempt to see theoretically how its laws could shed light on the process of human history. But when this was done by Marx, Lenin and Stalin proceeded aggressively to attack the life of the spirit and to term irrational everything except scientific historicism. The freedom of individuals and peoples was suppressed, and creativity died. By the 1970s and 1980s—not to mention the programs of the 1930s—the philosophical laboratory of historical practice reported the anguished cries of peoples under the reductionist character of this philosophy.

Finally, John Rawls supposed that a public square reduced by secularism is a neutral (rather than neutering) terrain for free participation. This has now been turned into an imperial campaign to impose upon all civilizations the fundamentalist secular theology that has based liberal theory since its military imposition at Westphalia. At the beginning of the 21st century when this sets out to "democratise" Islamic and other civilizations in a campaign so similar to that of Marxism in the 20th century one has the terrible sense of Huntington's global clash in the making.

All of these are parallel cases of theoretical rationalist axioms become metaphysical totalisms. It is not surprising that the result for half of the 20th century was a bipolar world armed to the hilt and subsisting by a reign of mutual terror between the opposing camps of the liberal democratic republics of the self-styled free world and the people's democratic republics.

What is surprising—indeed unsettling—is that the internal collapse of the communist partners in the deadly cold war should give credence to the notions: that the parallel road taken by the "liberal" partner can be followed now without fear; that the wolf has been transformed into a lamb for lack of a mirror in which to observe the effects of their common philosophical DNA; that the mercantile capitalism which suppressed peoples in colonial times will be less inhumane if practiced now on a global scale; and even more, that it is the obligation of the secular liberalisms to impose this upon all others.

In view of the above analysis it is most urgent to look for the positive resources found in the emergent awareness of the person and of the personal. The history of humankind in the 20th century could fairly well be described as the abutment of this rich notion of person, and hence of peoples, against the impoverished rationalistic individualisms and communalisms as they existed in the first part of the XXth century. From the overthrow of an oppressive Fascism, to liberation from colonialism, to increased self-awareness of minorities, to the collapse of totalitarian Communism, the history of the major accomplishments of the last century has been constituted by a series of campaigns of liberation in the name of the dignity of persons and peoples.

Entering upon the new millennium, when the end of modernity and entrance upon what as yet can be termed only "post-modern" is generally recognized, it would seem essential no longer to continue to play the same modern game and with the same reductionist rationalist tools. That promises only to leave the real opportunities unaddressed or even to resurrect or recreate old problems. Instead we need to heal the above reductionisms, reunite the divided person and thence heal the divisions between peoples in order to be able to live the new opportunities of the global age.

For these we will need to search for the full range of being as manifested, not only in the abstract simplicity of reason, but in the new unity of persons and peoples in their concrete complexity and richness, for it is in these terms that freedom operates, social life is built, and history is created. One needs to interpret more circumspectively the proper realm of scientific and technical reason upon which modern times have focused, in order to reap its fruits without being subjected to it, body and soul. Finally, one needs to be able to learn from all dimensions of human life, especially those of family, community and nation—with their dimensions of education,

productivity, commerce and religion—in which humankind has long interpersonal experience. These must be given their proper place and role in order to evolve the more rich and open philosophy required for authentic physical and spiritual progress in our times.

As we proceed into the new millennium there are then reasons to rejoice and reasons to fear. Unfortunately, the two may be so intimately related that it is impossible simply to jettison the latter and proceed with the former. Instead, it would appear that there is urgent need for work in philosophy to achieve the progress in understanding needed for an era that will be truly new. The process might be that of a dialectic, understood not in the Hegelian sense of continued progress, but in that of Tillich which sees the mounting catastrophes which force us to the very borders of life as enabling Being to unveil itself at new levels and in new ways. This suggests not that metaphysics alone can confront, much less solve, the issues of our times, but that such issues make possible more profound metaphysical reflection and that this reflection is an integral part of the free human response to the challenges of our times.

Now new and equally threatening challenges open for the future. We have found that authentic liberation is not merely a matter of establishing new economic systems—though that cannot be low on the long list of things to be done. Such systems must be made into means of freedom, rather than of enslavement. More directly, there is the task of living freedom, that is, of understanding and unfolding new senses of personal and cultural identities. The challenge in this new century is to find ways to promote cultural identity and to interrelate it with that of other peoples in a new fusion of strengths, rather than of destructive confrontation.

In this search Part I will attempt to diagnose the contemporary problematic and look for new foundations for a response. Chapter I will analyse in greater detail the purposes, confines and authentic capabilities of modern thought at the origins of both sides of the cold war. If the broad collapse of the communist experiment in Eastern Europe at the end of the 20th century has focused hopes for progress upon the liberal market and polity, it is important to look critically into the Enlightenment underpinnings these shared with communism in order to identify their underlying limitations. This will be done with a view to building, in subsequent chapters, upon the authentic strengths of the Enlightenment, healing its weaknesses and integrating its missing dimensions as part of the effort at a more integral and balanced reconstruction of the sense of person for the twenty-first century.

Chapter II will review the nature of the sciences taken first as formal structures and then as modes of uncovering the existential sense of being and personal life.

On this basis Part II will proceed to a reconstruction of the person. Its chapters will be ordered and even grounded in the classical metaphysical trilogy of the Hindu *Vedanta*: existence (*sat*), consciousness (*sit*) and bliss (*ananda*). Thus Chapter III on existence will take us from person as role to person as subject existing in its own right; Chapter IV on consciousness will take the step from objectivity to subjectivity as the conscious life of the person; and Chapter V on bliss will move from mere choice to the creative freedom in which the person actively seeks his or her happiness and fulfilment.

Part III will attempt to situate this in the broader modes of human sensibility with which, through the ages, each people has generated its culture, and through which, in turn, it has interpreted its world. This will attempt to understand the emerging notion of person which has mobilized the great dynamism required for the immense projects of liberation and humanization that have generated the changes in the last half century.

Chapter VI will examine how creative freedom moves beyond simply satisfying interests to creating a culture and civilization. It will examine how a metaphysical foundation can enable us

to save our cultural resources from being destroyed in a clash of civilizations and engage them instead in establishing global peace. This will attend to the dimension of affectivity in order to surpass the levelling effect of rationalisms and relate as complementary the differences of genders and of peoples. This must surpass conflict to build up the unity of family and community.

Chapter VII carries the search further to the recently emergent awareness of cultural identities and civilizations, and of the way in which they are constituted by the creative exercise of human freedom. This presents the special dilemma of our times. For as constituted by, and of, our freedom cultures must be unique of their very essence. One cannot reduce this uniqueness in order to achieve unity. How then can they be related and even converge, not despite, but by the very nature of their difference. This leads us to the notions of participation and especially of analogy, and to their renewal and extension.

Finally, in Chapter VIII through a phenomenology of gift we shall look to a deeper source and richer mode of being as the self-existent consciousness and bliss which gives of self in love.

In sum spiritual culture today faces a special challenge and opportunity. It confronts an aggressive secular interpretation of life according to which ancient wisdoms appear as retrogressive and hence must be removed in the name of progress. To do so, however, would be to remove the heart and soul of a people and leave them without the personal resources with which to build a proper and humane future. This challenges ancient wisdoms to speak to new times, to breath life into the technical concepts and structures of modern life, and to enable all peoples to advance on the strength of their visions of life and of meaning as valuable and valued partners in the project of humankind in this new millennium.

Hence, the chapters look at the new recognition of human subjectivity, especially its aesthetic dimension, in order to integrate the sciences, both physical and human, into a richer sense of human life. The aim will be to listen with other persons and peoples to the Spirit as the voice of Being. This entails economic and political action, but must go beyond manipulating and being manipulated in terms of interests, whether individual or group. The goal is rather to promote the human dignity of persons and peoples, mutual respect and cooperation in the works of peace required for a global age.

Chapter I

Person and the Challenge of Modernity: From Rationalism to Depersonalization

Introduction

In order for major changes to challenge and guide human efforts rather than be simple happenings in people's lives, it is important that they be marked by awareness and decision that open the way for new and meaningful life. This must include a rich sense of the nature and dignity of the human person and some sense of the goal and purpose of the human endeavor.

Descartes became the Father of Modern Western Philosophy by providing a new approach for this in his *Discourse on Method*.¹ Pointing to the relative advantages of a unified construction, whether of a building, a city or a constitution. He sought to construct a more adequate pattern of knowledge and a more secure mode of life by developing a broad unified science in which each element would have the clarity and certainty of mathematics. To this end he placed whole dimensions of knowledge under doubt in order ultimately to secure certainty. This echoed Bacon's call for the removal of the idols in order to be able to observe truthfully and reason effectively.²

But what survived the test of clear and distinct knowledge was but a skeleton of the human person. Indeed its parts could never be fully reassembled for Descartes had divided the person into two mutually distinct substances: the physical which was extension and quantity, and the spirit which was not extended but simple. Bacon, too, dismantled the rich pattern of life in community, smashing the idols which bore in symbols the accumulated body of human wisdom which constitutes the culture in which a person grows with others, past and present.

In assessing our situation centuries later, we wonder about the overall effects of such an approach and begin to speak of a "post modern" period. We benefit from the many technological and even social inventions in communication and human rights: they need to be protected. But we worry that the quality of human life seems seriously to be reduced, e.g., by criminality, social disintegration, communal violence—and imperial adventures.

Hence, rather than the Cartesian method of setting a single norm and proceeding to an arbitrage of human life, another method seems needed. This will need to reflect different goals, namely, not only that of the systematic control characteristic of the sciences, but of the openness and integration typical of wisdom. It will be marked by different attitudes as well, namely, not of exclusion and hegemony in the name of abstract univocal categories, but of a rich inclusiveness respectful of the uniqueness and differences of all peoples.

Enlightenment Restrictions on the Understanding of Person

We shall begin here with an examination of the development of the modern spirit in the "Enlightenment" of the 17th and 18th centuries in search of the restrictions this placed upon human vision. This will be done with the positive intent of seeing how what was omitted then might now be reintroduced. This is a matter not simply of repeating the past, but of becoming newly aware of additional dimensions of human life and meaning, and thereby of countering the dehumanization of life in our times. This is suggested by the Heideggerian notion of "retrieval" of what had been present in the past, but had not been chosen for development. In contrast to an arithmetic incremental progression along well worn paths, this "step back" to as yet undeveloped dimensions

of the person can enable progress that is geometric. By opening deeper and richer dimensions of human life and of being new life can be infused into human hearts and into the institutions which have been the mighty achievements of modern times.

In order to prepare the search for ways of new life, we shall look first more to the negative side of modernity, enlightenment and liberalism. By identifying what they chose to leave out we hope to open avenues for later new and promising development. In Chapter III, for example, we shall return in more heuristic manner to Descartes to discover the positive richness and potential in his thought which for centuries has been largely ignored.

Though long a common cultural term, "modern" is a philosophical term. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,³ first published in 1967, had no such entry. In 1984, Philibost Secretan thematized the notion in his "Elements for a Theory of Modernity."⁴ Thereafter a broad parallel literature developed almost simultaneously on both modernity and postmodernity. As is often the case, we appreciate things only in their passing. In philosophy, this reflects the difficulty of identifying with surety the characteristics of the age in which one is immersed; these become clear only when an age is questioned or enters into crisis.

The Replacement of Goals by Means and of Purpose by Power

This suggests that we turn to the notion of Enlightenment, especially in its earlier roots in the 17th century in such thinkers as Hobbes, Locke and Descartes. It is striking that this group immediately divides in two when one attends to their fields of interest. Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Leibnitz and Newton wrote on physics, but did little on moral or political philosophy. In contrast, Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau seem focused upon political philosophy and did not argue to the moral or political on the basis of scientific discoveries. From this Richard Kennington⁵ concludes that the road to the Enlightenment for moral philosophy does not pass through natural philosophy. This, of course, does not preclude the subsequent dominance of the physical science model even in the human sciences, but it may help us to avoid the common, but too simple, transfer of changes in physical models into changes in social self-understanding. This is an important correction to the earlier obtrusive claims of several theories to be inexorable objective scientific truth, rather than social constructs for which we are responsible and which it remains our responsibility to shape in a humane manner. Indeed, this may be the very center of human responsibility in our times when the role of man begins to be recognized even in the elaboration of physical theory. We shall then examine these two currents of Enlightenment thought, tracing that in which they agree as well as that which is proper to the social model.

What appears common and fundamental to both sets of Enlightenment thinkers is their abandonment of teleology or final causality in nature, including human nature. For Machiavelli this was a license for reducing the project of Plato from the perfection of the soul to cynical manipulation: it was the choice of Creon, as supposedly being more realistic, over Antigone. The rejection of finality is highly praised by John Dewey for whom the key to human emancipation is the reduction of all to the status of indifferent material in human hands and at the arbitrary disposition of human ingenuity.⁶ The identity and meaning of things depend entirely on how they are engaged in the human project, whose end is set by human choice. If there is a guiding ideal it is "progress," but in Dewey this is self-defined in a circular manner as the constitution of those conditions which in turn promotes progress itself more possible. As progress for its own sake leads nowhere and is for nothing, life becomes ever more frenetic and unfulfilling.

Further if there is no goal there is no good open to human reason. In this case, reason no longer rules the will, its passions and desires. Instead, by supreme irony reason, no matter how highly it be exalted, becomes in the end the tool or instrument of blind and unsatiable forces.

Thus far, however, one might think of the human will as basically benevolent and dedicated at least to progress. Upon further analysis this proves not to be so. This is not only because, having abandoned teleology, scientific knowledge is not able to tell us about the good to be desired: Hobbes does not argue from science. To the contrary, standing astride the headwaters of this current of the Enlightenment he restricts his attention to ordinary human experience, which in turn manifests no sense of a highest good, but is concerned only with a changeable search for securing limited goods. In these terms human reason cannot claim to know the good for man; it can know only, as Hume would subsequently make clear, the various contraries which are manifest to the senses.

But if passion rules reason, on what then are our passions based? They are subject to the riotous panoply of contrasting attractions, but are guided by no supreme good. Inexorably, however, they confront as their nemesis the supreme evil, of death. Many readings of the Enlightenment, such as Dewey's contrast of the Ancient and modern, root the difference in the change from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican system of the universe.⁷ Though the importance of this should not be underestimated, it suggests only a reordering of relationships. The deeper revolution is that the world is no longer a realm of peace, the court of a loving God, in which people's freedom is ruled by their self-determined search for fulfilment in the good. Instead it becomes a mad flight from evil; as nonviolence is replaced by Hobbesian violence, and friendship by envy and enmity. One would not choose to live there; indeed, life there is no life at all.

In this light nature is perceived as a hostile aggressor upon man; one's basic right to life is threatened. Consequently, all action, natural and human, must be shaped toward dominating a hostile environment, both physical and social: man becomes wolf to man; conflict and competition reign. Pentagon planners at the beginning of the 21st century would find their philosophy in Leo Strauss⁸ who echoes Moses Maimonides's position that there must be two philosophies. The false one is exoteric and for the masses; it proceeds with Socrates in terms of justice and the good. The true philosophy is esoteric; it proceeds in terms of suppression, violence and fear as the only way to control the masses. This must be kept hidden. Rule is by deception and instilling fear as said Thrasymachus and Creon of old.

In sum then, as there can be no talk of ends, attention is focussed exclusively and insatiably upon the means, which basically is power that is acquired in violent competition with others. As a quantitative notion this has no standard within itself, but calls only and continually for increment—today reflected in what is called "consumerism". In the competition for means there can then be no peace; social, commercial and political life all become fields of war "by another name."

The Replacement of Metaphysics by Method

The history of the Enlightenment has been long and differentiated, replete with adjustments and adaptations. To a deductive system such adjustments would appear to be compromises, but in the enlightenment model they are a natural part of the learning process. A major step in this was the development of an epistemology by John Locke. This too was not a conclusion from scientific discovery, though Locke knew the new scientists at Oxford and took part in their discussions. What was more decisive for him, however, was his work for the Earl of Shaftsbury and the political milieu of London. The discussions there, organized by Locke, seemed always to come to the same impasse: how can one be sure of the position one advances? The issue was not merely speculative.

Society as a whole was moving from the period in which all decisions were made by the monarch, to one in which the people in their multiple groupings were beginning to assume responsibility for state decision-making. Their concerns, interpretations and proposals needed to be able to be examined by all concerned. This problem in Locke's seminar at the Earl of Shaftsbury's residence mirrored that of the country as a whole: A democratic parliamentary system requires the ability to communicate what is in one's mind and heart and in public affairs this must be restricted to what can be evaluated together with others. It was the nominalist parallel to Descartes restriction of all to what was clear and distinct; it would appear later in John Rawls' relegation of all else—all cosmic and religious vision—behind a veil of ignorance.

In this context Locke developed what he referred to as a "short paper," which over the years evolved into his two volume *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*,⁹ where the original short paper seems to have survived as the first pages of book II, "Of Ideas in General, and Their Original". There he proposed his "historical plain method" which seems amazingly simple and clear. The first step is to remove all prior ideas—a ground-clearing process in the grand Enlightenment manner. Then one examines the way in which ideas come to be inscribed, as it were, upon the mind as on a blank tablet. Only two classes of ideas are recognized. The first is ideas coming from the senses, the experience of which supposedly can be repeated by all others persons. The second is the process of reflection in which these and only these ideas are variously combined and interrelated.

Here the supposition is that if this history of ideas can be made clear, then the value of each idea can be ascertained. Thus, one must hold rigorously to the origin of ideas through the senses, as these experiences can be replicated by others. Further, the process of manipulating ideas must add no new content. Hence, all thought will be open for inspection by all. The subsequent development of Lockes' text elaborated the ways ideas could be variously combined and set the whole in the context of language. On this basis the final part of his *Essay* is able to delineate the extent and nature of knowledge.

His exchange with Bishop Stillingfleet, who objected to the loss of any real knowledge of substance in such a pattern, suggest that Locke was not fully aware of the drastic limitations this placed upon the mind. Indeed, it took some steps, first by Berkeley and then Hume, before the notion of substance, and hence of being and metaphysics as a whole, would be rejected entirely. The radical implications of this for the present have been articulated in a consistent manner by Carnap in the "Vienna Manifesto".¹⁰ Only that which is available to the senses or able to be traced back to perception thereby is to be considered valid scientific knowledge. Thus the political requirements of collaboration between scholars become the characteristics of the scientific endeavor. The unified science which Descartes sought to elaborate is no longer his rationally elaborate unity of natures, but the process itself of collaboration between scientists. The endeavor itself and its method supplants its object in importance. From the above it becomes manifest that the development of the Enlightenment, both in its Hobbesian content with regard to the nature of man and his social dynamics and to its Lockean epistemology, was an inversion of human outlook.

In the 18th century this epistemology had great impact on the European continent—to such a degree, in fact, that historians have compared it to the spread of Roman Law in ancient times. The Encyclopedists were rather propagandists than original thinkers, but the political lead up to the French Revolution needed simple and clear positions which could provide strong and broad impetus for the replacement of all things old with a new vision and practice. This spirit of the times buoyed up the human commitment to "the rights of man" in the face of the regime and the

corresponding commitment of the masses to shaping by reason not only the exercise of political power, but the sense of the human person itself.

Problems of Person in Modern Liberalism

Today, however, there is a growing consensus that modernity, as founded in the 17th century, realized in the revolutions of the 18th century, and proclaimed in more recent liberalism, may not be sufficient to promote or even allow for the further deepening of the self awareness of the human person. For an explanation of why this is so, Max Scheler's¹¹ critique of liberalism provides a list of particulars, namely, its rationalist formalism, individualism, and absence of purpose. An examination of these should help in diagnosing the contemporary pathology which must be addressed by attempts to develop a more adequate vision for the new millennium.

Rationalism: Reason without Life

Among the most salient—and presently the most critical—aspects of the Enlightenment is its central characteristic and strength, namely, its development of, and dependence upon, reason. Its goal is control of reality through control of ideas. However, the more it succeeds in this goal the more it isolates itself from the highly integrated and complex character of life as physical and spiritual, from truth as goal of intellect and from the good as goal of the will, and from reason and affectivity, individual and social.

In its rigorous Kantian form rationalism would eschew the concrete facts as too chaotic, the psychological aspects of utility as too unstable, and traditional ethical principles as too heteronomous to be worthy of human autonomy. Instead, it would look to reason itself for formal rules of action and political cooperation common to all persons. This would mitigate the radical individualism of those proceeding on the basis of empirical knowledge; indeed, the test and proof of the validity of the norm and the corresponding political practice would be precisely their degree of universality.

But there is the rub, for universality at the cost of separating reason from concrete actuality, is idealized out of time and space. It is forgotten that reason is part of man and undergoes change in the dynamic developmental humans process of interaction with other persons and things. Further, while will depends on knowledge, we have a perception of values which precedes clear concepts and deductions, takes us out of indifference and situates our reasoning processes within an ongoing process of taking interest, evaluating and, at its highest point, being in love.

Formalism: Person without Personality

The formalism inherent in liberalism derives from its conception of the social order as a set of external *quid pro quo* contracts between its members. In the positivist tradition this consists in a certain calculus of desires in which what counts is not persons and their values but the method of calculation, or "due process" in the legal order. Where individualism is strong, this becomes a tool used by atomic individuals in pursuit of their discrete ends at the expense of society and its welfare. Where the social is strong the balance shifts so that the formal pattern becomes supreme; persons, their freedom and creativity in the social order are ignored or even crushed so that the social goals can be more freely pursued.

Classically, Kant attempted to protect the person in this context by his formulas for treating the other as oneself and all persons as ends in themselves. But the very universality which assures that such formal factors apply equally and identically to all bespeaks their essential limitation. The "X" which is to be treated as an end in itself is applicable identically to all humankind; its meaning is identical in each case. But this means that what is particular about each—their proper identity and history, their hopes and concerns, their freedom and creativity—are not taken into account. The concrete person, along with his or her free and hence unique affirmation of meaning and importance is lost. There can be an affirmation of universal rights, and certainly no one would want less; but in this context, the culture created by a particular people through generations and even millennia of shared suffering and generous commitment comes to be looked upon as a remnant from the past to be at best tolerated, but progressively disparaged and discouraged as an impediment to the emergence of the new and supposedly more purely formal democratic order. Formalism becomes the enemy of the concrete, of the existential freedom of persons and peoples.

Motivation: Progress without Purpose

Liberalism fails adequately to explain its key notion of progress upon which it centers when it appeals to either need or utility. Need can be seen as a stimulus to actions undertaken to escape or lessen present evil, e.g., death for Hobbes or anarchy for Spinoza. Life is looked upon rather pessimistically and action is a process of ameliorating its deficiencies. But logically, because these needs develop in history they could not at the same time be principles for its explanation. As concrete needs arise spontaneously and randomly, the responses thereto are aimless and accidental; they could not explain positive progress over time. Rather, positive advance requires a surplus of time, of means and of vision free from the constraints of needs and necessities.

The other liberal approach to motivation is utility. But as individuals are particular, their utility does not take account of the commonweal. Hence it is unable to provide the motivation needed for social cohesion and true progress.

Individualism: Person without Society

The new stress on the individual emerges in contrast to the prior state of affairs where interpersonal relations were duties and reflected one's place in society. In contrast, for liberalism rights pertain to a person independently of society and prior to one's participation therein. Relations to others are secondary and society is reduced to a fabric of individual interests woven according to patterns of similarity and dissimilarity, convergence and contrast, in the form of explicit contracts or traditional usage.

Scheler would recognize levels of sociality as parallel developmental stages in the growth of the person, as well as stages in historical social development. This begins in the tribe in which the individual is completely submerged as an appendix to the community. In liberalism the situation is quite reversed. Society and other persons become objects and means for the individual and his or her ends. The bitter fruit of this is that conversely the individual becomes but an object in the eyes of others. Both authentic personhood and true sociality are lacking.

Hence, liberalism bears three main errors regarding the individual. First, the individual is seen as prior to the society, whereas in fact the person emerges from society. Second, by so stressing the action of simply parallel autonomous individuals as constituting the community all subjectivity is denied to others and to the community, and in the end to the individual him- or herself. Finally,

individualism itself becomes unworkable for it is in the community that one discovers oneself. To be isolated is in the end to lose real individuality and personhood and to be reduced to an abstraction.

Post Modernism Against Foundationalism

Thus far we have reviewed the problems of the Enlightenment and of modern philosophy. It seems clear that with the Third Millennium we enter now upon a new age. This enables us to develop philosophical sensibilities and insights which are new and advance the understanding of the person. Indeed the present work attempts principally to elaborate in what this human subjectivity consists.

Thus we will be interested in the ways the human mind has been able to enrich the rationalism and objectivism of modernity with a further sense of the self consciousness of the human person as subject. This indeed, along with its flowering in the new 21st century awareness of culture, constitutes the special burden of this book.

However, it would seem best to include among the critiques of the notion of person to which this chapter is devoted the recent radical critique even of philosophy itself, by what thusfar can be termed only "post-modernism".

Professor Liu Fangtong in his work *China's Contemporary Philosophical Turn* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004) has an exceptional chapter on "Post-modernism and the Orientation of Contemporary Philosophy" in which he begins by situating postmodernism in relation to earlier philosophy. Taking modern philosophy as beginning roughly from Descartes, Locke and the 16th century, he identifies one set of reactions which begin in the mid 19th century and consisted in efforts to overcome the preceding reductionist intellectualism and rationalism, with its focus upon object rather than subject, matter rather than spirit, body rather than mind, and fact rather than value which this entailed.

This effort to reintegrate the person by recognizing subjectivity as well as objectivity was early signified by Pascal and Vico, but gathered vigor with Nietzsche and Kierkegaard and emerged in full strength in the early 20th century with Blondel, Bergson, Wittgenstein and the phenomenologists, Husserl and Heidegger.

But in the late 20th century there was another yet more radical reaction against modernity and even against the attention to subjectivity. It opposed all notions of substance, self and person as the foundational points for philosophy. Especially, it turned strongly against any metaphysical basis for philosophy and against philosophy's inherent tendency to see itself precisely as the search for such a point of reference. Indeed, this had been central to philosophy, since Socrates' and Plato's elaboration of the theory of values and ideas in order to draw society out of chaos and provide some coordinating and guiding principles. More recently, especially in reaction against the programs and holocausts of the 20th century totalitarianisms, there has been an effort to suspect all principled stances, reducing them to the suspect motivation of a commercial search for profit and a political search for power. All was met with the question of "to whose advantage," as if there could not be principles for human welfare as a whole.

The effect has been a radical affirmation of will without reason and of individual without society. This has finally come to its natural extreme in the rejection of the very notion of the individual substance, self or person. The affirmation of the power to do whatever is willed has finally become so radical as to reject the very identity of the agent as a subject in terms of which action might have some norms, guides and responsibility. In order to assure that one can do

whatever one wants, the step is taken to saying that one can be whatever one wants. There is then no individual identity or person, but only a flow without cohesion or direction.

Liu Fangtong sees Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) as paradigmatic. This rejects philosophy as a general theory of representation in which the human mind is considered as a mirror reflecting external things, for that supposes an opposition between mind and matter, subject and object. This, of course, is just what Aristotle and his followers up through Aquinas were most anxious to reject in saying that the essence of knowledge consisted in the subject not mirroring, but becoming the object. Mind cannot be a mirror of reality for if it is only a representation then its truth could be secured only through another act of knowledge as a representation, and so forth *ad infinitum*. When Rorty came to see that this could not work he would seem to have drawn the wrong conclusion. Rather than seeing the need to go back to Aristotle's original sense of knowledge as unity. His nominalist Anglo-Saxon culture rooted in multiplicity led him to a radical philosophical *auto da fe*, that is, to reject the very possibility of knowledge and hence of philosophy. Henceforth Rorty's goal would become to destroy the reader's trust in mind as something of which one could have a philosophical view, in knowledge as something with a certain theory and concrete foundation, and in philosophy as practiced since Kant.

Liu Fangtong cites five problems with these broad critiques of foundationalism in late modern and post-modern philosophy:

1. *A new foundationalism*. One paradox was that, in attempting to overcome what they saw as the foundationalism of modern philosophy, Nietzsche, Bergson and Bradley, as well as the analytic philosophy of Russell and the phenomenology of Husserl set up their own foundations. Such would seem to be Nietzsche's "will", Bradley's "mind," the analyst's "language," the phenomenologists "consciousness" and Heidegger's "being".

2. *The death of man*. Post-modern philosophy, in objecting to modern philosophy being too centered upon man, made the crisis of man more central. Thus Foucault responded to Nietzsche's death of God with the death of man, which became the "noncenter" for Foucault or the "non presence" for Derrida. Man may still exist, but not as a self or subject contrasted to object, or even not as a center or essence with aims, ideals, duties to society, or political and ethical responsibilities. If wonder is the source of philosophy, then there is in man truly a center of wonderment.

3. *A functional non rationalism of multiple truths*. A tendency to the extreme appears also in the postmodern attempt to overcome modern rationalism not only by a contemporary substantive or foundational non-rationalism of Nietzsche's will to power or Schopenhauer's subconscious, but by a more radical functional non rationalism dissolving the reliability of any method of knowing so that all becomes unstable, indeterminable, incommensurable and even anarchistic. For Derrida truth as "for me" and "about me" becomes simply plural, thereby rendering communication and cooperation impossible.

4. *Rules as games*. To this end Lyotard employs Wittgenstein's "language game theory" so that not only are the rules reduced to being mere pacts between the participants, but the participants need not even abide by them. Even science this becomes a mode of free thinking. Thus Derrida's deconstruction so alters and reinterprets the original relation between concepts that the rules of the game themselves become the game. Arbitrariness is the new foundation of life.

5. *The end of philosophy itself*. In the end therefore the postmodern exits philosophy itself, turning to literature and other imaginative and aesthetic modes. As a result, for Rorty there is no

criterion to tell when we are contacting reality or truth. Philosophers only compare the advantages and disadvantages of the great narratives; they can tell only how the ways in which things get to be related are themselves related. There is no philosophy; its great project since Socrates and Plato to enable humanity to direct and enable its life is abandoned. In the words of Dante etched on the Bridge of Sighs "abandon all hope ye who enter here".

It would be wrong to miss the positive elements involved in the post modern effort. Indeed the present work begins with a chapter on the limitations of modernity, to which post modernism adds related criticism, e.g., of the excessive rationalism and objectivism. In this sense it joins our project of opening the way for the appreciation and exercise of new dimensions of the human person. But as itself a radical fundamentalism postmodernism would seem to overshoot this mark and winds up in rejecting, rather than reconstructing or perfecting, philosophy itself.

21st Century Imperial Democracy

It would be inadequate, however, to think of this vision of the person as simply abstract and inactive in practical and political life, for if the sense of the human person is inadequate then social interaction cannot but be impoverished. This is not all, however, for as we have seen this impoverishment of the modern project is methodological; it is intended and systemic. Hence, it can be expected to tailor human concerns, to set up walls of exclusion and to restrict human discourse and interaction between persons and peoples.

The impact of this can be seen by juxtaposing elements in the thought of Jurgen Habermas and John Rawls. After a long peregrination Habermas worked the implications of the replacement of metaphysics by method into his theory of communication ethics. If we could not know the nature of the human person or develop a categorical imperative, ethics could still be salvaged on a purely formal and methodological basis. This would be done by assuring that all persons could take part in practical discourse. No person, no view, would be excluded or disadvantaged. All could enter and play any role, from proponent to questioner: all hinges on complete openness.

When however, one turns to the *Political Liberalism* of John Rawls we find that this very principle of universal inclusion is rejected and indeed exclusion becomes the first principle of political discourse. Rawls codified a principle which most trace to the peace of Westphalia that ended the religious wars. Augsburg had not established religious freedom, for it bound the religion of the people to that of the ruler. Westphalia provided for a separation of religion from the public forum, of Church from state, of the sacred from the secular. In Rawls this appears as the condition for public discourse, namely, that all integrating, cosmic and religious visions be relegated behind a "veil of ignorance" so that public debate is framed in exclusively secular terms.¹² Its origin in the ending of the Religious Wars gives this separation much more than theoretical weight. It bears the visceral weight of its alternative, namely, the devastating religious wars of the 19 century. It is a matter of ultimate concern for it presents itself as the basic grasp of societies on life itself. Hence it is closed to any discussion, the immovable principle of all liberal reasoning was imposed by arms and remains unquestionable out of fear.

All constitutional and legal structures are then to be so articulated and interpreted as to assure that the process of public debate and decision making exclude religion and become reductively secular. It is true that in this forum each person can draw upon any and all sources for their personal inspiration and guidance, but what emerges as public policy must be intentionally and assiduously areligious, both in articulation and in practice.

Though some would consider such an horizon to be neutral to all religions, as a process of exclusion of religion from public life and policy it is in reality neutering for it renders cosmic visions no longer cosmic. Indeed, Rawls recognizes that this should have the effect of diminishing religious fervor, and sociological research in the West would seem to confirm this. The more it is pursued the more it excludes religion and religious meaning in public symbolism, political practice and the educational formation of the next generation. It constitutes, in sum, an integrated and aggressive project of forgetfulness of God beyond question or discussion—a secular fundamentalism or black hole in public life.

Liberalism has come to mean that the mind of man could range freely, but over a decidedly limited terrain. It means free speech, but not about ultimate human concerns. In 1993 in his now famous article, "The Clash of Civilizations,"¹³ and three years later in his *The Clash of Civilization and the Remaking of World Order*,¹⁴ Samuel P. Huntington warned that this so called 'liberal' world was about to encounter opposition and should expect to be defeated. His reasons lie in a number of convergent factors:

1. The end of modernity is marked by, and even consists in, the end of an exclusive confidence in the competency of the scientific search for clear and distinct objective knowledge to provide the answers to human problems.

2. The end of this confidence entails, in turn, new attention to human subjectivity and to the creative freedom of each people by which they elaborate a set of values that over time coalesce as cultural traditions. These traditions, in turn, together constitute civilizations as the largest human affiliations, "the largest we".

3. Civilizations engage sets of cultures and, in turn, are founded in the major religions. Following this lead we find that cultures and cultural traditions are sets of values and virtues formed by the decisions of communities of people regarding how to cultivate their life in their geographical and historical circumstances. Thus where some people put a primacy on harmony and develop a pattern of virtues by which this can be realized, others might focus upon courage or initiative, whence distinct cultures result.

What is important for us is that this is an act of responsible freedom which, in turn, shapes the many more specific decisions in the life of a people. Over time this is adjusted and adapted as the culture is passed on, or *tradita*, as a cultural tradition. This is rightly identified as the cumulative freedom of a people.

4. Going higher to the principles from which this vision flows and in which it is embedded, each civilization is based on a great religion; conversely, each great religion founds a distinct civilization (with the exception of Buddhism, which Huntington takes pains to explain). And this religious commitment of non Western civilizations is emergent, rather than recessive. For the cultural traditions and the religions in which they are grounded and consecrated provide the grounding needed in unsettled and changing times.

5. These cultural traditions constitute the very purchase that peoples have on a properly human life, that is, one that is lived with dignity and self respect for themselves and their children. This sense of personal and social identity receives more, not less, attention at points of great change. When attacked it will be defended at all costs. In this it matches the liberal terror at the suggestion of any compromise separation of Church and State, the path to which had been opened in the Peace of Westphalia at the end of the Thirty Years of Religious War in 1648.

We find ourselves then in a clash of two civilizations, as massive, all-inclusive and inexorable as the shifting of tectonic plates. On the one hand, there is the liberal tradition which sees the removal of all cosmic, metaphysical and religious vision from the public square as the sole strategy which can enable peoples to live together in peace. On the other hand, there is the broad sense among the other world civilizations that such a mental lobotomy would be the destruction of human meaning and dignity – the mega threat. Nothing could be more threatening to each civilization, more contradictory between two, or more strenuously resisted by all.

In this light the present transition beyond modernity finds itself at the intersection of two fundamentalisms: on the one hand, a secular fundamentalism that is a forgetfulness of God, which, in contradiction to Habermas, Rawls formulates into a principle of liberalism, and on the other hand, a reactive religious fundamentalism that consists in a forgetfulness of man. Huntington's analysis of the latter's reaction to the global assertion of secular liberal democracy is precisely his sense of an impending clash of civilizations, which he sees as an attack on Western liberalism. But what even he seems not to have envisaged—though it may be a consequence of his analysis—is the aggressive character of Western liberal free-market democracy, when inspired by its own fundamentalism. Rather than a defensive military posture with aggressive diplomacy, it has reversed the order to a preemptive military strategy to force conversion of the world to its secular ideology. That ideology is the more fundamental issue seems indicated by the unveiling of "regime change" and democratisation as the real goal once the issue of "weapons of mass destruction" evaporated and by the willingness to squander the world's resources and the lives of tens of thousands of people in the vain attempt to fight ideas with guns. There must be a better way!

In sum, we have diagnosed the modern Enlightenment program in order not to repeat it and return to the past, and to see what it has not provided in order to go in search of what is needed. The identification of what has been left undeveloped or deliberately suppressed makes it possible to identify the work now needed.

We found:

means without goals
power without purpose
method without metaphysics
reason without life
person without personality
people without society
man without God.

As a result liberal democracy has fallen into a self-contradictory imperial attitude searching for hegemony after the pattern of the other failed ideological empires of the last century: colonialism, fascism and communism.

The missing elements in the above list cluster around the sense of person in its existence and commitments, personal, social and religious. Hence, we shall first look back to Greek philosophy to chart out the dimensions of knowledge required by the person and to medieval Christian and Islamic philosophy for the sense of existence it entails. Subsequent chapters will see how the notion of person can be rearticulated and enriched following the Hindu characteristics of existence, consciousness and bliss (which in the West have been articulated in less dynamically and more formally as unity, truth and goodness) and then add the more recent dimensions of culture and love.

Notes

- 1 R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, eds. E. Haldane and G.R. Ross (Cambridge: at the University Press, 1969).
- 2 Francis Bacon, *Novum Organon, de Sapientia Veterum* (New York: 1960).
- 3 *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967).
- 4 *Diogenes*, 126 (1984), 71-90.
- 5 "Enlightenment and Natural Rights" in N. Chavchavadze, P. Peachey, and G. Nodia, *National Identity as an Issue of Knowledge and Morality* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994).
- 6 *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon, 1957). See also William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Washington Square, 1963).
- 7 Dewey, *ibid.*
- 8 Leo Strauss, *What is Political Philosophy* (Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), ch. 9, "On a Forgotten Kind of Writing"; "Persecution and the Art of Writing," *Ethics* (1959).
- 9 John Locke, *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Dover, 1959), Book II, ch. I, vol. I, 121-124.
- 10 Rudolf Carnap, *Vienna Manifesto* (with trans. Hahn and Otto Newrath, *Wissenschaftlicher Weltanffassung: Der Wiener Kreis [Vienna Manifesto]*), trans. Albert E. Blumberg in *Perspectives on Reality*, e.g., J. Mann and G. Kregche (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1966), pp. 483-493.
- 11 Max Sheler, *Problems of Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. M. Frings (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980).
- 12 John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).
- 13 Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* (Summer, 1993), pp. 22-49.
- 14 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

Chapter II

Metaphysical Foundations for the Person: From Shadows to the Light of Wisdom

In order to begin the work of restoring the notion of person two things seem needed. Leads to these may be found in the past, but have been left unattended in modern times. The first is an ordering of human knowledge which frees one from choosing one of its modes against the others. Such choices achieve ideological unity and clarity, but at the cost of the richness of multi-levelled human experience. Plato had attempted to respond to this need in his simile of the divided line which he exemplified by his allegory of the cave. Here we would like to follow the well-known process of his analysis of the experience of the prisoner freed from bondage in the cave where only shadows can be perceived.

From this we will proceed to a second need, namely, for metaphysical awareness of existence as contributed by medieval Christian and Islamic thought and interiorized by the Vedantic philosophies of India.

With these two insights into knowledge and being it will become possible to reexamine in detail the more generally ignored experience of those who had been prisoners but, after being liberated and able to see the light at the mouth of the cave, had returned to the active life of the cave. Their return is no longer a matter of mere stages of thought, but of existential engagement, for the light at the mouth of the cave is the source of being and meaning. Its light penetrates the darkness to give new life and hope. This is the true power of being and of the modes of participation in being that are open to us.

Plato's Cave I: The Ascent as a Delineation of the Sciences

In his *Republic*, Plato confronted a problem similar to that of modernization. Things were not well. That the state had killed its wisest thinker, Socrates, as too dangerous to the new generation suggested a perverse desire for blindness. Teaching was being left to the Sophists whose approach was exemplified by the character of Creon in Sophocles' *Antigone*. There could be no truth, for every statement could turn dialectically into its opposite; no principles, for the mind was tied to changeable sense experiences after the fashion of Hobbes; and no standards of ethics, for public life was a Machiavellian exercise in managing the crowd.

In contrast, Plato undertook to design a project of education or enlightenment which would form a generation of leaders who could direct a state in which the human spirit could flourish. This was not a short range project; he did not envisaged merely a method or a handbook of techniques for managing people. Rather, his plan was an educational model to reopen the mind to all levels of meaning. Thus, his *Republic* serves as a checklist for the dimensions of the spirit. It presents an overall view in two media: the simile of the divided line and the prisoner freed from bondage in the cave.

I should like to refer to this commonplace for its heuristic value, not only in distinguishing levels of knowledge, but especially in identifying how the progressive development of understanding might contribute to a more proper development of life at all levels. For this the return to the cave will be especially important, for this concerns how the transforming divine light illumines human issues and enlivens our daily struggles.¹

Through the simile of the divided line (*Rep.* 509d-511e) and the Allegory of the Cave (*Rep.* 514a-521b) Plato deftly distinguishes the levels of knowledge; in the allegory of the cave he provides the imagination with a way of ascending these levels. The line is divided into two unequal parts, one represents the sense level, the other represents the intellectual level; when each is again subdivided unequally the result is four unequal levels. In the allegory of the cave there is again an unequal fourfold division. First persons are chained facing the inner wall and are able to perceive only the shadows reflected on the wall. Behind them is a raised partition, on the other side of which people are carrying placards; at the mouth of the cave there is light from a fire or the sun. The content of knowledge at the lower stages are the images or reflections shed by the fire formed according to the shapes of the placards.

The *first level* of awareness which Plato terms "imagination" (*eikasia*) may be seen as the affective order of sense and feeling corresponding to reflections, e.g., of trees cast upon the water of a canal, or to the shadows cast upon the wall by the placards and the fire.

In the *second level* of awareness represented by the second section of the line the concrete individual realities (placards/trees) which Plato terms "belief" (*pistis*) are directly perceived or intuited. They are but limited expressions of the natures they express. Thus the perception of a concrete tree at any moment expresses but part of what this tree is and will become, and this tree in turn is but one expression of the possible ways in which the nature of tree can be realized. Similarly, in the allegory of the cave when a prisoner is freed from his chains and turns to perceive a square placard raised above the wall he senses but one concrete individual realization form or shape.

In the *third level* of awareness which Plato terms "thought" (*dianoia*) and represents as passing beyond the partition in the allegory of the cave, the prisoner moves from the sensible to the intelligible order. There he not only perceives concrete physical patterns, but understands the nature of the square shape and can appreciate how squares can be variously combined to generate triangular, rectangular, and pentagonal figures—indeed, the whole science of geometry. The simile of the line identifies the key step in the development of such a science, namely, generating hypotheses on the basis of which the entire content of the science can be deduced (e.g., that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points as the initial hypothesis for Euclidian geometry). The content of such sciences being deduced from hypotheses is essentially and always hypothetical. This is the realm of ideas or forms, of the different ways in which being can be; it is that of the categories which Kant identifies as the conditions of possibility for the universal and necessary knowledge that constitutes the sciences.

In this third stage of knowledge one could only unfold more and more possibilities, descending from unity to multiplicity. One may, however, employ the hypotheses not as first principles for deductive awareness, but conversely as points of departure for moving to the *fourth level* of knowledge, to the necessary (rather than hypothetical) principle of the whole. This might be compared to Descartes' step when he reflects that in doubting he certainly is thinking and being. Thus, that there be such a thing as an hypothesis – of whatever content – there must be a distinction between being and its negation. For were it possible that to affirm an hypothesis is the same as to deny it (if to say that X equals Y is the same as to say that X does not equal Y) then no statement of whatsoever kind is possible. In the allegory of the cave, this is to ascend to the mouth of the cave, to the fire or the sun as the source of light without which no shadows of any shape would be shed, nor would there be any meaning to form if all is undifferentiable darkness and obscurity. This level of knowledge Plato terms "understanding" (*noesis*).

Plato's model of line/cave has become classic because it deftly both distinguishes and relates the levels of sensation and intellectual knowledge. These, in turn, can be subdivided so as to take account, on the one hand, of affectivity at level one, of perception of shapes at level two, and, on the other hand, on level three of the categorical sciences of natures and on level four of the metaphysics of being.

But if the fourth stage of the line (or, in terms of the allegory of the cave, the light at the mouth of the cave) is knowledge of reality itself of which all the rest are types of expressions, then the insight of Plato can be essentially and immeasurably enriched to the degree that this fourth stage can be appreciated. This can be approached from two directions: East and West. The Indian tradition of *moksha-marga* and *yoga* can be immensely helpful, and can be helped, in turn, by the Western development of phenomenology in this century. In the West the philosophy of existence developed in early Christian and medieval philosophy speaks most directly to this issue and is particularly relevant to our times.

Hence, before following Plato back into the cave to see what this direct awareness of the source of light at the mouth of the cave contributes upon return to life at each level we shall try to assemble what has been discovered about the source of light by the various traditions East and West, ancient and modern. Then and in its light will we return to the cave in order to see how metaphysical insight illumines all. Part II will apply this to the notion of person and Part III will unfold the implications of both Part I and Part III through examining the notion of culture.

Christian Philosophy of Existence

Beyond Form and Matter, beyond Nama Rupa. For Plato reality was form or idea and the stages of the line/cave represented the levels of ideas acquired. In the more active philosophy of Aristotle these ideas or forms were also the forms of matter. Hence the Greek focus remained on the forms or kinds of being.

Development in the understanding of being required transcending this Greek horizon within which being had meant simply to be of a certain differentiated type or kind. This meaning was transformed through the achievement of an explicit awareness of the act of existence (*esse*) in terms of which being could be appreciated directly 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 existed. 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. It was, he explained, the light from the One which, having been progressively attenuated as it emanated ever further from its source, finally had turned into darkness.² This answer obviously is not very satisfactory, but whence came this new sensitivity to reality which enabled him even to raise such a question?

It is known that shortly prior to Plotinus the Christian Church Fathers had this awareness. They explicitly opposed the Greeks' simple supposition of matter; they affirmed that, like form, matter too needed to be explained and traced the origin of both form and matter to the Pantocrator.³ In doing this they extended to matter the general principle of *Genesis*, that all was

dependent upon the One who created heaven and earth, the Spirit who breathed upon the waters. In doing this two insights appear to have been significant.

Beyond the Trinity to Human Freedom. 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.

This required that in the life of the Trinity his procession from the Father be understood to be in a unity of 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. This could not be in a unity of nature for it resulted, not in a coequal divine Person, but in creatures radically dependent for their being. But to push the question beyond simply the nature or kind of being is to open directly the issue of the reality of beings, and hence not only of their form, but of their very existence as well. This is to ask not only how things are of this or that kind, but how they exist at all, rather than not exist. This constituted an evolution in the awareness of being, of what it means to be real, for it was no longer simply the compossibility of two forms, which Aristotle had taken as a sufficient response to the scientific question "whether it existed". Instead, to be real means to exist or to stand in some relation thereto.

By the same stroke, our self-awareness and will were deepened dramatically. They no longer were restricted to focusing upon choices between various external objects and life styles. This was the common but superficial contemporary meaning of what Adler terms a circumstantial freedom of self-realization. Nor was it even Kant's choosing as one ought, after the manner of an acquired freedom of self-perfection. Both of these remain within the context of being as nature or essence. The freedom opened by the conscious assumption and affirmation of one's own existence was rather a natural freedom of self-determination with responsibility for one's very being.⁴

Paul Tillich follows the progression of this deepening awareness of being by reflecting upon the experience of being totally absorbed in the particularities of one's job, business, farm or studies—the prices, the colors, the chemicals—and then encountering an imminent danger of death, the loss of a loved one or the birth of a child. At the moment of death, as at the moment of birth, the entire atmosphere and range of preoccupations in a hospital room shifts dramatically. Suddenly they are transformed from tactical adjustments for limited objectives to confronting existence, whether in sorrow or in joy, in terms that plunge one to the center of the entire range of meaning. Such was the effect upon philosophy when human awareness expanded and deepened, from concern merely with this or that *kind* of reality, to the act of existence in contrast to non-existence; and hence to human life in all its dimensions, and, indeed, to God Himself.

The Philosophical Impact of Redemption: Radical Freedom. Cornelio Fabro goes further. He suggests that this deepened metaphysical sense of being in the early Christian ages not only opened the possibility for a deeper sense of freedom, but itself was catalyzed by the new sense of freedom proclaimed in the religious message.

I say "catalyzed", not "deduced," which would be the way of science rather than of culture. Where science looks for principles from which conclusions are deduced of necessity, a culture is a creative work of freedom. A religious message inspires and invites; it provides a new vantage point from which all can be reinspected and rethought; its effects are pervasive and enduring. This was the case with the Christian *kerygma*.

That message focused not upon Plato's imagery of the sun at the mouth of the cave from which external enlightenment might be derived, but upon the eternal Word or *Logos*, the Son, who entered the cave unto death so that all might rise to new existence.

In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him: and without him was made nothing that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

...

That was the true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into this world.⁵

But this was more than light to the mind. Christ's resurrection was also a freeing of the soul from sin and death. Cornelio Fabro suggests that it was precisely reflection upon one's free response to the divine redemptive invitation that was key to the development of the awareness of being as existence. The radically total and unconditioned character of this invitation and response goes beyond any limited facet of one's reality, and/or any particular consideration according to time, occupation or the like. It is rather the direct self-affirmation of one's total actuality. Its sacramental symbol is not one of transformation or improvement; it is not a matter merely of reformation. Instead, it is resurrection from the waters of death to radically new life. This directs the mind beyond any generic, specific or even individual form to the unique reality that I am as a self for whom to live is freely to exercise or dispose of my very act of existence. This opened a new awareness of being as that existence by which beings stand outside of nothing ("ex-sto")—and not merely to some minimum extent, but to the full extent of their actuality. Fabro calls this an intensive notion of being.

This power of being bursting into time through Creator, Redeemer and Prophet:

- directs the mind beyond the ideological poles of species and individual interests, and beyond issues of place or time as limited categories or sequences;
- centers, instead, upon the unique reality of the person as a participant in the creative power of God—a being bursting into existence, which is and cannot be denied;
- rejects being considered in any sense as nonbeing, or being treated as anything less than its full reality;
- is a self, or in Iqbal's term an 'ego', affirming its own unique actuality and irreducible to any specific group identity; and
- is an image of God for whom life is sacred and sanctifying, a child of God for whom to be is freely to dispose of the power of new life in brotherhood with all humankind.

It took a long time for the implications of this new appreciation of existence and its meaning to germinate and to find its proper philosophic articulation. Over a period of many centuries the term 'form' was used to express both kind or nature and the new sense of being as existence. As the distinction between the two was gradually clarified, however, proper terminology arose in which that by which a being is of this or that kind came to be expressed by the term 'essence,' while the act of existence by which a being simply is was expressed by 'existence' (*esse*).⁶ The relation between the two was under intensive, genial discussion by the Islamic philosophers when their Greek tradition in philosophy was abrogated at the time of al-Ghazali.⁷

This question was resolved soon thereafter in the work of Thomas Aquinas through a "real distinction" between existence and essence as principles of being. This rendered most intimate the relation of these two principles, related as act and potency respectively. Essence was simply that by which the being is what it is, while *esse* is that by which the being simply is or exists. This supported a new and uniquely active sense of being.

This is not to say that al-Ghazali was wrong a century earlier to oppose Averroes and Greek metaphysics or that Islam was wrong in choosing the side of al-Ghazali in that dispute; Aquinas also had to overcome the Latin Averroists in the course of his intellectual battles in Paris. But Iqbal's intuition of the need to proceed in terms of being as active suggests the importance of this medieval juncture in the history of thought. For with Thomas' renewed sense of being as existence, rather than as merely form, the Christian metaphysical tradition went on to develop a systematic philosophy with the technical tools needed for understanding human life in this world. It accompanied, reflected, deepened and enabled the dramatically new dimension of human life which the Middle Ages added to antiquity.

An Existential Metaphysics. In order that the mind not be subject to the closures later imposed by the modern mentality it is important to follow Aristotle's example in developing a set of studies rightly termed metaphysics. This was not only about the spiritual but about all reality, both physical and non physical. How could such an inclusive science be developed? To do so for this expanded sense of life and its meaning Thomas Aquinas had to go beyond Aristotelian categorial abstraction the process of selective omission by which the other sciences had been initiated. For the mind to be all inclusive as is being he turned instead to the act of judgement which proceeds not in terms of contrasting, and hence limited, kinds of being or essences, but in terms of existence which of itself is unlimited and one.

As seen above, based on insights of the Christian Fathers, existence had emerged in philosophy during the Middle Ages. To initiate metaphysics as a distinctive science Thomas now employed a negative judgment.⁹ It is essential to note the character of this negation, for what it removed was not, as with Bacon and Descartes, positive content in any order of reality. Rather, it removed any limitation of the mind in relation to being of whatever kind. It did not reject definitively the essentially limited sense data, images or intellectual conceptualisations, but only the implication that human vision could, or should, be limited totally thereto.

This is not a ground clearing exercise presumptuously rejecting the vision and human sensitivity on which humble beauty and great civilizations have been built. Nor does it remove any part of the "brain" by which we think, of the "lungs" by which the Spirit breaths in us, or of the "heart" by which we love. That would be to engineer a robot or automation – which may be more effective, but only for a life so drastically reduced as to be inhuman.

Rather, with sensitivity and discrimination, Thomas' negative judgement negates only what limits or negates further awareness of existence. It does this, not by rejecting any limited reality, but only by pointing out that this is not all of reality and hence cannot be the meaning of reality or of being as such.

Today as we move beyond modernity we turn, not surprisingly, to those existential factors of human life which Descartes' clear and distinct ideas were calculated to omit, namely, to civility and self control, to non-violence and respect for the feelings and dignity of others, in a word, to love and hence to the existential dimension central to the metaphysics of the human person and to the quality of life. As objectivity is enriched by subjectivity, values and culture become central philosophical issues. At the center of this development stands the human person, no longer in

isolation as individual, but as freely engaged with other peoples and civilizations in a global context.

Hindu Awareness of the Divine Depth of Being and Phenomenological Consciousness

As Augustine noted, the essential character of transcendence is not spatial but spiritual. While it can be pictured as an extrinsic journey to a far off place as in Bonaventure's *Intinerarium Mentis* and in the later sections of the *Vedanta Sutras*.

More truly it echoes the *neti neti* of the Vedas by which as limited beings we approach the unlimited character of the divine through a double negative. This removes only the limitations, while affirming the radical openness of mind before the truth in which all things echo the Brahman as consciousness, and while attracting the heart in loving adoration of the Brahman as bliss in which is grounded joy without limit. The life of philosophy in these terms is then not a tool for domination, but a key for liberation unlocking the divine mystery at the heart of all.

Essentially it is an entering via one's subjectivity to the sources of one's limited selfhood in the absolute and infinite fullness of being, that is, the Self. In this journey the limitations and contrasts of the senses and even of contrary natures fall away and we enter the realm of consciousness or self-witness, echoing Aristotle's *noesis noeseos* (knowing on knowing).

Here lies the experience of absolute freedom; indeed, this is freedom. It is, of course, accompanied by a certain ecstasy, but if taken only as a transport of the senses it is not the object of the journey, but its echo or image. Rather, the goal or *telos* that directs all is Existence itself, which is not only fullness of consciousness and thus not only blissful, but is consciousness and bliss itself.

In this one does not proceed from one to the other, for then one could not reach the plenitude of the infinite; rather as limitations fall away one finds one's self as conscious of being, indeed of fundamentally unlimited Selfhood. This is the full realization of personhood and the root of the human person or self. Here we find the echo of Aquinas's more technical role of the negative judgement in removing the limitations in order that the mind be open to limitless being or Being Itself. Aquinas's concern was with establishing being as the subject of a metaphysics truly open to reality as such and hence to all of reality. This would be implemented spiritually through all the ascetical and mystical practices of prayer and meditation.

The Wisdom of Sankhya—the Vision of the Eternal

In vedantin metaphysics especially the *advaitan* or non dual insight of Shankara all this is united so that what is encountered is not merely truth but lived consciousness, not only the good but bliss.

In this light Yoga is above all a system of release from the limitations of the empirical and a coordination of human capabilities in an attitude of balance and harmony. In the state of *Samadhi* one is both self-centered and compassionate, manifesting that one has transcended the ego as contrasted to others and entered upon the true sense of self as open consciousness or existence.

In the *Bhagavad Gita*¹⁰ the direct response of Krishna to Arjuna in his dilemma is the message of *Karma Yoga*. *Yoga* means yoke or placing under control; *Karma* means action in the broad sense of deeds, sacrifices, duties and prayer. Hence, the nature of *Karma Yoga* is to act or to carry out one's duties without looking for the fruit of one's action, either immediately here in

this life or even afterwards in a higher life with God (II 47). To focus upon the results of one's action is to be subject to self-interest, to things or to results that we can accomplish. If instead one can proceed to doing one's duty then one can act with complete equanimity, equilibrium or balance of mind. This is a path between, on the one hand, activism in this life or even in making sacrifices to obtain goods in the next world and, on the other hand, non-action, passivity or even rejection of all life activities in favor of contemplation. Hence, Krishna advises not renunciation of action, but renunciation in action.

But on what basis should one follow this path (II,1-38)? The basis must be not merely the way I feel, or the way I look upon things, but the way things really are. This is the path of the eternal, on which is based the path of wisdom, the vision of the eternal and freedom from bondage. Here the method is to move from my multiple states of experience and feeling (hot and cold, pleasure and pain) which are transient (II,1) to my self as that which continues through all these states and is their basis, to move from the many subjective states to the one self who experiences them (14-15). But then Krishna directs Arjuna to go higher still, to rise to the absolute Self (16-18) above even one's own self. This he relativises as a seen between the two unseens (28) which precede and follow after this life. Like Descartes, this is the search for what really is. The absolute or Brahman is described as *sat* or existence that is one, *cit* or consciousness, and *ananda* or bliss. These are the character of the absolute, of divine life; hence it is also the essence of our true life as deriving therefrom and directed thereto.

Existence (*sat*) is stated in terms of predurance and unity. It continues the first step noted above as being from the transient to the permanent; it identifies as goal that which is not of limited duration. Where the individual self was a limited "seen between two unseens"(28), this is definitive in existence. The real never is not; it is immortal and eternal, beyond time and destruction. As with Xenophanes the One is never changing or moving, but is ever one (16-19, 24, 30).

Consciousness (*cit*) is seen as the one source of all meaning. The whole process has been one of consciousness, from feeling the varied states of hot and cold, pleasure and pain, to the self. This appears here especially as justice or the ability to make the right judgement in terms of one's duty or of doing what is right (31). It is honor as greater than death (33-26). Such right judgement is based on wisdom (39) which is the vision of the eternal. Ultimately, it is founded in the all knowing Spirit or Self-like Xenophanes' God who knows all and moves all by His mind.

Bliss (*ananda*) is the ultimate Source and Goal of all. All comes from God who shows joy in sharing, indeed whose essence, as in Greek myth, is to share rather than to hide or inhibit. The ultimate aim of all then is joy in God or divine life (55); a good life gives peace on earth and glory in heaven (37).

In this broad light the particulars of life are ignored only if taken all by themselves and made into absolutes. This is particularly true of the ego or self, if taken as opposed to all others. This would make the ego an end in itself and reduce life to simply a matter of achieving particular pleasures. When, however, particular actions and persons are seen in and through the One they take on great importance as manifestations of the Brahman, i.e., of existence, consciousness and bliss. Only in these terms are they truly real, just and good. Hence, the point is not to achieve some goal, but to exist or live in a way that is true and just; only this is really meaningful. Only acting in a way that is good, i.e. as a dynamic expression of joy, does one really exist; the rest is illusion.

What then of action which—concretely for Arjuna—is to enter into battle. The response is direct: do your duty (31-33), that is, do what is true, just and righteous. Not to do so is dishonor; and seen in terms of God and eternal life dishonor is worse than death (33-36). In sum, when to battle is

one's duty, then that is what one must do. It is the moral quality of the action that is important, not its outcome, for victory is glory on earth, in death is glory in heaven (37-38).

The metaphysics presented thus far has great ethical implications. The first half of this second chapter of the *Gita* distinguishes three levels of life: first, that of the various sensations such as hot and cold, pleasure and pain; second that of the individual human self; and third that of the absolute Self or Brahma.

Considering things on the first level there is only an interplay of physiological states, of the senses and of behavior. There is no question of honor: indeed, honor is pretense when taken in terms of Creon in the *Antigone*. But that is to isolate these realities from their real foundations.

On the second level, that of the individual self or *atman*, people are seen only in terms of time and place; hence they are taken as egos opposed one to the other. To be united they must be seen in terms of reality which transcends this level.

The highest or third level (corresponding to the fourth level of Plato's allegory of the cave) is what was spoken of in the totem and myth; here it is Brahman or the absolute at the third level of reality and of awareness. This is existence; it is consciousness, truth and justice; and it is bliss or joy and love as dynamic gift. The first two levels must be seen to originate from this third, which they express; only in as much as they do so do they really exist and become matters of truth and goodness.

Evil in contrast, as was seen in the Greek myths, is suppression of this emergence from the real, from truth and goodness and hence a negation of justice and goodness. It is dishonor on earth and hell thereafter (34).

After a life lived in truth, however, death is simply the termination of the time sequence. It is negation not of reality, but only of the unreal, that is, of the self as opposed to others. Death then is affirmation of reality (37).

On this basis the text proceeds in its second part to provide particular ethical directions on how to live *karma yoga* (39-72):

- avoid thinking only of this life or state (II 42-44); these are delusions in comparison to the eternal or if thought of without the eternal (52);
- what is important is to achieve wisdom, i.e., to see all according to the eternal, which entails bringing all things together into a unity or harmony (61-66);
- this is done by 're-collection', that is, by recalling the senses from the particulars (59-61); and hence
- they are truly one who practice *karma yoga* (47-49).

"This is the eternal in man, O Arguna. Reaching him all delusion is gone. Even in the last hour of this life upon earth, man can reach the Nirvana of Brahman—man can find peace in the peace of his God" (72).

Phenomenology as Consciousness of Being

In this there is a seeming danger, for it may turn the attention of humankind away from the concrete structures of the world as perceived on level two of Plato's allegory. This would leave a burgeoning population to wander bewildered, to err catastrophically, and to destroy unawares the patrimony of the natural universe required as context and support of human life. At the same time, we must avoid wandering into a choice between, on the one hand, transcendent meaning without

support for physical life in our journey through time and, on the other hand, a journey with neither meaning nor destiny—which would be no journey at all.

In this dilemma the work of the phenomenologists¹¹ can be helpful. Like Kant, Edmund Husserl began his work looking for a method for science. This took him not into a search for an increasing quantity of data, but rather into consciousness and hence toward Descartes' ego and cogito at the third or eidetic level, that of essences. Husserl struggled mightily to untangle this search from the merely psychological. But even if he did not fully succeed in this, his effort makes abundantly clear that what he pointed to was not merely the internal mechanics of consciousness in a Freudian sense, but the structures of consciousness revealed therein. This was needed in principle in order that the work of the sciences be intelligible, but it remained oriented to the empirical world. It concerned the level of essences or the natures of beings, rather than of Being or existence as lived.

To work out this active, existential reality of consciousness as life and being was the contribution of Heidegger. In the earlier part of his work (the so-called "early Heidegger"), his perspective was essentially that of time. Thus, his *Being and Time* focused upon the human being (*dasein*) as the point of emergence of being into time. After that work the focus of the so-called later Heidegger appears to have shifted, not so as to lose sight of the *dasein*, but to look at it from the perspective of Being which emerges through the *dasein*. At this point our usual conceptual apparatus falters, for it had been developed for the world of multiple realities, differentiated by names and forms which are contrasted and hence external one to another. In this regard negative terminology begins to play an essential role. The process of bracketing the categories of the mind begun by Husserl in his eidetic phenomenological reductions is now extended to all language, not because there is no reality, but because all our attempts to express it inevitably reflect our limited mode of being. Hence, as with Thomas' negative judgment at the initiation of metaphysics and the *via negativa* at its culmination, what is being negated is limitation in order that our mind be able to unfold to the full the unlimited character of consciousness.

Modern consciousness in the Lockean branch of the Enlightenment had disdainfully rejected the sense of life based upon inner awareness and upon the Absolute in favor of restricting all to the empirical and temporal. Now, in the phenomenological search for its own roots, human consciousness in a new way returns to the ancient insight that reality ultimately is self-conscious.

This would appear to rejoin the Indian insight that consciousness is not merely a matter of perceiving some other or objective reality; but rather is itself the quintessential manner of being. As Descartes appreciated, most fundamentally within our doubting is thinking, which, yet more fundamentally, is being which ultimately is God. Hence, in opening to absolute or unlimited consciousness our self is united to the Absolute Self in a union which is not between two beings, but an entrance into the depth of being or a transparent rediscovery of one's self in the Self or in Being itself. Here, the language and logic designed for the world of multiplicity no longer functions; the union is rather essentially unfathomable and of the character of limitless self-consciousness. We experience our own genesis and that of our consciousness in a mystical union which is a transforming and beatifying bliss. Tagore describes it as suddenly finding one's home after wandering in a blinding fog. It has nothing to do with a labored empirical reconstruction of an object or a tentative tasting of some new food to see if I like it. Rather, upon rediscovering what I am, self assurance, faith, hope and the joy of being pours out.

Plato's Cave II: The Descent as the Metaphysical Enrichment of the Life of the Person

By reviewing the insights of the Christian uncovering of the sense of being as Existence; the unfolding of this by the Hindu tradition regarding the Brahman as existence, consciousness and bliss; and the new access to this through the interior method of phenomenology, the initial insight of Plato regarding the fourth level of the line/cave has been vastly enriched.

Fourth level. Plato's description of reality as known at the highest stage of the line and as the source of light in his allegory of the cave¹² corresponds to the more abstract transcendental properties of being unity, truth and goodness. It is vastly enriched when related to the Christian, and eventually Islamic, sense of being as existence and to the characteristics of the Brahman as existence, consciousness and bliss in Hindu Philosophy.

First, it is *existence* itself, the single source of all which gives the seasons and years. Second, it is *truth* as openness to mind or consciousness for it is both the light of the visible world and the source of all reason and truth in the intelligible world. This implies as well that it is the principle of justice or of all things right. Third, it is *good* as corresponding to will for it is worth giving up all for; it is the basis of all good acts both public and private; and it is the power to be watched as norm and guide for whoever would act in public and private. Finally, it is *beautiful* and the author of all things beautiful. Hence it can be expected that proceeding in these terms a reexamination of life in time will reveal a vastly enriched sense of the person.

In this richly intensified light it is possible now to appreciate the great contribution of this awareness of being to the various aspects of the life of persons returning to the various levels of the cave. It is significant that Plato continues by noting that those who arrive at the source of light would not want to return to the cave. Why, they argue, would I go back to interpreting shadows when I already understand their principles or sources and all their possibilities and meanings. This suggests that their perspective was not adequately liberated, for it still has a sense of ego as opposed to others. Hence he continues, they were educated not for their own good but for the good of the state; and therefore it is just that they be forced to return in order to serve the commonweal. From this it would seem that his perspective remains inadequate before the full objective of *moksha* as liberation and of the *buddhi satva* ideal of returning to serve humankind where no element of force enters or is needed.

The Indian view of consciousness as bliss and the Christian sense of love are most central here. In the Vedanta Sutras it is the fullness of bliss, not need or external force, which leads to the unfolding ("we are one; let us be many") that constitutes the beginning of a new cycle of creation or of manifoldness and informs its every stage. In the Christian view appreciation of the plenitude and self-sufficiency of the divine means that creation cannot be the result of some need or some utility which returns to the divine source, but rather a pure sense of transcendence, that is, of expressing, manifesting or giving. This is the deepest insight regarding the nature of being. Together with the other characteristics of the source it provides the deepest insight regarding the reality of the effect.

Thus, as one descends in reverse order the stages of the line or the phases of the allegory of the cave each of the forms of knowledge takes on new and transforming meaning. Not only will one be inspired to reenter the world with the same spirit with which it was originated, but once accustomed to its circumstances one "will see 10,000 times better", for one will understand the true origin, nature and purpose of all therein.

Third level. In the process of ascent, on the third level the sciences were represented solely in themselves; they were simply hypothetical and without definite truth, meaning or purpose. In the

process of descent or return into the cave, however, as enriched by the fourth or metaphysical level of knowledge, nature or essences can be appreciated in their being with existential reference. Ideas and principles are not only bases for hypothetical insights which may have symmetry but not reality; instead they are transformed into ways of existing – real truth, goodness and beauty. They are ways of unfolding the divine life and sharing in it.

For our days this has special importance because the search for liberation seems to have taken a reductionist turn. After the experience of oppressive totalitarian regimes, in order to eliminate the possibility of their return it is a matter of great concern for some that no recourse be left to any absolute point of reference. This extends through the practical order of ethical principles and to the speculative order as well. All principles are taken as restrictive and are to be rejected in favor of a simple amassing of empirical data which are then to be managed according to the unguided whimsy of changeable human interests.

This seriously misinterprets Aristotle's intent. Some claim that in Aristotle the original sense of *arché* as beginning or inception was extended as shaping or dominating all that is derived therefrom, for it is in the context of the search for physical principles and causes that the sense of *arché* evolved. This is extended later to the order of natures and essences under the term "principle".¹³

But this is to read the whole in terms simply of the material cause – as the quantity of the bricks determines in the sense of limiting or restricting the height to which such a building can be constructed. In the Indian and Christian tradition – and indeed for the Greeks in the order of final cause – the origin is rather in being and love which is an outpouring, a sharing, a giving. This is not dominance and suppression, but communication and enlivening.

In the order of descent from the one to the many or of return into the cave in Plato's imagery, this is particularly important. In the process of ascent in which it was the various sciences which were being articulated or understood and the various natures which were being discovered, the extent of the possibilities were those of variously combining such natures. In the process of descent, in contrast, all transpires in view of the infinity, and hence infinite possibilities, of existence. Far from being limited to working out the possibilities of a closed order (such as that of physics or biology) the mind is pushed further to seeing how all these possibilities can be part of unfolding life that is rich in the meaning that goes beyond any one and of an order that is reflected in all of them.

With the light of the Indian insight concerning the nature of being in the descent into the cave they are no longer simply human hypotheses concocted for human purposes, but are modes of unveiling and expressing the divine life as consciousness and logos, and as bliss and life-giving.

Thus they express ways in which beings, whether human or merely physical in nature, express divine life. To have meaning and value according to such natures is not to be restricted from the good, but only to avoid what would negate their full expression of divine life according to their nature. Again the basic meaning of these principles is manifest as a double negation revealing thereby the splendor of limited reality as reflecting absolute power and beauty in limited ways. For example, an ethical principle which excludes lying is not a limitation of human action, but a guide for its more adequately sharing in, and expressing conscious life. The same can be said with regard to the physical order of the valence tables in chemistry and the laws of motion in physics. Similarly, to be held to recognizing and providing for the full dignity of human persons in all applications of engineering, medicine, and politics is not to limit these fields of activities, but to assure that the person's true being as image of God is promoted in all human action and that these sciences reach their full existential meaning.¹⁴

Second Level

In this light too when one comes down to the *second level* of the line or cave one is opened to the full meaning of the concrete sensible realities encountered. Gestures then are not mere facts, but expressions of ultimate truth and respect; eating is not a mere restoration of energy, but an entrance into the world as expressing divine life; a forest is not merely a physical resource whose meaning can be reduced to an economic equivalent, but ways in which the existence of the divine can be affirmed in time and space, the beauty of the absolute can be proclaimed, and human life ennobled. Where pragmatism would want to reduce all things to raw material at the disposition of arbitrary human purposes,¹⁵ against the backdrop of metaphysics a fuller sense of human purposes emerges transcending calculable utility and based on participation in transcending bliss.

First Level. Finally, arriving at the first level of the line or cave, that is, to the reflections or shadows, we come to the affective life. This is our response to what is (level 4), according to its limited and specific nature (level 3), and as realized concretely (level 2). In this sense, emotions, rather than being blind as cut off from reference to objects beyond themselves, are our deep, affective, and even passionate responses to the Absolute and to all its expressions in our social and physical universe. This is a reflection of divine bliss in a turbulent world which we engage with passionate anguish and which we enjoy with pure delight.

Descartes set out on a great project, namely, to join the clarity of mind newly available in the mathematical sciences to the rich sense of life grounded in the religious vision of our culture and traditions. He was able to sketch out three stages of doubt, not unrelated to the divisions in the models of line and cave in Plato. The experience of modern times suggests that if these stages are left unconnected they can be powerful yet destructive, articulate yet empty. The above reflection suggests that Descartes' grounding of his universal science in the existence of the divine in *Meditation III* should be seen, not as an external defence against skepticism or a subterfuge for a Promethean human intellect, but rather as a vast enrichment of the sense of truth, of knowledge and of being. This could be the *sensus plenior* of Shankara: not to ignore the finite realities of the life we live, but to see them in their divine and unconditioned depth in which persons have dignity that is absolute and power is a commission to care. This can both strengthen human resolve and orient its application. In Part II we shall seek out how the phenomenological method and the content of a metaphysical and religious tradition can provide an essential completion to the enlightenment project of Descartes, restore the sense of human dignity and equip humankind for the task ahead.

Notes

1 Plato, *Republic*, VI-VII 509d-521b.

2 Plotinus, *Enneads*, II 5(25), ch. v.

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

4 Mortimer Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conception of Freedom* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958), I, 609.

5 John I:1-5, 8.

6 Cornelio Fabro, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Torino: Societa Ed. Internazionale, 1950), pp. 75-122.

7 Al-Ghazali, *Deliverance from Error and Mystical Union with the Almighty: al-Munqidh min al-Dalal* trans. M. Abulaylah, ed. G.F. McLean (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2001).

8 M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy and Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989)

9 Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, trans. Arnaud Maurer (Toronto: PIMS, 1953), q. 5-6.

10 The Bhagavad Gita, trans., Juan Mascaro (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1962).

11 See Chapter IV below.

12 *Republic* VII, 516-517, especially 517c.

13 M. Heidegger, "On the Being and Conception of *Physis* In Aristotle's *Physics*," in *Man and World* (1976), 227.

14 See *The Humanization of Technology* (Washington, D.C.: The Council For Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998).

15 John Dewey, *Reconstruction of Philosophy* (Boston: Beacon, 1957).

Chapter III

Person as Existence: From Role to Subject

In the last half century, the war against Fascism, the process of decolonialization, new attention to the rights of minorities and women, and, finally, the social changes throughout the world at the end of the 1980s, all had as their common motivating force the renewed emergence of a sense of the dignity of the person. Hence, it is important to look closely at the different dimensions of the notion of person. As these are progressively ignored or taken into account our horizons for social change shrink or expand and the possibilities for a more rich harmony recede or advance.

Here, the intent is not to choose one dimension of the person against others, but to review them, in order to see how each makes possible a specific level of self-understanding and social relations, and points, in turn, to still other dimensions. In particular, we shall review our heritages for answers to three crucial questions about the person as the subject of a moral life and moral education.

(a) Is the person only a set of roles constituted entirely in function of a structure or system in which one plays a particular part? If so, one could not refuse to do whatever the system demanded or tolerated. Or is the person a subject in his or her own right, with proper dignity, heritage, goals and standards? If so, can this be understood within a context that liberates the person from the ultimate prison of egoism, conflict and violence.

(b) Is one merely a stream of consciousness which becomes a person only upon the achievement of a certain level of self-awareness? If so, it is difficult to integrate the experiences of early childhood and the emotions of adult life which play so central a role in moral maturity. Or is the person an essentially free and responsible psycho-physical subject? If so, can this be understood within an understanding of self which does not limit the person solipsistically, but opens his or her consciousness to the plenitude of being and life.

(c) Finally, does a person's freedom consist merely in implementing a pattern of behavior encoded in one's nature. If so, there would be little place for the anguish of decision, the pains of moral growth, or the creativity of a moral life. Or is this free subject a creative center whose basic dynamism consists in realizing a unique inner harmony and outer community? If so, is there a mystical character to this inner harmony that opens to the life of the Absolute Existence, and what is its meaning for our life with others in this world.

To respond to such basic concerns requires the full resources of our heritages. At the same time, because the task of self-creation will reflect one or more of the multiple modes of our contemporary self-understanding, it can be expected that not everyone will subscribe to all the possible dimensions of the meaning of the person—certainly not in the same mode or to the same degree. Hence, in a pluralistic society one must be clear about the potential dimensions of the person: what they are, how they are rooted in our cultural heritages, how they affect the aims and methods of moral education, and how they can be interrelated in a mutually reinforcing manner toward the development of a more integrated person and a more cohesive society. Indeed, there may prove to be a certain correlation of the above-mentioned questions both with the dimensions of the subject as a distinct, yet related and responsible, moral agent and with the progressive development of the person throughout life.

For orientation in this task let us begin by delineating the meaning of person by contrast to a number of other notions. These contrasts will serve subsequently as guideposts for a series of positive and progressively deepening insights regarding the nature of the person, its moral growth, and self-fulfillment.

In this first and negative effort to delineate the meaning of persons, we find that most notably, persons are contrasted to possessions. We object most strongly to any suggestion, whether in word, gesture, or deed, by which a person is treated as a commodity subject to manipulation or as a mere means by which others attain their goals. This, indeed, has become a litmus test for acceptable behavior.² Secondly, persons are considered to be irreducible to the community. Structures which take into account only the social whole without taking account of the distinctive concerns of its participants are rejected precisely as depersonalizing. Thirdly and conversely, those who are so individualistic as to be insensitive to the concerns of others are themselves considered impersonal. These exclusions direct our search for the meaning of the human person toward a responsible self which is neither reducible to, nor independent of, the physical and social context in which one abides.

This positive notion of the person has not always had an identical or unchanging meaning. By natural growth, more than by mere accretion, the notion of person has managed to incorporate the great achievements of human self-discovery for which, in turn, it has been both the stimulus and the goal. This continuing process has been central to philosophy from its earliest days. Like all life processes, the search for the person has consisted in a sequence of important steps, each of which has resulted in a certain equilibrium or level of culture. In time each has been enriched and molded by subsequent discoveries. Indeed, it may not be incorrect to say that a parallel search is the very dynamism at the heart of our personal life as well.

To look into this experience, it will be advantageous to study the nature of the person through reflection on a series of paired and progressively deeper dimensions: first, as a role and as the one who lives out this role; second, as free self-consciousness and as the subject of that freedom; and third, as moral agent and as searching for one's moral development and fulfilment. The first member of each pair is integral to an understanding of the human person and of moral growth, but each of these members requires in turn its corresponding dimension and evokes the pair on the next higher level.

Person as Role

One means for finding the earliest meaning of a particular notion is to study the term by which it is designated. As earliest, this meaning tends to be more manifest and, hence, to remain current. The major study³ on the origins of the term 'person' concludes that, of the multiple origins which have been proposed, the most probable refers to the mask used by actors in Greece and subsequently adopted in Rome. Some explain that this was called a '*persona*' because, by 'sounding through' (*personando*)⁴ its single hole, the voice of the wearer was strengthened, concentrated, and made to resound more clearly. Others see the term as a transformation of the Greek term for the mask which symbolized the actor's role.⁵ Hence, an original and relatively surface notion of person is the assumption of a character or the carrying out of a role. As such it has little to do with one's 'self', it is defined rather in terms of the set of relations which constitutes the plot or story-line of a play.

This etymology is tentative; some would document an early and more rich sense of person in Homeric literature.⁶ There can be no doubt, however, that the term has been used broadly in the

above ethical sense of a role played in human actions. Ancient biblical literature described God as not being a respecter of persons, that is, of the roles played by various individuals.⁷ The Stoics thought of this in cosmic terms, seeing the wise person either as writing their role or as interpreting a role determined by the Master. In either case, to be a wise person was to be consistent, to play out one's role in harmony with oneself and with reason as the universal law of nature. From this ethical sense of person as role, it was but a short step to a similar legal sense. This generally is a distinct and characteristic relation, although, as Cicero noted, it could be multiple: "Three roles do I sustain . . . my own, that of my opponent, that of the judge."⁸

Far from being archaic,⁹ the understanding of person as the playing of a role seems typical of much modern thought. John Dewey, in *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, characterized the essence of the modern mentality in just these terms: in the case of ancient or classic usage "we are dealing with something constant in *existence*, physical or metaphysical; in the other [modern] case, with something constant in *function* and operation."¹⁰ The social and psychological sciences focus upon these roles or functions and through operational definitions elaborate their entire conceptual fields.

This undergirds much of the progress in the social and behavioral sciences. As the same individual can play multiple roles, even in the same circumstances, studying the person in terms of roles makes it possible to identify specific dimensions of one's life for more precise investigation and to analyze serially the multiple relations which obtain in an interpersonal situation. William James, for example, distinguishes in this manner the self shown to family from that which one shows to professional colleagues. Further, determining to pursue this exclusively on the basis of data which is subject to empirical verification¹¹ has made possible an immense collaborative effort to achieve a scientific understanding of human life.

Indeed, to begin from its meaning as role can save the notion of person from hiding and then suppressing the ontological reality who fulfils that role. This route is suggested by an alternate (Etruscan) origin of the term 'person' locating it in the mask worn in the cult of the goddess Persephone. While the Latin grammarians seized on this to classify the speakers voices as first or second person, the original dramatic context was more mysterious, based on a vibrant interplay of presence and absence as the goddess manifested herself while remaining absent. The appearances, thus, became multiple while the unlimited reality of the source remained one and unfathomable. There is here a first suggestion of a central truth about person, namely that a person is an unlimitedly rich and even mysterious source; and, hence, that in dialogue with one's physical and social environment, one can be adaptive and creative in one's expressions. This holds a key to understanding the rich variety of cultures.

Though much has been accomplished through understanding the person in terms of roles, there may have been a distant early warning of the limitations of this approach in Auguste Comte's (1798-1857) *Cours de philosophie positive*. By rejecting psychology as a scientific discipline and reducing all data concerning the person to either biology or sociology, he ignored introspection and the corresponding dimensions of the individual's conscious life. The person was not only one who could play a role, but one whose total reality consisted in playing that role.

More recently Gabriel Marcel has pointed up a number of unfortunate consequences which derive from considering the person only in terms of roles or functional relations. First, no account can then be taken of one's proper self-identity. If only "surface" characteristics are considered, while excluding all attention to "depth,"¹² the person is empty; if the person can be analyzed fully in terms of external causes and relations, one becomes increasingly devoid of intrinsic value. What is more, lack of personal identity makes it impossible to establish personal relations with

others. Even that consistency between, or within, one's roles which the Stoics as early proponents of this understanding of person considered to be the essence of personal life is left without foundation. Life would be reduced, in the words of Shakespeare, "to a tale told by an idiot".¹³

Person as the Individual Substance Who Lives out the Role

These difficulties suggest that attention must be directed to another level of meaning if the person is to find the resources required to play his/her roles. Rather than attempting to think of a role without an actor, it is important to look to the individual who assumes the role and expresses him or herself therein.

Caution must be exercised here, however, lest the search for the subject or the self appear to reinforce the excesses of self-centeredness and individualism. This could be a special danger in the context of cultures whose positive stress on self-reliance and independence has been rooted historically in an atomistic and nominalistic understanding of persons as individuals, single and unrelated. This danger is reflected, for example, in the common law understanding of judicial rulings, not as defining the nature of interpersonal relations, but simply as reducing violence through resolving conflicts between individuals whose lives happen to have intersected.

In this regard, it is helpful to note that, when Aristotle laid the foundations for the Western understanding of the person, he did so in the context of the Greek understanding of the physical universe as a unified, dynamic, quasi life process in which all was included and all were related. Indeed, the term 'physical' was derived from the term for growth and the components of this process were seen always with, and in relation to, others. (Similarly, modern physical theory identifies a uniform and all-inclusive pattern of relations such that any physical displacement, no matter how small, affects all other bodies). Within this unified pattern of relations the identification of multiple individuals, far from being destructive of unity, provides the texture required for personal life. Where individuals are differentiated by the moral tenor of their actions, which, in turn, make a difference to other persons, distinctiveness becomes, not an impediment to, but a principle of, community.¹⁴

In order better to appreciate the members of a community, it is helpful to consider them in three progressively more specific dimensions: first, as instances of a particular type, that is, as substances; secondly, as existing, that is, as subsisting individuals; and thirdly, as self-conscious, that is, as persons. The order in which these three will be considered is not accidental, for the former are required for the latter. Moreover, while it is necessary to be of a certain definite type, it is more important to exist as an individual in one's own right. For the person, finally, it is important above all that one be self-aware and free. Hence, our exposition begins with substance and the subsisting individual in order to identify some general and basic—though not specific or exclusive—characteristics of the person. What is distinctive, namely, self-awareness and freedom, will be treated in the subsequent sections.

Substance

It was Aristotle who identified substance as the basic component of the physical order; his related insights remain fundamental to understanding the individual as the subject of moral life. His clue to this basic discovery appears in language. Comparing the usage of such terms as "running," and "runner" one finds that the first is applied to the second, which, however, is not said, in turn, of anything else.¹⁵ Thus, one may say of Mary that she is running, but one may not

say that she is another person, e.g., John. This suggests the need to distinguish things which have their identity in their own right (e.g., Mary and John) from those that can be realized only in another (as running is had only in a runner, e.g., in Mary) whence they derive their identity (the running is Mary's and distinct from any running that John might do).

Hence, a first and basic characteristic of the moral subject, and indeed of any substance, is that it has its identity in its own right rather than through another; only thus could a human being be responsible for one's action. Without substances with their distinct identities one could envisage only a structure of ideals and values inhabited, as it were, by agents without meaning or value. In this light the task of moral education would be merely to enable one to judge correctly according to progressively higher ideals. This, indeed, would seem to be the implicit context of Lawrence Kohlberg's focus upon moral dilemmas which omits not only the other dimensions of moral development, but personal identity as well. Aristotle points instead to a world of persons realizing values in their actions. In their complex reality of body, affections and mind they act morally and are the subjects of moral education.

Secondly, as the basic building blocks in the constitution of a world, these individuals are not merely undetermined masses. As the basic points of reference in discourse and the bases for the intelligibility for the real world these individuals must possess some essential determinateness and be of one or another kind or form. The individual, then, is not simply one unit indifferently contrasted to all others; he or she is a being of a definite nature or kind – in this case, humankind,¹⁶ – relating in a distinctively human manner to other beings, each with their own nature or kind. Only thus can one's life in the universe have sense and be able to be valued.

Thirdly, being of a definite kind the individual has its own proper characteristics and is able to realize a specific or typical set of activities. These activities derive from, or are "born of" (from the Latin, *natus*) the substance as being of a specific kind or *nature*. The determination of what activity is moral will need to include, not only the good to be derived from the action, but respect for the agent and his or her nature.

In the search for the subject, the work of Aristotle has made an essential contribution by directing our attention to three factors, namely: (a) individual beings, (b) who are particular instances of a definite kind, and hence (c) capable of specific types of activities. It should be noted that all three are concerned with the kind or type of the agent.¹⁷ This is important, but it is not enough for a moral life. One can know well enough what kind of thing a unicorn is but, as none has ever existed, they have never acted or entered the field of activity in which morality is found. Similarly, one might know what kind of musician is needed in order to complete an orchestra, but this does not mean that such a musician is available to be engaged for a concert. In sum, in order to consider the field of moral action it is important to take account not only of the nature or kind of agent involved, but also of his or her existence and actions.

Subsisting Individual

Something of the greatest importance was bound to take place, therefore, when the mind expanded its range of awareness beyond the nature of things to what Shakespeare was to call *the* question: "to be or not to be." At that point the mind became able to take explicit account not only of the kind, but of the existence of the individual, by which it is constituted in the order of actual, and hence of acting, beings.

The uncovering of existence in the context of early Christianity was described in Chapter II above. Its decisive impact cannot be overestimated. From recognizing the individual as just another

instance of human nature this allowed one to see the explosive emergence of the unique person which is and refuses to be denied in whole or in any part. This life is mine and unique; it has never existed before and will never be lived by another now or ever; it is my precious responsibility but even more it is my opportunity to live and love, to create and to transform, to serve and to communicate.

It is this utter power of the person when seen as existence that created the Christian era after antiquity, and that now creates our contemporary dilemma when at last it meets other civilizations in this global age.

From this there followed a series of basic implications for the reality of the person. It would no longer be considered as simply the relatively placid, distinct or autonomous instance of some specific type. Rather, it would be understood in the much more dynamic manner as existing. This means not only being in its own right or, as is said, "standing on its own two feet" (sub-sisting), but bursting in among the realities of this world as a new and active center (ex-isting). This understanding incorporates all the above-mentioned characteristics of the individual substance, and adds three more which are proper to existence, namely, (a) complete, (b) independent, and (c) dynamically open to actions and to new actualization. Yet, since existing or subsisting individuals include not only persons but rocks and trees, these characteristics, though fundamental, still will not be exclusive to the person.

First, a person must be whole or complete. As regards its nature it must have all that is required to be and to be of its distinctive kind (just as by definition a three digit number cannot be made up of but two digits). Hence, if humans are recognized to be by nature both body and mind or body and soul, then the human mind or soul without the body would be neither a subsisting individual nor, by implication, a person, for it would lack a complete human nature. This is of special importance in view of the tendency of some either to reduce the human person to only the mind, soul, or consciousness or to consider the person to be adequately protected if these alone are cared for. In fact, the inclusion of body in the human person is as central as is attention to the issue of torture for human rights. The same is true of the mind or spirit in view of the tendency, described by William James,¹⁸ to reduce the person to "nothing but" the inert by-products of physiology, or to functions of the structure of the production and distribution of goods.

Further, the existing individual requires not merely a complete nature, but his or her proper existence. As existing, the individual is not merely an instance of a specific nature or kind, but a concrete reality asserting oneself and dynamically struggling to achieve one's fulfilment. In the person this goes beyond merely walking a course whose every step is already charted; it includes all the unique, fully individual choices by which a life is lived. It is subject then to combinations of the precarious and the stable, of tragedy and triumph in its self-realization. These are described by the American pragmatists and Continental existentialists as the very stuff of life, and hence by Dewey as the very stuff of education.

Secondly, as subsistent the person is independent. Being complete in its nature it is numerically individual and distinct from all else. In accord with this individual nature, one's existence is, in turn, unique, and establishes the subject as a being in its own right, independent of all else. This does not imply that the human or other living subject does not need nourishment, or that it was not generated by another: people do need people, and much else besides. There is no question here of being self-sufficient or absolute. What is meant by independence is that the needs it has and the actions it performs are truly its own.

In turn, this means that in interacting with other subsistent individuals one's own contribution is distinctive and unique. This is commonly recognized at those special times when the presence

of a mother, father, or special friend is required, and no one else will do. At other times as well, even when, as a bus driver or a dentist, I perform a standard service, my actions remain properly my own. This understanding is a prerequisite for education to responsibility in public as in private life. It is a condition too for overcoming depersonalization in a society in which we must fulfil ever more specialized and standardized roles.

Another implication of this independence is that, as subsisting, the human person cannot simply be absorbed or assimilated by another. As complete in oneself one cannot be part of another: as independent in existence one is distinct from all else. Hence, one cannot be assumed or taken up by any other person or group in such wise as to lose one's identity. In recent years awareness of this characteristic has generated a strong reaction against the tendencies of mass society totally to absorb the person and to reduce all to mere functions of a larger whole called the state, the industrial complex, the consumer society, cult, etc.

As noted above it is perhaps the special challenge of the present day, however, to keep this awareness of one's distinctive independence from degenerating into selfishness, to keep individuality from becoming individualism. The individual existent, seen as sculpted out of the flow and process of the physical universe, cannot rightly be thought of as isolated. Such an existent is always *with* others, depending on them for birth, sustenance and expression. In this context, to be distinct or individual is not to be isolated or cut off, but to be able to relate more precisely and intensively to others.

This can be seen at a series of levels. My relation to the chair upon which I sit and the desk upon which I write is not diminished, but made possible by the distinction and independence of the three of us. Their retention of their distinctness enables me to integrate them into my task of writing. Because I depend still more intimately upon food, I must correlate more carefully its distinctive characteristics with my precise needs and capacities. On the genetic level it is the careful choice of distinctive strains that enables the development of new plants with the desired characteristics. On the social level the more personable the members of the group the greater and more intense is its unity.

Moving thus from instruments such as desks, to alimentation, to lineage, to society suggests that, as one moves upward through the levels of beings, distinctness, far from being antithetic to community, is in fact its basis. This gives hope that at its higher reaches, namely, in the moral and artistic life, the distinctiveness of autonomy, freedom and culture need not be compromised, but may indeed be the basis for a community of persons bound together in mutual love and respect.

The third characteristic of the subsistent individual to be considered is this openness to new actualization and to interrelation with others. The existence by which one erupted into this world of related subjects is not simply self-contained; it is expressed in a complex symphony of actions which are properly one's own: thus, as noted above, running can be said only of an existing individual, such as Mary, who runs. What is more, actions determine their subject, for it is only by running that Mary herself is constituted precisely as a runner. This will be central to the person as moral agent.

It is important as well for our relations to, and with, others. For the actions into which our existence flows, while no less our own, reach beyond ourselves. The same action which makes us agents shapes the world around us and, for good or ill, communicates to others. All the plots of all the stories ever told are about this; but their number pales in comparison with all the lives ever lived, each of which is a history of personal interactions.¹⁹ The actions of an individual existent reflect one's individuality with its multiple possibilities, and express this to and with others. It is in this situation of dynamic openness,²⁰ of communication and of community that the moral

growth of persons takes place. As subsistent therefore the person is characteristically a being, not only in him/herself, but *with* other beings. About this more must be said below.

Critique

To summarize: thus far, we have seen the early derivation of the notion of person from mask. For this to evolve into the contemporary notion of person a strong awareness both of the nature and of the existence of independent individuals needed to be developed. The first was achieved by the Greeks who identified within the one physical process different basic types of things. Substances are the individual instances of these specific types or natures. This provides the basis for the self-consciousness of one's own nature and for relating to others within the overall pattern of nature(s).

There were limitations to such a project, for in its terms alone one ultimately would be but an instance of one's nature; in the final analysis the goal of a physical being would be but to continue its species through time. This was true for the Greeks and may still be a sufficient basis for the issues considered in sociobiology taken in a reductivist manner, but it does not allow for adequate attention to the person's unique and independent reality. This required the subsequent development of an awareness of existence distinct from nature or essence, and by which one enters into the world and is constituted as a being in one's own right. On this basis the subsisting individual can be seen to be whole and independent, and hence the dynamic center of his or her action in the world.

There may be an inherent difficulty in this view. While it provides strong grounding for an affirmation of uniqueness and by implication for one's proper dignity and individual rights, it may be subject to the danger of generating a self-centeredness that encloses, and in time stifles, the thrust of being.

If this is so, then it could be important to look for the Indian and other correlatives to this notion to see if they have resources for overcoming this difficulty without losing the appreciation of unique individuality that remains important for the emergence of the person and the multiple personal initiatives required for a people to prosper, or even to survive.

From the logical point of view merely coordinating different characteristics may be a candidate. But the metaphysical question of that by which a being is constituted in itself points rather to the foundation of being or the *atman* as the ultimate root of all existence. In the *Upanishads* it would appear to be a relational term expressing subjectivity and interiority, the enduring and pervading, in contrast to what is objective, external and manifest to our external consciousness. In this sense it stands as the support of the phenomena we perceive.

Here we come to a crucial juncture, that of the relation of the many to the one. In the history of Western thought this arose immediately as the field of metaphysics was opened by Parmenides. While it can be argued—I believe, successfully—that he did not intend to rule out a plurality of beings (why else write the second part of his Poem?), nevertheless within two generations Simplicius and others took such an exclusion of all plurality to be the case, holding that if being be one then there can be no multiplicity or many. This served as the basic challenge to Plato: to restore to the human mind finite, multiple and changing reality. There may be a lesson here, namely, if there had not already been a strong affirmation of the one unchanging being it would not be necessary to focus upon and provide for the reality of finite beings. The answer was initiated by Plato in terms of participation: the multiple, finite beings were participations and images of the

One absolute. Aristotle further articulated their reality by seeing them not only as forms, but as principles of action.

The Christian message was that God not only appeared in the form of man, but literally became incarnate and existed also according to a human nature. Through this reality he carried out the work of salvation, bringing humankind from death to life. All of this continually reiterated the distinction between that which exists in itself (*in se*) and that which exists of itself (*a se*). The latter pertains only to that which is absolute and self-sufficient, infinite and hence unique. But the former (in itself) expresses the foundational or substantial (standing under) character of beings. They support accidents, but do not in turn inhere in another; they exist in themselves or, as it were, stand on their own two feet.

A strong sense of the independence of the person derives from this. As the processes of political entitlement, education and commerce evolve, this sense of the independence of the person becomes ever more essential to modern life; indeed, in a sense it is the true heart of modernity.

This is not a case of bargaining between the reality of the finite and that of the infinite. Rather, it is the greatness of the unity of the Absolute – to the point of uniqueness – that points to the substantial distinctiveness of the multiple finite beings existing *in se* or in themselves, though not *a se* or of themselves. The power of the creature does reflect the power of the creator, but the converse is true as well: the power and uniqueness of the creator implies the distinctive power and reality of the creature; only the absolute can make a being to be or to exist, but that existence must be taken with extreme seriousness. I am, and while much can be done to, for and even against me, finite agents can only transform, they can never annihilate me or any other limited being, no matter how small or insignificant.

This leads to a strong sense of efficient causality in which, not only is the cause really distinct from the effect, but the effects are distinct from the source and from one another. It should be noted that this is not a spatial matter, though our need from images whenever we think pushes us toward thinking of the efficient cause as external. We know, however, that the cause is present to the effect and that the more penetrating the causality exercised the more immanent the cause. The highest cause then is the most immanent as well; causing our being precisely as existing, it is more present to us than are we who act according to a nature or essence distinct from our existence.

In the Indian tradition with the notion of *atman* the perspective is more simply that of immanence: the being that is *in se* is also *a se* or cause of its own existence, eternal and self-explanatory. Any existence in itself which is not also of itself is in the final resolution illusion, and hence can be conceived only as *maya* or false superimposition. It would be hard to disagree that this gives the highest self-confidence, that it transcends anything that can be achieved by human efforts, and that it defies the vicissitudes of life. The recognized wisdom of the *Gita* is just this insight, as is the religious paradox that he who loses his life will save it.

But we might ask whether such a vision can provide as well the individuation of persons required for the development of personal initiative and the diversified modes of cooperation supposed for active modern life. Here, of course, one is at the heart of the basic dispute which differentiates the schools of Shankara's *advaita* from Ramanuja's *visistadvaita* and from the string of carefully worked out alternatives stretching toward ever greater substantiality and individuality for the person.

Together they provide a rich palate which can be drawn upon in expressing the sense of person. To suggest but a few insights: if for *Advaita* the multiple individuals as mutually contrasted are not what is definitively real, nonetheless each according to its proper characteristics is a manifestation (*viyakti*) of the divine absolute. This might join the Greek notion of *prosopon* or

mask, or the modern sense of role. But where in the West this is reductivist in the sense that the reality is nothing but the role, in the Hindu tradition the person is so much more that the sense of role seems overshadowed. Though one must not forget the pervasive sense of the four roles (*asramas*) of the person according to one's stage of life, i.e., student, householder, ascetic and mystic, Tagore would ask whether this could be lived with sufficient intensity and passion without the sense of love proclaimed by the *Bauti* singers of Bengal or in the *Saiva Sedanta* philosophy of South India.

Ramanuja would see the human soul as a vassal and even an attribute of the Lord. This opens the way to the ideal of service of humanity so manifest in almsgiving and in the *Bodhi-satva* ideal.

In the *Nyāya-Vaisesika* the living self or *jivatman* is the substratum of intelligence and mind (*buddhi, manas*), pleasure and pain, love and hatred, right and wrong (*dharma-adharma*).

In the *Samkhya karikàs* the notion of *purusa* is presented as witness consciousness in a way that could suggest important elements for a modern notion of person. It is not simply for others, but an end in itself to which all human activities are directed (*purusartha*). It is the controller of action, the reflection of all enjoyment, and the purpose of all activity: for which reason the more abstract notion of values is often expressed by the *purusarthas*.

There is great wealth in these traditions for use in the development of a notion of person for future use. The Indian tradition has rich resources for overcoming the tendency to organize this tightly according to only one type of rationality and thus desiccate human life in the confines of a mechanistic model of clear and distinct ideas. This would be relegated to the lower level of consciousness concerned with the structures of the *buddhi* (intelligence), the *manas* (mind) or other internal faculties deriving from the bodily pole of human nature, though through such rational activity there shines the spirit as reflection of the *atman*.

On the other hand, if the rationalization of life is to be truly humanizing and expressive of the divine in time, there must be a mode of human awareness which transcends the rational but does not abandon it. This must open to a full and transcendent meaning in which the modern person with all its cares can be truly liberated and rehumanized in a new birth or renaissance of the spirit. This points to Kant's third *Critique*, that of *Aesthetic Judgment*, and the great attention it finally is beginning to receive in our times. This will be discussed in the fifth chapter below.

First, however, it must be noted that subsistence in oneself as complete and independent, while foundational for a person, is had as well by animals and trees: they too are wholes, independent and active in this world. Hence, to analyze the notion of person, in addition to what has been said above about substance as the subsisting individual, it is necessary to identify that which is distinctive of the human subsistent and constitutes it finally as personal. This is self-consciousness and freedom, which will be the burden of chapter four.

Notes

1 An integrated study of the person as moral agent is found in G. McLean, F. Ellrod, D. Schindler and J. Mann, eds., *Act and Agent: Philosophical Foundations for Moral Education and Character Development* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values, 1992).

2 For a psychological reconstruction of the person see Richard Knowles, ed., *Psychological Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development: An Integrated Theory of Moral Development* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy and The University Press of America, 1986).

3 Adolf Trendelenburg "A Contribution to the History of the Word Person," *The Monist*, 20 (1910), 336-359. This posthumously published work, now over 100 years old, remains definitive. See also "Persona," *Collected Works of F. Max Muller* (London, 1912), vol. X, pp. 32 and 47; and Arthur C. Danto, "Persons," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), VI, 110-114.

4 This was pointed out by Gaius Bassus. See Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* V, 7.

5 *Prosepeion*. This explanation was given by Forcellini (1688-1769), cf. Trendelenburg, p. 340.

6 C. J. De Vogel, "The Concept of Personality in Greek and Christian Thought," *Studies in Philosophy and the History of Philosophy*, ed. John K. Ryan (Washington, D.C: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), II, 20-60.

7 "That accepteth not the persons of princes." *Job* 3 4: 19. See also *Deut* 10:17; *Acts* 10:34-35; *Rom* 2:10-11.

8 Cicero, *De Officiis*, I, 28 and 31; *De Orator*. II, 102; and Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, ch. 17.

9 A. Danto. See n. 3 above.

10 (Boston: Beacon, 1957), p. 61.

11 Rudolf Carnap, "The Vienna Manifesto", p. 483.

12 *Ibid.*

13 Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existence*, trans. Manya Harari (New York: Citadel Press, 1956), p. 14.

14 See Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper, 1959); Wilfrid Desan, *The Planetary Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1961).

15 Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I, 4 73 a 3-b 25.

16 René Claix "La statut ontologique du concept de sujet selon le metaphysique d'Aristot. L'aporie de *Metaph.* VII (Z) 3," *Revue philosophique de Louvain*, 59 (61), 29.

17 *Metaphysics*, VII 4-7.

18 William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), ch. I.

19 See also Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 181ff.

20 Gabriel Pastrama, "Personhood and the Burgeoning of Human Life," *Thomist*, 41 (1977), 287-290.

Chapter IV

Person as Consciousness: From Objectivity to Subjectivity

The Person: A Self-Conscious and Free Subject

Self-consciousness and will had been central to philosophies of the person in classical times; indeed, at one point Augustine claimed that men were nothing else than will. After Descartes' reformulation of metaphysics in terms of the thinking self, however, the focus upon self-consciousness by John Locke and upon the will by Kant brought the awareness of these distinctive characteristics of the person to a new level of intensity and exclusivity. This constituted a qualitatively new and distinctively modern understanding of the person. It is necessary to see in what these characteristics consist and how they relate to the subsisting individual analyzed above.

Self-Consciousness and Freedom

John Locke undertook to identify the nature of the person within the context of his general effort to provide an understanding which would enable people to cooperate in building a viable political order. This concentration upon the mind is typical of modern thought and of its contribution to our appreciation of the person. Focusing upon knowledge, Locke proceeded to elaborate, not only consciousness in terms of the person, but the person in terms of consciousness. He considered personal identity to be a complex notion composed from the many simple ideas which constitute our consciousness. By reflection we perceive that we perceive; thereby we are able to be, as it were, present to ourselves and to recognize ourselves as distinct from all other thinking things.¹ Memory, which is also an act of consciousness, enables us to recognize these acts of consciousness in different times and places. Locke saw the memory, by uniting present acts of awareness with similar past acts, not merely as discovering but as creating personal identity. This binding of myself as past consciousness to myself as present consciousness constitutes the continuing reality of the person. Essentially, it is a private matter revealed directly only to oneself, and only indirectly to other persons.

Because Locke's concern for knowledge was part of his overriding concern to find a way to build social unity in a divided country he saw his notion of the self as the basis of an ethic for both private and public life. As conscious of pleasure and pain the self is capable of happiness or misery, "and so is concerned for itself."² What is more, happiness and misery matter only inasmuch as they enter one's self-consciousness as a matter of self-concern and direct one's activities. He sees the pattern of public morality – with its elements of justice as rewarding a prior good act by happiness and as punishing an evil act by misery – to be founded upon this identity of the self as a continuing consciousness from the time of the act to that of the reward or punishment. 'Person' is the name of this self as open to public judgment and social response; it is "a forensic term appropriating actions and their merit."³

This early attempt to delineate the person on the basis of consciousness locates a number of factors essential for personhood such as the importance of self-awareness, the ability to be concerned with, and for, oneself, and the basis this provides for the notions of responsibility and public accountability. These are the foundations of his *Letters Concerning Toleration* which were to be of such great importance in the development of subsequent social and political structures in many parts of the world.

There are reasons to believe, however, that, while correct in focusing upon consciousness, he did not push his analysis far enough to integrate the whole person. Leibniz, in his *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, was quick to point out some of these reasons in a detailed response. Centering personal identity in consciousness, Locke distinguished it from the notion of the person as that which could be identified by a body of a particular shape. This led him to admit that it is conceivable that the one consciousness or self could exist in different bodies a thousand years remote one from another⁴ or, conversely, that multiple selves could inhabit the same body.

This is more than an issue of "names ill-used";⁵ it is symptomatic of the whole cluster of problems which derive from isolating human consciousness from the physical identity of the human self. These include problems not only regarding communication with other persons for which one depends upon physical signs, but regarding the life of the person in a physical world in whose unity and harmony one's consciousness has no real share, indeed, in relation to which it is defined by contrast.⁶ Recently, existential phenomenologists have begun to respond to the perverse, desiccating effect which this has had even upon consciousness itself, while environmentalists have pointed up the destruction it has wrought upon nature.

This implies a problem for personal identity. Locke would claim that this resides in the continuity established by linking the past with the present in one's memory.⁷ But, as there is no awareness of a substantial self from which this consciousness proceeds,⁸ what remains is but a sequence of perceptions or a flow of consciousness recorded by memory.

Finally, Leibniz would question Locke's claim to have provided even that public or forensic notion of the self by which he sought to provide a sufficient basis for legal and political relations. Memory can deal with the past and the present, but not with the future; planning and providing for the future is, however, the main task of a rationally ordered society. Further, Locke's conclusion, that since the self is consciousness the same self could inhabit many bodies of different appearances, would undermine the value of public testimony, and thereby the administration of justice.⁹ Though self-consciousness is certainly central and distinctive of the person, more is required for personhood than a sequence of consciousness, past and present.

Another approach was attempted by Kant whose identification of the salient characteristics of the person has become a standard component for modern awareness. Whereas Locke had developed the notion of the person in terms of consciousness predicated upon experience, Kant developed it on the requirements of an ethics based upon will alone. Both the strengths and the weaknesses of this approach to the person lie in his effort to lay for ethics a foundation that is independent of experience. He did so because he considered human knowledge to be essentially limited to the spatial and temporal orders and unable to explain its own presuppositions. Whatever be thought of this, by looking within the self for a new and absolute beginning he led the modern mind to a new awareness of the reality and nature of the person.

For Kant the person is above all free, both in him- or herself and in relation to others; in no sense is the person to be used by others as a means. From this he concluded that it is essential to avoid any dependence (heteronomy) on anything beyond oneself and, within oneself, on anything other than one's own will. The fundamental thrust of the will is its unconditional command to act lawfully; this must be the sole basis for an ethics worthy of the human person. In turn, "the only presupposition under which . . . (the categorical imperative) is alone possible . . . is the Idea of freedom."¹⁰

As free the person must not be legislated to by anyone or on the basis of anything else; to avoid heteronomy one must be an end-in-oneself. Kant's self-described goal was to awaken interest in the moral law through this "glorious ideal" of a universal realm of persons as ends-in-

themselves (rational beings).¹¹ The person, then, is not merely independent, as is any subject; he is a law-making member of society. This means that the person has, not only value which is to be protected and promoted, but true dignity as well, for he is freely bound by, and obeys, laws which he gives to himself.¹² As this humanity is to be respected both in oneself and in all others, one must act in such wise that if one's actions were to constitute a universal law they would promote a cohesive life for all rational agents.

This "glorious ideal" has been perhaps the major contribution to the formation of the modern understanding of oneself as a person. At the minimum, it draws a line against what is unacceptable, namely, whatever is contrary to the person as an end-in-himself, and sets thereby a much needed minimal standard for action. At the maximum, as with most *a priori* positions, it expresses an ideal for growth by pointing out the direction, and thereby providing orientation for the development of the person. In Kohlberg's schema of moral development it constitutes the sixth or highest stage, and hence the sense and goal of his whole project – though he notes rightly that this is not an empirically available notion.

Further, this bespeaks a certain absoluteness of the individual will which is essential if the person is not to be subject to domination by the circumstances one encounters. If one must be more than a mere function of one's environment—whether this be one's state, or business, or neighborhood—then Kant has made a truly life-saving observation in noting that the law of the will must extend beyond any one good or particular set of goods.

Nevertheless, there are reasons to think that still more is needed for an understanding of the person. In Part I of his *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* Kant correctly rules out anything other than, or heteronomous to, human freedom and will as an adequate basis for ethics, at least as far as using one's own ability to think and to decide are concerned. Nor does he omit the fact that these individuals live their lives with others in this world. As the good is mediated by *their* concrete goods, however, a role for experience must be recognized if right reason is to conform to the real good in things. Further, there is need to know more of the reality of the person in order to understand: (a) not only how will and freedom provide the basis for ethical behavior, but (b) by what standards or values behavior can be judged to be ethical, and (c) how ethical behavior is integral to the project of the person's self-realization. Something more than a postulation of freedom (along with the immortality of the soul and God) is essential to enable the development of the person to be guided throughout by his "glorious ideal."

In sum, Locke and Kant have contributed essentially to delineating the nature of the person for the modern mind. Both have pointed up that which distinguishes the person from other subjects. Focusing upon knowledge, Locke showed the person to be an identity of continuing consciousness which is self-aware and "concerned for itself." Focusing upon the will and its freedom, Kant showed the person to be an end-in-itself.

By attending directly to consciousness and freedom, however, both left problems which are similar and are of great importance to the present project. The first issue regards the way in which consciousness and freedom are realized in the person as a unique identity with a proper place in society, and indeed in reality as a whole. It is true, as Locke says, that the term person expresses self-awareness and continuing consciousness, as well as its status in the public forum. But, one needs more than an isolated view of that which is most distinctive of man; one needs to know what the person is in his or her entirety, how one is able to stand among other persons as a subject, and how in freedom one is to undertake one's rightful responsibilities. One is not only consciousness or freedom, but a conscious and free subject or person. Further, it is necessary to understand the basis of the private, as well as the public life of the person, for one is more than a role, a citizen or

a function of the state. The second problem regards the way in which the person can attain his or her goal of full self-awareness, freedom, and responsibility, namely, how the person can achieve his or her fulfilment through time and with others.

In sum, what Locke and Kant discovered about the person by considering self-awareness in the abstract and for the political arena needs now to be integrated with what was seen in the preceding chapter regarding the individual in order to constitute the integral person as a rational and free subject.

The Self-conscious and Free Subject

While it has been said that ancient thinkers had no concept of the person, a very important study by Catherine De Vogel¹³ has shown that there was indeed a significant sense of person and of personality among the ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as a search for its conditions and possibilities. It will be helpful to look at this in order to identify some of the cultural resources for understanding the way in which self-consciousness and freedom are rooted in the subject and constitute the person. Above, we saw a certain progression from the Greek philosophical notion of the individual as an instance of a general type to a more ample existential sense of the subject as an independent whole, which nonetheless shares with others in the same specific nature. It is time now to see how this relates to self-consciousness and freedom.

The Greeks had a certain sense for, and even fascination with, individuals in the process of grappling with the challenge to live their freedom. T.B.L. Webster notes that "Homer was particularly interested in them (heroes) when they took difficult decisions or exhibited characteristics which were not contained in the traditional picture of the fighting man."¹⁴ In the final analysis, however, the destiny of his heroes was determined by fate, from which even Zeus could not free them. Hence, an immense project of liberation was needed in order to appreciate adequately the full freedom of the moral agent.

This required establishing: (a) that the universe is ruled by law, (b) that a person could have access to this law through reason, and (c) that the person has command of his relations to this law. These elements were developed by Heraclitus around 500 B.C. He saw that the diverse physical forces could not achieve the equilibrium required in order to constitute a universe without something which is one. This cosmic, divine law or Logos is the ruling principle of the coherence of all things, not only in the physical, but in the moral and social orders. A person can assume the direction of his life by correcting his understanding and determining his civil laws and actions according to the Logos, which is at once divine law and nature. In this lies wisdom.¹⁵

This project has two characteristics, namely, self-reflection and self-determination. First, as the law or Logos is not remote, but within man – "The soul has a Logos within it"¹⁶ – the search for the Logos is also a search for oneself: "I began to search for myself."¹⁷ Self-reflection is then central to wisdom. Second, the attainment of wisdom requires on the part of man a deliberate choice to follow the universal law. This implies a process of interior development by which the Logos which is within "increases itself."¹⁸

A similar pattern of thought is found in the Stoic philosophers for whom there is a principle of rationality or "germ of logos" of which the soul is part, and which develops by natural growth.¹⁹ A personal act is required to choose voluntarily the law of nature, which is also the divine will.

These insights of Heraclitus, though among the earliest of the philosophers, were pregnant with a number of themes which correspond to Kant's three postulates for the ethical life: the

immortality of the soul, freedom and God. The first of these would be mined by subsequent thinkers in their effort to explore the nature of the person as a physical subject that is characteristically self-conscious and free. As the implications of Heraclitus' insight, namely, that the multiple and diverse can constitute a unity only on the basis of something that is one, gradually became evident, the personal characteristics of self-consciousness and freedom were bound to the subject with its characteristics of wholeness, independence and interrelatedness. The first step was Plato's structure for integrating the multiple instances of a species by their imitation of, or participation in, the idea or archetype of that species.²⁰ This, in turn, images still higher and more central ideas, and ultimately the highest idea which inevitably is the Good or the One.

Aristotle took the second step by applying the same principle to the internal structure of living beings. He concluded that the unity of their disparate components could be explained only by something one, which he termed the soul or *psyche*—whence the term 'psychology.' The body is organized by this form which he described as "the first grade of actuality of a natural body having life potentially in it."²¹ For Aristotle, however, the unifying principle of a physical subject could not be also the principle of man's higher mental life, his life of reason. Hence, there remained the need to understand the person as integrating self-consciousness and freedom in one subject which is nonetheless physical.

Over one-thousand years later Thomas Aquinas took this third step, drawing out of Heraclitus' insight its implications for the unity of the person with its full range of physical and mental life. He did not trace the physical to one form or soul and the higher conscious life to another principle existing separately from the body, as had the Aristotelian commentators, nor did he affirm two separate souls as did Bonaventure. Rather, Thomas showed that there could be but one principle or soul for the entire person, both mind and body. He did this by drawing out rigorously, under the principle of non-contradiction, the implications of the existence of the subject noted above. One subject could have but one existence—lest it be not one but two. This existence, in turn, could pertain to but one essence or nature—again lest it be and not be of that nature; for the same reason the one essence could be of but one form. Hence, there could be only one formal principle or soul for both the physical and the self-conscious and free dimensions of a person. This rendered obsolete Aristotle's duality of these principles for man and founded the essential and integral humanness of both mind and body in the unity of the one person.²²

This progression of steps leading to the one principle, which enables that which is complex nonetheless to constitute a unity, points in the person to the one form which is commonly called the soul. By this single formal principle what Locke articulated only as a disembodied consciousness and Kant as an autonomous will are able to exist as a properly human subject. This is physical truly but not exclusively, for it transcends the physical to include also self-consciousness and freedom. Similarly, it exists in its own right, yet does so in such wise that it exists essentially with others as a person in society.

The implications of such an integration of the physical with the self-conscious dimensions of the person through a single principle are pervasive. One does not become a person when one is accepted by society; on the contrary, by the form through which one is a person one is an autonomous end-in-oneself and has claim to be responded to as such by others. Hence, though for his or her human development the person has a unique need for acceptance, respect and love, the withholding of such acceptance by others—whether individuals, families or states—does not deprive one of personhood. One does not have to be accepted in order to have a claim to acceptance. (Even in circumstances of correction and punishment, when a person's actions are being explicitly repudiated, persons cannot be treated as mere things.) Thus, the rights to respect, to an education,

to possibilities for development and to meaningful engagement in society are based within the person and need to be responded to by family and society.

Similarly, it is not necessary that the person manifest in overt behavior signs of self-awareness and responsibility. From genetic origin and physical form it is known that the infant and young child is an individual human developing according to a single unifying and integrating principle of both its physical and rational life.²³ The rights and their protection belong to a person by right prior to an ability consciously to conceive or to articulate them. Even in very young children, the physical manner in which they express themselves and respond to others is truly human. Indeed, though the earlier the stage in life the more physical the manner of receiving and expressing affection, the earliest months and years appear to be the most determinative of one's lifetime ability to relate to others with love and affection.

Finally, attempts to modify the behavior of persons must proceed according to distinctively human norms if they are not to be destructive. Whether in the school, the workplace or society at large, it is crucial to recognize that every human being is a human person, and integrally so in each of their human actions and interactions. Not to attend to this is to fail to recognize those with whom we interact to the detriment and dishonor of ourselves, the person and the social process.

There is a second insight of great potential importance in the thought of Heraclitus. When he refers to the Logos²⁴ as being very deep he suggests multiple dimensions of the soul. Indeed, it must be so if human life is complex and its diverse dimensions have their principle in the one soul. Plato thought of these as parts of the soul; in these terms the development of oneself as a person would consist in bringing these parts into proper subordination one to another, which state is called justice, the "virtue of the soul."²⁵ Both the *Republic* and the *Laws* reflect amply his concern for education, character formation, and personal development understood as the process of attaining that state of justice. The way to this is progressive liberation from captivity by the objects of sense knowledge and sense desires through spiritual training, as is described in the *Phaedo* and the *Republic*. All this prepares the way for what is essential, namely, contemplation of the transcendent Good. This alone establishes that inner harmony of soul through which the person is constituted as free and responsible, both in principle and in act. Because this vision, not only of some goods, but of the transcendent Good, cannot be communicated by teaching but remains "an extremely personal interior vision,"²⁶ the uncalculating and unmeasured love shared in the family and in intermediate communities has special importance.

By the human form or soul the human individual as a person is open in principle, not only to particular states of affairs or events, but to the one source, Logos and goal of all. Through this, in turn, one is able to take account of the full meaning of each thing and freely to relate oneself to others in the coordinating virtue of philanthropia, the love of all humankind.²⁷ As it is of foundational importance for a truly moral life to have not merely access to some goods, but an ability to evaluate them in terms of the Good, the form or soul as the single organizing and vivifying principle of the person is the real foundation for the person as an end-in-himself.

Correlatively, recent thought has made crucial strides toward reintegrating the person into his or her world. The analytic process of identifying the components of the world process initiated by the Greeks was inherently risky, for as analytic any imperfection in the understanding of personal identity would tend toward individualism and distract from the unity of persons and peoples through their grounding in the One. Cumulatively, the intensive modern concentration upon freedom in terms of self-consciousness would generate an isolating and alienating concentration upon self.²⁸

Some developments in recent thought have made important contributions to correcting this individualist—even potentially solipsist—bias. One is the attention paid recently to language and to the linguistic character of the person. Our consciousness is not only evoked, but shaped, by the pattern of the language in which we are nurtured. In our highly literate culture—many would say in all cultures—the work of the imagination which accompanies and facilitates that of the intellect is primarily verbal. Hence, rather than ideas being developed and then merely expressed by language, our thought is born in language. As this language is not one's private creation, but that of our community and over a long period, conscious acts, even about ourselves, involve participation in that community. To say that our nature is linguistic is to say that it is essentially "with others."

A similar point, but on another level of insight, was developed by Martin Heidegger and laid the basis for the stress among many existential thinkers on the importance of considering the person as being in community. As conscious and intentional, one essentially is not closed within oneself, but open to the world; one's self-realization depends upon and indeed consists in one's being in the world. Therefore it is not possible to think of persons in themselves and then to add some commerce with their surroundings; instead, persons exist and can be conceived only as beings-in-the-world. Here the term 'in' expresses more than a merely spatial relation; it adds an element of being acquainted with or being familiar with, of being concerned for, and of sharing. At root this is the properly personal relation.²⁹

From what was said of being-in-the-world it follows that the person is also being-with-others, for one is not alone in sharing in this world. Just as I enter into and share in the world, so also do other persons. Hence, as essentially sharing-in-the-world, our being is also essentially a sharing-with-others; the world of the person is a world in which we are essentially with-others. In this light a study of the existence of the rational subject with its hopes and its efforts toward self-realization with others must center ultimately upon understanding the development of the person as a moral participant in social life.

Descartes

As was seen in some detail in Chapter I the person as consciousness or self-awareness has been the great temptation of the modern mind. To achieve clarity it bargained breadth and subtlety; its ability to control was tried to its reductionist approach tailoring reality to the powers of the human mind. Thus in our day the challenge to humanize social life centers on the ability to open the mind to new dimensions of meaning, particularly to the fourth or metaphysical dimensions (treated in Chapters II and III) can be encountered. Many have taken Descartes' project of developing a universal mathematics to entail the restriction of his project to Plato's level III of conceptual clarification and scientific construction in which the divine could not figure.

In the present post modern period such restriction upon the modern mind is recognized as in need of being transcended. In such a liberation of person as consciousness it is important then to see if there is within the thought of Descartes himself the roots of this transcendence. If so the new openings will not constitute a destructive rupture with modernity. Rather its transcendence will have a constructive and enriching character.

In order to grasp something of the nature of the task undertaken with such impressive success by the builders of the modern mind it could be helpful to look back for a moment upon the preceding period, rightly termed the Renaissance or time of rebirth. It was a period of explosive discovery and rediscovery in every field. In space the use of the telescope opened to human reconsideration the nature of the planets; on earth Portuguese ships went to the Indies and circled

the globe; suddenly the art and writings of the ancients took on new interest; and in society new forms of civil order were emerging.

Each opening brought major problems as it became necessary to integrate or deal with whole new categories of reality. Where blind forces worked their way, e.g., disease killed off over 90 percent of the population of Central America within one or two generations; greed enslaved entire populations; superstition led Europeans into alchemy and magic. Thus the need for reason to assess and direct life became urgent in order to overcome the threats of confusion and death resulting from the new discoveries and to orient creatively the newly emerging physical and social forces.

Francisco de Vittoria began the elaboration of international law; Copernicus and Galileo began to reorder the understanding of our galaxy; Newton and Harvey laid the groundwork for a new understanding of the physical and anatomical orders. But the most fundamental task and key to all the others was a new level of coordination of the workings of human reason itself. If the new threats were to be avoided and the successes of the Renaissance were to bear fruit then the capacity to observe with precision, and especially for reason to employ the results of these observation, needed to be secured. This was the task which Descartes addressed.

In his *Discourse on Method*, he tells in autobiographical form how he did so. Describing his studies at *La Fleche*, the Jesuit leading French College of the time, he described how each branch of knowledge was seen to have its attractiveness, yet each seemed strangely unfulfilled. Mathematics had great clarity, precision and unity, but was being used mainly by engineers in the pedestrian tasks of digging canals and building fortifications; philosophy treated the truly important issues, but was rife with a myriad of opinions, without clarity or cohesion; etc. Thence emerged his great hope: to develop the work of reason so that the clarity and surety of mathematics could be extended through all fields of knowledge, and thereby to enable man "to walk with confidence in this life".³⁰ His plan for this was to reduce all to their minimal components or simple natures, each clear enough in itself to be distinguished from all else, to order these simple natures by clearly grasped simple linkages one to the other, and by reviewing this panoramic pattern to be able to grasp *quasi* simultaneously all things both in themselves and in their relationship one to the other.

It was a simple plan much needed for its time, and certainly useful for some operations. It is no accident that Descartes became "the Father of the Modern Mind," by the power of the model he provided the late Renaissance mind in its confusion from the welter of new information and high aspirations. The marvellous achievements of the route he opened for the human mind are immediately obvious in their transformation of our physical surroundings, in medicine and in the instrumentation of our lives. But recent environmental concerns begin to suggest that it is too simple for our complex life. There are reasons to suspect that this is true in relation not only to the physical environment, but to our social reality as people are increasingly manipulated by social systems and by their own personal self-understanding as people come to look upon themselves in merely functional and utilitarian terms.

To overcome these undesirable results one could simply add humane understanding alongside what initially was proposed by Descartes, but that does not promise to tame the vision of the man-machine. Instead it would introduce another dichotomy leaving the new humane additions in losing warfare with a tightly organized, well-entrenched adversary. This suggests that a better approach would be to return to Descartes and his original project in order to search there for paths of openness and continuity which it might suggest. When this is done a vast and fascinating panorama opens up – so rich as to suggest that Descartes fatherhood of the modern mind has but begun. The paths are so spectacular that to appreciate these additional dimensions it is more helpful, if not

necessary, not to be encased solely in the direct line of the modern Western currents which have applied his method thusfar. If so then India and other non Western peoples could provide a helpful vantage point for unfolding needed further implications of Descartes' response to modern problems and to the problem of modernity itself.

The Rules

When we return to Descartes we find something quite marvellous. His project of a unified science may have survived, but by the time he arrived in Holland in 1628, where he was to take up his major work, his effort to work out the general method he articulated in his *Rules for the Direction of Our Intelligence* had come to an abrupt halt, never to be taken up again. An analysis of this posthumously printed work, however, shows us his dilemma. He had begun the work of laying out in detail his method as described above and was doing this basically in the manner in which it generally has been employed since that time. It was atomic in its assumption, namely, that all consists of a limited number of irreducible simple natures which seemingly quantitative in nature. And it was analytic in procedure, namely, that these were to be distinguished clearly one from another in order to identify the basic components of all things. But it would be synthetic only to the extent that these basic components would be assembled on the basis of equally clear but external linkages; no new reality or truth beyond that of the simple component natures could be derived in, or from, this. It would be a universal mathematics in a reductionist sense.

Indeed, he had great success with his analytic method while he remained in mathematics. But his project was to extend this to all fields, and this he found to be impossible as soon as he tried it. For instance, in facing the problem of the anoclastic line, or curve through which parallel incoming light rays are refracted to focus on a single point, the mathematician would reduce the issue to the relation between the angles of incidence and refraction. But many laws of refraction are mathematically possible and the mathematician has no way of determining which is correct (AT X, 39). To make progress one would need to turn to other types of knowledge to discover what extension and "what human knowledge is" (AT X, 397-98), that is, it becomes necessary to determine the faculties of knowledge and their objects (Rule 12). But to do this requires, in turn, establishing a theory of human nature, of bodies and minds. The difficulty is that this needs to be done before work in the sciences if they are to have the apodictic certainty required for a universal mathematics. For lack of this he was able only to cobble together a mechanical hypothesis about the very reality he needed to establish by his method.³¹ The circle had become vicious.

The result was that he stopped work on this project all-together, and left the manuscript of the *Rules* in mid-state, replete with repetitions and unresolved alternatives. In no way, however, did this mean abandoning the effort to develop on adequate basis for understanding the sciences; it meant only that a new approach, a new direction, a new foundation was needed.

The Meditations

The moment is indeed decisive in Descartes' life for he abruptly moved out of Paris and into seclusion in Holland where he spent effectively the remainder of his life, focused around his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. The circumstances of his move are not well-known: it was sudden and a complete surprise to his associates. The future direction of his work, however, would seem to relate the move not only to his own dismay at the limitations of his project to establish mathematical clarity in all fields of knowledge, but to the major cultural intersection of his time.

From his school days, Descartes had been known for his method. This was remarked by the great mathematician Beeckman's to whom he promised to write down his method. It appears in Descartes' *Method IV*. Shortly before his abrupt departure from Paris Descartes demonstrated the power of his method in the discussion of a paper delivered at a gathering of key intellectuals. Soon after he was summoned by Cardinal de Bérulle, the Augustinian mystic and theologian who founded the French Oratory and was to become Descartes' spiritual guide. The problem which preoccupied the Cardinal was the great fissure which was opening in the cultural heritage of Europe. On the one hand, there was the tradition of Greek and Christian culture which bore the cumulative humanizing vision of the West. This grounded all in the ultimate Being as one, true and good, echoing the Hindu sense of Brahman, the divine source as existence (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ananda*). On the other hand, there were the new mathematical methods of quantitative analysis and conceptualization with its great promise for scientific discovery and control. Both were essential for humankind, but the two were turning against each other, each perceiving each other as a basic threat. The challenge of the times was to enable the two to work together.

It was in this context that Cardinal de Bérulle saw the great potential of Descartes' method and pointed out the Descartes that his development of this method was even an obligation of conscience for the good of humankind. Indeed, Descartes states in the dedicatory letter of his meditations that "some persons . . . demanded in the strongest terms" that he take this step. The foundational issues which this pressed upon his attention, as listed in the title of his *Meditations*, namely, the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, were Augustinian themes. As treated by Descartes they could bridge the growing division between sciences and culture not least because they would help to resolve the precise dilemma which had derailed Descartes' own initial attempt to work out his *Rules*.

Hence as soon as he arrived in Holland, he took a chalet, drew up the drawbridge and "for the first nine months I was in this country I worked on nothing other" than a "short paper". This probably is effectively Chapter IV of the *Method*, which in turn is a sketch of his major work, *Meditations on the First Philosophy in which the Existence of God and the Immortality of the Soul are Demonstrated*.

In order to catch the central importance of this for carrying forward the project of Descartes, both as regards founding the modern scientific effort and healing the breach in the culture, we need to turn briefly to Augustine in order to isolate in depth the real issues involved here.

For Augustine the religious dimension of meaning had become centrally important, but for lack of an ability to locate evil in relation to God he seemed forced to the Manichean position of two supreme principles – one good, the other evil. In that case there would be effectively no supreme being, no Goodness Itself, no absolute Bliss (*ananda*). As he recounted the dramatic story of his conversion in his *Confessions*, he recounts how he had conceived of God as spatially infinite interpenetrating all: also his soul and body stood as parts in relation to that great Whole. In transcending this purely quantitative approach he was helped by some neo-Platonic books which suggested that he direct his mind inward, into himself. In finding that he judges some of his thoughts to be true and others not, he discovers that his mind has ever been present to some eternal and immutable truth as a standard, which serves as light above his mind (Conf. VII X, 16). As it created him, his relation to it is not that of part to whole, but of measured to measure. In this way, evil can be seen as a deviation which as such does not require a corresponding ultimate principle or cause.

Truth then (or Consciousness, *cit*), on the one hand, is not simply a property of sentences or judgments, for it is a standard to which we look in judging; nor, on the other hand, is it simply all the things about which we judge, for it is wisdom which exemplifies ideally what our judgments should be, and illumines both things and the mind. In *Confessions VII*, Augustine suggests the way to search for the immutable Truth, which is God.³² He reports "seeking whence I approved the beauty of . . . bodies and judged rightly about mutable things and said, 'this ought to be this way, that ought not to be that way'",³³ i.e., the source of the knowledge of the intelligible standards. He recognized that his knowledge itself was mutable, yet that it judges according to an immutable standard which imposes the "ought". This led him to "the immutable and true eternity of truth above my mutable mind"³⁴ .

It is most striking that in his *Meditations* Descartes follows a quite parallel route. In his first *Meditation* he proceeds by way of doubt to show that of themselves the competencies of the external and the internal senses which constitute the first and second levels of knowledge cannot assure us of true knowledge. Hence, the sciences which depend on them should be bracketed or held in abeyance until a firm foundation can be provided for the truth of their mode of knowledge. This brings us to the third or intellectual level of knowledge where he subjects even mathematical knowledge to hypothetical doubt by hypothesizing a deceiving God or evil genius. The effect is great confusion, indeed vertigo, for lack of ability to find a firm and unchanging basis.

To achieve such a firm basis, in *Meditation II* he establishes the direction of his search, which like Augustine (and the *Gita*) is precisely to enter into oneself as thinking. Note that this is no longer in order to reason from thinking to being, as was the case in Descartes' *Discourse on Method*, but rather to find, not unlike Parmenides, that thinking is being. Hence one touches directly upon that which cannot be doubted, since to doubt is identically to be thinking, which identically is 'to be' or 'to exist'.

Descartes' move to *Meditation III* at this point can be understood in a number of ways, and it is the mark of his genius that probably they are all correct and mutually reinforcing. At the end of *Meditation II*, he had found his own self, but was in splendid isolation. He needed then to establish a basis for knowledge of realities other than himself. In proceeding to do this he is not simply responding to the hypothetical doubt of his first *Meditation*, but searching even more for the foundation of the certitude even regarding his self. Thus far he has not been able to doubt this, yet its origin and hence its quality are not yet understood. If this were indeed to have been created by a deceiving God his knowledge would exist in eternal confusion, and, hence, isolation. Thus *Meditation III* is an effort to assure not only the ability to know others, but to know himself more deeply and to be able to achieve that confidence which, as he had said in the *Method*, he sought for walking in this world.

His approach to this in *Meditation III*, in some contrast to *Meditation V*, could be considered to be *a posteriori* reasoning from effect to efficient cause. He finds within his mind the idea of an all perfect being: eternal, omnipotent and immutable. Asking how it is possible for his imperfect mind to have the idea of the perfect, on the basis of the principle of causality (and more fundamentally on that of non-contradiction: that being cannot be nonbeing, nor hence can it come from nonbeing) he traces this idea to an existing all perfect being, that is, to God.

A number of pointers lead us still further. First in the Augustinian and NeoPlatonic tradition the mode of thought is different from the Aristotelian pursuit of an unchanging cause of motion, where cause and effect are in clear contrast. Instead it is founded in the Platonic notion of form and of participation, where the participated is identified not by its distinction from, but by its

similarity to, the cause. Thus two realizations of the same form, precisely as form, are one; this tends not to oppose, but to assimilate effect to cause.

Further, because the Aristotelians of his time were bound to object to his proceeding on the basis of the idea of the all perfect—as Thomas had objected to Anselm's notion of "that greater than which nothing can be conceived"—Descartes restated the argument in terms of the substance of the person who has such an idea. But in his correspondence he stated that he considered the two arguments to be quite the same. For the Aristotelian, this would be taken at face value to mean the substance of the person as really distinct from its idea of the all perfect, but for Descartes, especially at this point in the careful choreography of his *Meditations*, this had not been worked out. What Descartes was speaking of was rather the thinking thing whose being as far as it could be established from the second *Meditation* is thinking: I am inasmuch as I think. "I am, I exist, that is certain. But how often? Just when I think. . . . To speak accurately I am not more than a thing which thinks."³⁵ "I am a thing that thinks."³⁶ Thus when he concludes to the existence of God he does so precisely inasmuch as he is thinking. This means that our mind is such that while its necessary idea is that of self, its sole characteristic idea is that of God.

This is confirmed in the very interesting addenda at the end of *Meditation III* when he asks how it is that this idea of God is present in his mind. He does not respond in terms of a construction from finite things—quite the contrary. His position is not that this shows the mastery of mind over finite reality or its ability to transcend it, but rather that the mind itself is the very image of its maker who

has placed his image and similitude upon me and that I perceive this similitude (in which the idea of God is contained) by means of the same faculty by which I perceive myself—that is to say, when I reflect on myself I not only know that I am something [imperfect], incomplete and dependent on another, which incessantly aspires after something which is better and greater than myself, but I also know that He on whom I depend possesses in Himself all the great things towards which I aspire [and the ideas of which I find within myself], and that not indefinitely or potentially only, but really, actually and infinitely; and that thus He is God.³⁷

For Ferdinand Alquie then Descartes' intuition is three in one: first, it perceives that in doubting he is thinking; second, it perceives that "to think" is identically "to be"; and third it perceives in this thinking-being there is the reality of God by which I think the unique. Thus, the reality of God is the basic reality of/for my mind. It is by His perfection that I can have confidence in my own knowledge and other actions.

In this light Descartes is able to resolve his difficulties in establishing the truth of science. Just as Augustine could not solve his problem of moral evil in terms of the quantitative extension of God throughout the universe of which we are parts, neither could Descartes solve his problem of scientific knowledge in the *Rules* by looking longitudinally into the set of faculties and their objects in the context of a mechanical hypothesis. Both found their way by turning from extension to intention, by entering into themselves and discovering the divine. For Augustine this was in terms of the reality or norm which founded the truth for his speculative intellect and the right for his practical intellect. For Descartes it was the All Perfect being, of which his intellect, indeed his very self, is the living image. Thus we

know *bodies* not just *from* the bodies causally influencing our senses, but in the first place from God as the light of our reason. Augustine leads us up from wisdom in souls and from number in bodies to God as their joint source. Descartes will take us up from souls to God and then down again from God to the bodies he makes intelligible.³⁸

In this Descartes echoes Plato's famous allegory according to which those who gain enlightenment must return to the cave to lead others.

Certainly, there is here a notable difference. Augustine leads the mind up to God where it remains and from which and in terms of which all is illumined and interpreted. His is the vision of the saint. Descartes does not remain there but returns to human reason and its work in the world.

Yet it would be too quick to simply contrast the two. Like Plato's prisoner's liberated in the allegory of the cave once they arrive at the light of the fire or sun at the mouth of the cave, they wish to remain there. Descartes too, at the end of his Third Meditation appreciates with prayerful reverence the holiness of the precincts upon which his mind has entered. He is not content only to see that his mind is grounded in truth in order to rush back to the human world. Rather he stops to contemplate, to ponder and indeed to admire and adore, and to enjoy the greatest satisfaction of which we are capable in this life.

But before I examine this matter with more care, and pass on to the consideration of other truths which may be derived from it, it seems to me right to pause for a while in order to contemplate God Himself, to ponder at leisure His marvelous attributes, to consider, and admire, and adore, the beauty of this light so resplendent, at least as far as the strength of my mind, which is in some measure dazzled by the sight, will allow me to do so. For just as faith teaches us that the supreme felicity of the other life consists only in this contemplation of the Divine Majesty, so we continue to learn by experience that a similar meditation, though incomparably less perfect, causes us to enjoy the greatest satisfaction of which we are capable in this life.

Some, being too quick to restrict Descartes to their own reductionist humanism, have not given enough attention to the significance of Descartes' Third and Fifth Meditations, nor indeed to the dependence of meditations Four and Six thereupon. For Plato those who reached the fourth level of knowledge or the light at the mouth of the cave would see 10,000 times better. For that reason they were urgently needed in the cave in order to unfold the deeper significance of the dimensions of knowledge opened on the lower stages of the line/cave. Descartes's return to his project of advancing human reason across the board has close analogy and similar impact in the field of reason.

From this one can see the reason for the immense confidence of Rationalists in their work of reason. To know is truly divine; to the degree that one knows clearly and distinctly, one touches that which is really real in things. Thus, humankind has a great mission, namely, to push back the frontiers of ignorance, to shed the light of reason into all that is dark and obscure. Correspondingly, the purpose of human powers for action is to correct all that is deviant from rational order in the physical realm and from justice or the judgement of what is right in social order. His is "a divine rage for order" as has been rightly said. Conversely, what is contrary to reason is deviant, unreal, or at least ought not to exist.

There is danger, as well as hope, in this. For people soon forget that their reason is limited, and that while it is possible to identify what is nonsense it is not possible for anyone to exhaust all the sense there is. In time what does not appear to be significant comes to be looked upon as something to be destroyed or stamped out. In forgetfulness of this lies the dark space in which the

passion for reason turns into intolerance and oppression. This has been the bitter experience in our times with the so-called scientific view of history. Further, rationalists, captivated as they are by reason, have often forgot the additional humane dimensions of affectivity, mutual concern and love. Reason is in danger – and itself can be a terrible danger, not only theoretically, but practically – if this be forgotten. However, there is also protection against this in the openness of Descartes, Augustine, *Advaita* and *Saiva Sedanta* to the Absolute and to love. We have in these traditions elements that are essential for the road ahead.

This work of Descartes on the foundations of the sciences, which constituted the very root of modern thought, could have great importance now with the reemergence of attention by peoples to their long and rich spiritual traditions. It is not that tradition, because of its ancient origins, is antithetic to science in its modern sense, or is in such tension that the road to modern progress can lead only through ruined temples, devastated cultures and the loss of values and identity. The work of Descartes suggests the deep religious convictions of the culture that at its roots reality is intelligible, indeed that consciousness itself (*cit*) can provide the very foundation on which the sciences can build. If being were to be simply given, blind and unintelligible, then science could be only an external imposition, manipulative and destructive. All would need to be imposed by violence and at great cost. If, on the contrary, nature is the expression of mind or consciousness then it can be accessed by reason, its inner unity and harmony is in principle open to knowledge, and thus available to creative insight. Nonviolence, harmony and even love could then chart the way for society; nature³⁹ might more readily be the handmaid of humankind; while all this manifests the Divine roots of the human mind.

There is another side as well to Descartes' basic project. His sense was not only that an appreciation of the role of God in human knowledge could help to found science, but that scientific reasoning could in turn help theological argumentation. It may not prove helpful to draw loose parallels between science and religion, or to try to find either scientific content in ancient texts written in a quite different mode, or religious content in scientific results concerned with a different order. But increasingly as the physical sciences probe their roots and become more aware of the nature of their theory construction there is a developing appreciation of the role of such themes as identity and unity. It can be hoped that their work if harvested by appropriate technique, as with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's *Phenomenon of Man* and *Divine Milieu*, might articulate in new and enriching manners what was sung in the Vedic hymns of old concerning the way in which all nature praises the heavens and they in turn praise God. With even greater reason, it can be hoped that the psychological and human sciences, as they point in multiple ways deeply into the dynamics of the self, might help people of our times to achieve greater openness to the Absolute Self within whom is life and love itself.

This is of special import in our day. Globalization is not only an economic phenomenon, but a new and unprecedented interaction of cultures and civilizations which generally are religiously based. At the same time, the interpretation of modernization as a secularizing process closed to religion has created a deep quandary: modern scientific and technological implementation must be sought avidly in order to support the basic needs of the mega populations, yet the secularizing modern context threatens to cut off these peoples from their cultural and civilizational spirit and identity. This dilemma, which tore China apart during the 20th century, is now being replayed on a global scale.

The above investigation of the thought of Descartes, Father of Western Philosophy, suggests that there is a solution to this dilemma, that modernity is in principle not closed against the religion but on the contrary is built on the reference to God which assures that being is also truth and that

this is pervasive in character, including the work of the human mind. In this light, the religious bases of the civilizations is not contrary to modernization but rather its speculative foundation which undergirds also the humanness and spiritual quality of its implementation.

Secularization may have served a tactical purpose in opening new space for the modern rationalization of all aspects of life. However, using it as a strategy in this globalizing encounter of cultures is having the disastrous effect of pitting a seemingly imperial Western civilization against other civilizations which it threatens to undermine. This invites, indeed requires, a clash of civilizations as others seek to save themselves from the collapse of their humanity which would entail the loss of the foundations of their civilization.

It was the genius of Descartes, in contrast to the Cartesians, to see that rationalization was not a reductive humanism, but on the contrary was grounded in the divine. Following his lead promises a way beyond conflict, to cooperation between civilizations.

Subjectivity and Culture

Unfortunately this rich depth of meaning in Descartes' turning to the self was covered over by his norm of clarity and distinctness. As a result the subject came to be treated as an epistemological object. As Gabriel Marcel points out, the essential character of the self as source of consciousness and intentionality always escapes whenever treated as an object of knowledge. Hence subjectivity was long ignored or even considered an enemy of knowledge.

During the last century human knowledge of the physical universe was totally transformed by breaking into the atom and discovering its structure. The effect was not only scientific advance, but the ambivalence of the conjoined threat of the atomic bomb and great promise of atomic energy. It is the contention here that similarly philosophical understanding today has shifted from being a work of deduction by specialists working in abstraction from the process of human life, to deep engagement at the center of human concerns under the pressures of life's challenges. From external objective observation life has now come to be lived in terms also of internal self-awareness where human freedom with its cultural creativity and responsibility becomes central. But as the playing field has shifted, the challenges have risen geometrically and with them the potential not only for death, but for life. To understand this we need to review the steps, negative and positive, by which this breakthrough from mere objectivity to subjectivity has occurred.

The Crisis of Objective Reason

The pressures of the last century force us to cross a new divide as we enter into the new millennium. To see this we need to review the history of reason in this epoch. The first millennium is justly seen as one in which human attention was focused upon God. It was the time of Christ and the Prophet; much of humanity was fully absorbed in the assimilation of their messages.

The second millennium is generally seen as shifting to human beings. Its first 500 years focused upon the reintegration of Aristotelian reason by such figures as Ibn Sina, al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd and Thomas Aquinas.

From its beginning human reason had always attempted to draw upon the fullness of human experience, to reflect the highest human and religious aspirations, and to build upon the accomplishments of the predecessors – philosophers sensed themselves as standing on the shoulders of earlier philosophers. The second half of the millennium, from 1500, was marked by a radicalization of reason and a certain Promethean hope emerged. As with Milton's *Paradise Lost*,

it was claimed that humankind would save itself, indeed that each person would do so by his or her power of reason.

For this, Francis Bacon⁴⁰ directed that the idols which bore the content of the cultural tradition be smashed; John Locke⁴¹ would erase all prior content of the mind in order to reduce it to a blank tablet; René Descartes⁴² would put all under doubt. What was sought was a body of clear and distinct ideas, strictly united on a mathematical model.

It was true that Descartes intended later to reintroduce the various levels of human knowledge on a more certain basis. But what he restored was not the rich content of the breadth of human experience, but only what could be had with the requisite clarity and distinctness. Thus, of the content of the senses which had been bracketed by doubt in the first *Meditation*, in the sixth *Meditation* only the quantitative or measurable was allowed back into his system. All the rest was considered simply provisory and employed pragmatically to the degree that it proved useful in so navigating as to avoid physical harm in the world.

In this light the goal of knowledge and of properly human life was radically curtailed. For Aristotle,⁴³ and no less for Christianity and Islam in the first 1500 years of this era, this had been contemplation of the magnificence and munificence of the highest being, God. By the Enlightenment this was reduced to control over nature in the utilitarian service of humankind. And as the goals of human life were reduced to the material order, the service of humankind shrunk to being service of machines in the exploitation of physical nature. This was the real enslavement of human freedom.

By the beginning of the 20th century humanity felt itself poised for the final push to create by the power of science a utopia not only by subduing and harnessing the physical powers of nature, but by genetic human engineering and social manipulation. Looking back from the present vantage point we find that history has proven to be quite different from these utopian goals as the power of science was diverted to two destructive World Wars and to the development of nuclear weapons capable of extinguishing the entire human race.

On the one hand, the ideals and idealism of Hegel and Josiah Royce would give way to William James' and John Dewey's concrete, pragmatic goals which could be achieved by human effort.⁴⁴ Or at least this would be so until it came to be recognized that in positive or empirical terms it was not possible even to articulate such social goals. Positivism would then succeed pragmatism only soon to have to admit that neither was its controlling "principle of verifiability" (and then of "falsifiability") intelligible in its own positivist terms. The consumer society showed itself incapable of generating meaning for life, but capable of exploiting everyone else, and its ideology of a totally free market appears to threaten the freedom of the weak majority of the world.

On the other side of the cold war, before the end of the 20th century the Soviet Union appeared to implode and that light in terms of which meaning was conceived and life was lived by half of humankind was extinguished, as if the sun went down never to rise again.

The religiously contextualized philosophical traditions not built in terms of the modern enlightenment reductionism were not understandable within the more restrictive enlightenment. Hence, the great Hindu and Islamic traditions were dismissed as mystifications, and effective access to the classical tradition of Western philosophy was no longer available.

In sum, this century has been marked by poverty that cannot be erased and exploitation ever more widespread, two World Wars, pogroms and holocausts, genocide and "ethnic cleansing," emerging intolerance, family collapse and anomie. The situation recalls the great meteorite which hit the Yucatan Peninsula eons ago sending a cloud of dust around the world which obscured the

sun for years, killed off the flora and thus broke the food chain. Life of all sorts was largely extinguished and had to begin slowly to regenerate itself once again.

In this sense the negative dimension of the present period may be misnamed "postmodern," because it is really the final critical period of modernity as it progressively collapses. Having become conscious of its own deadly propensities, modern philosophy begins to attack these evils by the only tools it possesses: power and control. Such attacks are not creative, but destructive. Knowing that it must arrest its inherently destructive urges reason destroys its own speculative foundations. All notions of structures and stages and, of course, all ethical norms, everything must be trashed because the *hubris* of modern rationalism closes off access to any sense that it itself is the real root of its problem. In a paroxysm of despair, like a scorpion trapped in a circle of fire, modernity commits its own *auto de fe*.

Subjectivity: A New Agenda

To read this history negatively, as we have been doing, is, however, only part of the truth. It depicts a simple and total collapse of technical reason if it acts alone and as self sufficient. But there may be more to human consciousness and hence to philosophy.

Above we saw how a close analysis of the thought of Descartes reveals that after all he did not definitively abandon his project of a universal mathematics nor did he allow it to enclose his mind in technical reason. On the contrary that project was the impetus which drove his consciousness in upon itself to discover its roots in divine truth.

In analogy to the replacement of a tooth in childhood, the more important phenomenon is not the weakness of the old tooth that is falling out, but the strength of the new tooth that is replacing it. A few philosophers did point to this new dimension of human awareness. Shortly after Descartes Pascal's assertion "Que la raison a des raisons, que la raison ne comprend pas" would remain famous if unheeded, as would Vico's prediction that the new reason would give birth to a generation of brutes – intellectual brutes, but brutes nonetheless. Later Kierkegaard would follow Hegel with a similar warning. None of these voices would have strong impact while the race was on to "conquer" the world by a supposedly omni-sufficient scientific reason. But as human problems mounted the adequacy of reason to handle the deepest problems of human dignity and transcendent purpose came under sustained questioning and new attention was given to search for additional human capabilities.

One might well ask which comes first, the public sense of the human challenge or the corresponding philosophical reflection. My own sense is that they are, in fact, one as philosophical insight provides the reflective dimension of human concern. In any case, one finds a striking parallel between social experience and philosophy in this century. To the extreme totalitarian repression by the ideologies of the 1930s there followed the progressive liberation from fascism in World War II, from colonial exploitation in the 1950s and 60s, of minorities in the 1970s, and from Communism in the 1980s. Throughout, like the new tooth the emergence of a broad sense of the human person across cultures has been consistent and persistent.

There has been a strikingly parallel development in philosophy. At the beginning of this century, it had appeared that the rationalist project of stating all in clear and distinct objective terms was close to completion. This was to be achieved either in the empirical terms of the positivist tradition of sense knowledge or in the formal and essentialist terms of the Kantian intellectual tradition. Whitehead wrote that at the turn of the century, when with Bertrand Russell he went to the First World Congress of Philosophy in Paris, it seemed that, except for some details of

application, the work of physics had been essentially completed. To the contrary, however, like the experience of Augustine and Descartes described above, the very attempt to finalize scientific knowledge with its most evolved concepts made manifest the radical insufficiency of the objectivist approach and led to renewed appreciation of the importance of subjectivity.

Thus, Wittgenstein began by writing his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*⁴⁵ on the Lockean supposition that significant knowledge consisted in constructing a mental map or picture corresponding point to point to the external world as perceived by sense experience. In such a project the spiritual element of understanding, i.e., the grasp of the relations between the points on this mental map and the external world, was relegated to the margin as simply "unutterable". Later experience in teaching children, however, led Wittgenstein to the conclusion that his empirical mental mapping was simply not what was going on in human knowledge. In his *Blue and Brown Books*⁴⁶ and in his subsequent *Philosophical Investigations*⁴⁷ Wittgenstein shifted the human consciousness or intentionality, which previously he had relegated to the periphery, to the very center of concern. The focus of his philosophy was no longer the supposedly objective replication of the external world, but the human construction of language and of worlds of meaning.⁴⁸

We have seen how, along with the developments in the objective and empirical sciences, there was need to recognize as well the non-objective realm of human subjectivity. The danger was that, in a time when the sense of science was objectivist, univocal and pervasive, the very attempt to recognize and protect the non-objective would be carried out by objectivist means and thereby itself become a process of reducing subjectivity to objectivity. This marked the efforts from Schleiermacher through Dilthey, and raised the question of whether subjectivity could ever be protected. On the one hand, the attempt of Schleiermacher illustrated that this could not be done if what was sought ultimately was simply objective scientific knowledge. On the other hand, Dilthey's effort illustrated that subjectivity would be reduced to relativism if left to itself in an exclusively horizontal historical dimension moving simply from past to future.

In retrospect then it would appear that the only way is to take up the vertical dimension which inspired the thought of Schleiermacher, but which had been ignored by those in search of a science of spirit or *geisteswissenschaft*. In order to access this a new mode of thinking, now called phenomenology, would be needed. This was initiated by Edmund Husserl, not in reaction against, but in the search for, the foundations of scientific knowledge at its most rigorous, namely, in mathematics.

As a student Husserl had been referred by T.G. Masaryk to Franz Brentano in Vienna, who introduced him to the notion of intentionality. From Aristotle this notion had flowed through the channels of Catholic philosophy due to its concern for the work of the Spirit in the human heart. In this light, the sciences and even mathematics needed to be set within the broader horizon of intentionality once they were seen as ways of organizing experience with a view to certain intentions or goals.

Thus, whereas Wilhelm Dilthey had attempted to render all such knowledge ultimately objective for scientific purposes, Husserl situated science within the broader life world. He placed on one side the experience that is objective and hence available for anyone and everyone to see. Under this heading would come the genius of Aristotle in developing a process of abstraction. Here differences would be omitted from attention so that there remained only what was uniform across any field under investigation. Modern empiricism is similarly objectivist in insisting that the object of knowledge be repeatable at any time and by any one, and that the result of any given experiment be exactly the same.

Edmund Husserl (1859-1938)

But our experience of life manifests another dimension characterized precisely by its temporal and historical character. What happens is succeeded by other events, in terms of which our prior experience can never again be seen in quite the same light. Hence, experience is not a set of unchanging blocks, but more a process of becoming. It consists less in objects before us than in our total – including our emotional – response to the world. This personal outlook on life is shaped less by the things observed than by living through them. Moreover, these two processes of experience and understanding are not so much separated as interactive in a spiral manner: understanding is shaped by developing experience, which in turn is shaped by progress in understanding. This is the double helix of experience.

In this way Husserl succeeded in directing the mind to human subjectivity, and hence to the unique freedom and creativity of peoples. But he leaves unanswered the question of the unity of this realm of human subjectivity. That there is a unity is seen from the fact of communication, the cooperative projects of science and the yet broader project which is the community. But how can this be grounded? Husserl appealed to a transcendental ego in a somewhat Kantian manner which ideally or formally states the entire realm of self-consciousness and of mutual awareness, but this would appear to lose touch with the life-world he wanted to explore. At a later point he would seem to identify this with the entire historical realm of actual human interchange, but that would not confront the foundational question of the unity of this realm.

In any case, his interest is not in a Kantian form of consciousness superimposed upon the concrete acts of consciousness. Rather he is intent upon a process of phenomenological reduction by which all the particular empirical contents of the various experiences are put to one side or bracketed in order to make manifest what is essential to consciousness. His conclusion is that whereas other things are always what they are, what is proper or essential to consciousness is that it is always of, or about, something else, that is, it is relational, transcending itself and tending toward another; in a word, it is intentional.

Husserl's process of reductions by which he uncovers this is close to Descartes' inward process of discovering that doubting is basically thinking and thus the work of the self or spirit as a thinking thing. This leads Husserl to the way the observer is progressively and selectively conscious of the different aspects of objects, and thereby constitutes the world for consciousness.

There is a yet further step to be taken, however, because, in addition to those many relations of the self to its objects in which awareness consists, there is also awareness of this awareness. In this we touch upon the deepest dimension of the self in relation to which everything else including reflection is an object. This he refers to as the transcendental ego, to which corresponds the world as a whole. In a provocative aside Robert Wood notes that

It is in this very direction that we might find the roots of traditional doctrines seemingly so foreign to minds conditioned to think in terms of sensorially observable objects: doctrines like Plotinus' world-intelligence, Aristotle's agent intellect, Augustine's divine illumination, German Idealism's Absolute Spirit are somehow necessarily related.⁴⁹

Yet there remains a gulf between the agent-intellecets of the medieval philosophers and the *atman-Brahman* of the Hindu's, on the one hand, and Husserl's transcendental ego, on the other. Husserl is looking for the essence or quintessence of consciousness. As this must be a

consciousness of consciousness he is in danger of entering as it were into a hall of mirrors and becoming trapped in an idealism.

As we shall see in Chapter VI below, the integral complex of these conscious relations is what constitutes the pattern of a culture, in terms of which life is encountered, interpreted and responded to. In the past culture was not seen as life, but rather as an outer garment by which life was adorned. It was, as it were, an afterthought, a possession of varying degrees of value perhaps, but more an adornment than life itself. Husserl enables us to see that cultures are the forms of the life world of which we are part. Yet they remain for him additions, forming and structuring life, but not being itself.

If this be so then an important step awaits, namely, to review these matters now in terms of being in order to be able to see intentionality as the very quintessence, not merely of consciousness, but of life itself. In those terms cultures and civilizations, and the religions which are their roots, will be revealed as the basic issue of life or death. This would enable us to rediscover in a new way how religion is the heart of life, why it now returns to the center of the conflicts and promises of life in our day, and how addressing its challenges is the key to moving into the future.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976)50

The step from consciousness to being was taken up in phenomenological terms by Husserl's successor, Martin Heidegger. In pursuit of the transcendental ego as the quintessence of conscious life Husserl bracketed the concrete existential reality of engagement in the world, thereby losing actual life in search of the essence of life. To correct this Heidegger advanced the phenomenological project from the order of consciousness to that of being.

He focused concretely on the human being living in the flesh and through time who experiences. But this is twofold. In his earlier work, which culminated in *Being and Time*, the perspective was not that of single things, or even of these as beings, but of the being of these beings. For this he turned to the being which is conscious of itself, that is, to the *dasein*, or the human being who is not only given but aware of his givenness. Here the major point of insight which frees the mind and takes it beyond the isolated singularity of things is their temporal character. On the one hand, we are creatures of past decisions which create this world which we did not make but in which we find ourselves thrown. On the other hand, we act in terms of a future toward which we project ourselves.

In this light the character of understanding is not primarily a speculative grasp of a fixed scientific object, but the practical engagement of one's being in the realization of its capacity for life. This reverses the direction of hermeneutics. It is no longer a search for necessary and objective, repeatable and universal truths; rather it is the conscious emergence of being in time.

Heidegger's *Being and Time* was only the first part of a project, whose second part he never formally completed. But in his subsequent writings (the so-called "later Heidegger") his horizon shifts so that the perspective is no longer that of the temporal *dasein* and what was available or at hand for description and analysis. Rather it becomes Being which the *dasein* expresses in time, but which transcends this being and is characterized rather by hiddenness and mystery. This deepens his sense of truth as *aleitheia*, or the unveiling of what is hidden.

The difference is important for the work of hermeneutics. The earlier Heidegger provided rich insight into our temporal conditions and how this could be a mode of awareness of being and of its realization in our lives. Thus, the earlier Heidegger sees the special role of hermeneutics to be that of questioning being – almost calling it to account for itself in history; for the earlier Heidegger

this is the essence of the human person. Only in questioning does man become truly himself and correlatively only as answer does being disclose itself. Indeed, by this questioning Being becomes history and in a sense depends upon man as the place of its manifestation.

The later Heidegger looks again at this. Now it is not man which is and brings Being into time, though Being always depends on man as the place of being. Rather man is now seen precisely as the expression of Being itself, which Being becomes the focus of attention. From its perspective all is seen, including human physical and conscious life. In religious terms this has always been referred to as seeing all *sub specie aeternitatis* (in terms of eternity). While not considering Being itself to be the Divine, Heidegger elaborates horizons that can be very helpful for religious thinkers and hence for the dialogue of essentially religious civilizations.

In this later state a whole new terminology appears in Heidegger's later writings. Man does not summon Being at will by his questioning, but is himself more fundamentally gift. He must wait upon Being to manifest itself, not only in the sense of awaiting the time of *kyros* or manifestation, but of responding to, waiting upon, and *shepherding* beings in time. Hence, the properly human attitude is not one of questioning, but of thanksgiving. This most deeply inspires and gives dynamism to human life as it is thanksgiving for the gift of one's very being. This gift of life can never be repaid in kind; it must be received and treasured, interpreted and shaped; and in turn creatively passed on to others. This itself is a hermeneutic process; indeed it is the essence of all hermeneutics.

Thus we come to what religious people have always known, namely, (a) that only in letting go of the grasping by which we hold to – or more really are held by – our possessions do we allow God to live in us; (b) that we live in Him; and hence (c) that to live is to serve God and neighbor in gratitude and generosity.

Notes

1 John Locke *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Book II, ch. 27, n. 11 and 9-10, ed. A. C. Grassler (New York: Dover, 1959), Vol. I, 448-452. The person is "a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself."

2 *Essay*, n. 17.

3 *Ibid.*, nn. 18 and 26.

4 *Ibid.*, n. 20.

5 *Ibid.*, n. 29.

6 G.W. Leibniz *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, Bk. II, ch. 27, 9, trans. A. G. Langley (Chicago: Open Court, 1916).

7 Locke, *Essay*, ch. 27, n. 15.

8 Leibniz, *New Essays*, II, ch. 27, n. 14. This consequence was recognized and accepted by Hume who proceeded to dispense with the notion of substance altogether.

9 *New Essays*, nn. 20-66.

10 Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, III, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), p. 80.

11 *Foundations* III, p. 82.

12 *Foundations* II, pp. 53-59.

13 C.J. De Vogel, 20-60.

14 T.B.L. Webster, *Greek Art and Literature, 700-530 B.C.* (London, 1959), pp. 24-45 (cited by C. De Vogel, p. 27, fn. 17a).

- 15 Heraclitus, fns. 2, 8, 51, 112 and 114 (trans. by C. De Vogel).
- 16 Heraclitus, fn. 115 (trans. by C. De Vogel, p. 31). See also fn. 45.
- 17 Heraclitus, fn. 101 (trans. by C. De Vogel, p. 31).
- 18 Heraclitus, fn. 115 (trans. by C. De Vogel, p. 31).
- 19 Diog. L. VII 136; Marcus Aurelius IV 14, VI 24.
- 20 Plato, *Republic*, 476, 509-511: *mimesis*.
- 21 Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 2 412 a 28-29.
- 22 George F. McLean, "Philosophy and Technology," in *Philosophy in a Technological Culture*, ed. G. McLean (Washington: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 1964), pp. 14-15. The same Heraclitean line of reasoning is reflected by structuralist insights regarding the need of structures for a single coordinating principle. Inasmuch as the structure is continually undergoing transformation and being established on new and broader levels this principle must be beyond any of the contrary characteristics or concepts integrated within the structure. It must be unique and comprehensive in order to be able to ground and to integrate them all. Jean Piaget, *Structuralism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 139-142. Cf. also George F. McLean, *Plenitude and Participation* (Madras: Univ. of Madras, 1978), pp. 12-15.
- 23 For a detailed consideration of the first weeks after conception and of the point at which an individual life is clearly present, see André E. Helligers, "The Beginnings of Personhood Medical Consideration," *The Perkins School of Theology Journal*, 27 (1973), 11-15; and C. R. Austin, "The Egg and Fertilization," in *Science Journal*, 6 [special issue] (1970).
- 24 Heraclitus, fn. 45.
- 25 Plato, *Republic* I 353 c-d; IV 43 d-e, 435 b-c, and 441 e-442d.
- 26 Plato, *Republic*, VI 609 c. See De Vogel, pp. 33-35.
- 27 C. De Vogel, pp. 38-45.
28. Different cultures, of course, are variously located along the spectrum from individualism to collectivism.
29. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), pp. 52-57 and 118; see Joseph J. Kockelmans, *Martin Heidegger* (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1965), pp. 24-25 and 56-57.
30. *Discourse on Method* in *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, trans. E. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 1969), Part I.
31. Stephen Menn, "The Problem of the Third Meditation," vol. LXVII, *ACPQ* (1993), p. 542.
32. See also *On Free Will* for a more elaborate development of this process.
33. *Ibid.*, 23
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Meditation II*.
36. *Meditation III*.
37. *Ibid.*
38. Menn, *ACPQ*, 548-549.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Francis Bacon, *Novum Organon, De Sapientia Veterum* (New York, 1960).
41. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (London, 1690).
42. René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), I.
43. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII.

44. William James, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (New York, 1907). John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (New York, 1920).
45. Tr. C.K. Ogden (London: Methuen, 1981).
46. (New York: Harper and Row).
47. Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958).
48. Brian Wicker, *Culture and Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1966), pp. 68-88.
49. Robert E. Wood, pp. 140-141.
50. Gadamer, pp. 225-234.

Chapter V

Person as Bliss: From Choice to Democratic Freedom

Recent advances in the understanding of the person are being made by interweaving two main streams of thought regarding the person: one considers the subject as existing in one's own right as conscious and free; the other situates this consciousness and freedom in the person as acting in the world with other persons. Together they provide a context for understanding the development of the moral awareness of the person.

Moral Agent and Moral Growth

The Person as Moral Agent

In Aristotle's project of distinguishing the components of the physical process actions and attributes were found to be able to exist and to be intelligible only in a substance which existed in its own right—there could be no running without a runner. Actions, as distinct from the substantive nature or essence, appeared to be added to the substance in a relatively external or "quantitative" manner. Subsequent developments in understanding the subject in terms of existence have provided protection against this externalism. For in relation to existence, essence does not merely specify the specific nature or kind of the thing; it is rather the way in which each thing is, the way in which each living being lives. Hence, for a person it implies and calls for the full range of activities of a human being. Indeed, essence is often termed nature precisely as that from which these life acts derive.¹ These actions, in turn, cannot be mere additions to the person; they are the central determinants of the quality of one's very life. It is not just that one can do more or less, but that by so doing one becomes a more or less kind, more or less loving, or more or less generous person.

A person should be understood also in terms of one's goals, for activities progressively modify and transform one in relation to the perfection of which one is by nature capable and which one freely chooses. Thus, though infants are truly and quite simply human beings, they are good only in an initial sense, namely, as being members of the human species. What they will become, however, lies in the future; hence they begin to be categorized as good or bad people only after, and in view of, their actions. Even then it is thought unfair to judge or evaluate persons at an early age before it can be seen how they will "turn out" or what they will "make of themselves," that is, what constant pattern of action and hence what character they will develop.

Further, one's progress or lack thereof can be judged only in terms of acting in a manner proportionate to one's nature: a horse may be characterized as good or bad on the basis of its ability to run, but not to fly. One must be true to one's nature, which in that sense serves as a norm of action. In this new sense I am a law to myself, namely, I must never act as less than one having a human nature with its self-consciousness and freedom. Below we shall see a way in which being true to this nature implies constituting both myself and my world.

Boethius classically defined the person as "an individual substance of a rational nature,"² within which Locke focused upon self-consciousness. But conscious nature can be understood on a number of levels. First, it might be seen as a reflective or passive mirroring in man of what takes place around him. This does not constitute new being, but merely understands what is already there. Secondly, if this consciousness is directed to the self it can be called self-

knowledge and makes of the subject an object for one's act of knowledge. Thirdly, consciousness can regard one's actions properly as one's own. By concerning the self precisely as the subject of one's own actions, it makes subjective what had been objective in the prior self-knowledge; it is reflexive rather than merely reflective.

This self-conscious experience depends upon the objective reality of the subject with all the characteristics described above in the section on the self-conscious and free subject. This, in turn, is shaped by the reflexive and hence free experiences of discovering, choosing, and committing oneself. In these reflexive acts the subject in a sense constitutes oneself, being manifested or disclosed to oneself as concrete, distinct, and indeed unique. This is the distinctively personal manner of the self actuation of the conscious being or person.

The result for the person is a unique realization of that independence which above was seen to characterize all subsistent individuals. Beyond the mirroring of surrounding conditions and of those things that happen to one, beyond even the objective realization of oneself as affected by those events, the person exists reflexively as their subject and as a source of action. As a person one has an inward, interior life of which oneself alone is the responsible source. This implies for the person an element of mystery which can never be fully explicated or exhausted. Much can be proposed to me by other persons and things, much can even be imposed upon me. But my self-consciousness is finally my act and no one else's. How I assess and respond to my circumstances is finally my decision; this relates to, but is never simply the result of, exterior factors.

Here finally lies the essence of freedom, of which the ability to choose between alternatives is but one implication. What is essential for a free life is not that I always retain an alternative, but that I can determine myself and carry through with consistency the implications of my self-determination—even, and at times especially, in the most straightening of circumstances. In this the person finally transcends that growth process originally called *physis* or the physical, and hence the personal has rightly been considered to be spiritual.

This, of course, is not to imply isolation from one's physical and social world; rather it bespeaks in the world a personal center which is self-aware and self-determining. More than objective consciousness of oneself as acting, the inward reflexion at the origin of my action is that according to which I freely determine³ and experience myself as the one who acts in freedom. The bond of consciousness with action as deriving from self-determination is crucial for a full recognition of subjectivity. It protects this from reduction to the subjectivism of an isolated consciousness which, being separated from action, would finally be more arbitrary than absolute.

Self-determination in action has another implication: in originating an action the person's experience is not merely of that action as happening to or in him, but of a dynamism in which he participates efficaciously. As a self, I experience myself immanently as wholly engaged in acting and know this efficacy to be properly my own, my responsibility. Hence, by willing a good or evil action, I specify, not only the action which results, but myself as the originator of that action.

Finally, I am aware of my responsibility for the results of my actions which extend beyond me and shape my world. The good or evil which my actions bring about is rooted in good or evil decisions on my part. In making choices which shape my world I also form myself for good or evil. By their subjective character actions become part of the person's unique process of self-realization.⁴

Action then manifests an important dimension of the person.⁵ On the one hand, the need to act shows that the person, though a subject and independent, is not at birth perfect, self-sufficient or absolute. On the contrary, persons are conscious of perfection that they do not possess, but toward which they are dynamically oriented. Hence, the person is essentially active and creative.

On the other hand, this activity is marked characteristically by responsibility. This implies that, while the physical or social goods that one can choose are within one's power, they do not overpower one. Whatever their importance, in the light of the person's openness to the good as such one can always overrule the power of their attraction. When one does choose them it is the person—not the goods—who is responsible for that choice.

Both of these point to two foundations of the person's freedom, and hence of one's ability to be a self-determining end-in-oneself. First, one's mind or intellect is oriented, not to one or another true thing or object of knowledge, but to Truth Itself and hence to whatever is or can be. Second and in a parallel manner, the person's will is not limited to—or hence by—any particular good or set of goods. Rather, because oriented to the Good Itself, it is freely open to any and all goods.

Personal Growth as Convergence of Values and Virtues

Below in tracing the emergence of a culture we will look at the dynamic involved in the evolution of values from free choices made among the range of possible routes to development and perfection. We will see how values serve as lenses which focus our attention and aspirations. Further, we will note the character of virtues as capabilities which one develops and which enable one to pursue the work of shaping his or her life according to his or her values.

In this light freedom becomes more than mere spontaneity, more than choice, and more even than self-determination; it shapes or even constitutes my world as the field of choice and action.⁶ This is the making of myself as a person in a community.

To appreciate this it is necessary to look more closely at the dynamic openness and projection which characterize the concrete person—not only in his or her will, but in his or her body and psyche as well. In order to be truly self-determining the person must not merely moderate a bargaining session between these three, but must constitute a new and active dynamism in which all dimensions of human life achieve their properly personal character.⁷

Bodily or somatic dynamisms, such as the pumping of blood, are basically non-reflective and reactive. They are implemented through the nervous system in response to stimuli; generally they are below the level of human consciousness, from which they enjoy a degree of autonomy. Nonetheless, they are in harmony with the person as a whole, of which they are an integral dimension. As such they are implicit in my conscious and self-determined choices regarding personal action with others in this world.

Dynamisms of the psyche are typified by emotivity. In some contrast to the more reactive character of lower bodily dynamism and in a certain degree to the somatic as a whole, these are based rather within the person. They include, not only affectivity, but sensation and emotions as well, which feelings range from some which are physical to others which are moral, religious and aesthetic. Such emotions have two important characteristics. First, they are not isolated or compartmentalized, but include and interweave the various dimensions of the person. Hence, they are crucial to the integration of a personal life. They play a central role in the proximity one feels to values and to the intensity of one's response thereto. Secondly, they are relatively spontaneous and contribute to the intensity of a personal life. This, however, is not adequate to make them fully personal for, as personal, life is not only what happens in me, but above all what I determine to happen. This can range beyond and even against my feelings.

It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish two directions or dimensions of one's personal transcendence. The first relates to one's world as the object of one's knowledge and/or one's will. This might be called horizontal as an activation of a person inasmuch as he or she relates to

other things and especially to other persons. Such a relation would be poorly conceived were it thought to be merely an addition to a fully constituted person. On the contrary, the person as such is essentially transcendent, that is, open to others. One requires this interaction with others in order to have a language and all that this implies for the formation of thought, to have a moral code to assist one in the direction of one's will, and above all to have a family and community, and thus the possibility of sharing in the hopes and anguish, the love and concern, which give meaning to life.

The other, or vertical dimension of transcendence follows the sequence of levels of personal reality. Personal actions are carried out through a will which is open and responsive to the Good or goodness itself and as such is able to respond to, without being determined by, any particular good or value. Thus, it is finally up to the person to determine him/herself to act. One is able to do this because personal consciousness is not only reflective of myself as an additional object of knowledge, but reflexive or self-aware in its conscious acts.

If such actions derived merely from my powers or faculties of knowledge or will, in acting I would determine only the object of my action. Instead, these actions derive from my self as subject or person; hence, in acting I determine equally, and even primarily, myself. This is self-determination, self-realization and self-fulfilment in the strongest sense of those terms. Not only are others to be treated as ends in themselves; in acting I myself am an end.

It is possible to trace abstractly a general table of virtues required for particular circumstances in order to help clarify the overall terrain of moral action. As with values, however, such a table would not articulate the particulars of one's own experience nor dictate the next steps in one's project toward personal realization with others in relation to the Good. This does not mean, however, that such decisions are arbitrary; conscience makes its moral judgments in terms of real goods and real structures of values and virtues. Nevertheless, through and within the breadth of these categories, it is the person who must decide, and in so doing enrich his or her unique experience of the virtues. No one can act without courage and wisdom, but each exercise of these is distinctive and typically one's own. Progressively they form a personality that facilitates one's exercise of freedom as it becomes more mature and correlatively more unique. This often is expressed simply as 'more personal.'

A person's values reflect then, not only his/her culture and heritage, but within this what he has done with its set of values. One shapes and refines these values through one's personal, and hence free, search to realize the good with others in one's world. They reflect, therefore, not only present circumstances which our forebears could not have experienced, but our free response to the challenges to interpersonal, familial and social justice and love in our days.

In the final analysis, moral development as a process of personal maturation consists in bringing my pattern of personal and social virtues into harmony with the corresponding sets of values along the vertical pole of transcendence. In this manner we achieve a coordinated pattern of personal capabilities for the realization of our unique response to the Good.

Though free and hence properly personal, as was seen above, this is done essentially with others. For this reason the harmony sought within oneself for moral development must be mirrored in a corresponding harmony between modes of action and values in the community and nation in which one lives. (Thus, Aristotle considered his ethics of individual moral action to be an integral part of politics.) If that be true then the moral development of the person as a search for self-fulfilment is most properly the search for that dynamic harmony, both within and without, called peace.

Metaphysics of Freedom: Kant and Shankara

Two great campaigns appear to have marked the history of the last century. One has been to develop science and its related technology. This has achieved a new command by man over energy and electricity and has led, in turn, to a great expansion of the industrial base and of communications.

There was hope that this alone would usher in a new and more humane world, but by the first third of this century the totalitarian and colonial powers had proved that these achievements could be used in quite ambivalent manners. There followed a vast project of liberation from totalitarianism, colonialism, and prejudice of many sorts with a view to recognizing and realizing the freedom of all persons. The last half century might be said to have been marked especially by the march of humankind toward freedom. From the marches of Mahatma Gandhi and the "Long March" of Chinese lore in the 30s, to that of Martin Luther King in the 60s, and the revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989, the aspiration of freedom has electrified hearts, evoked great sacrifices and defined human progress in our age.

Conversely, in each case the achievement of freedom confronts a people with new responsibility for its own welfare, thereby necessitating an intensive program of scientifically coordinated agricultural and industrial development and fiscal management, with corresponding developments in the mode and content of education. Scientific knowledge, practice and formation come increasingly to be seen as keys to the exercise of freedom. Some indeed have thought that what is not according to universal and necessary laws of science, such as political freedom and the creative freedom of culture, to be impediments which should at best be ignored in education or restricted in practice. Thus, the freedom to be truly oneself for which Gandhi fought has been attacked and a new form of colonialism begun, not only from external political power, but from within.

At present this imbalance is being redressed and science has been rejoined first by democracy and now by culture as the watchwords of our times. It is true, here as elsewhere, that wherever there are two or more their unity and integration becomes central to the realization and value of both. So at the present moment a more adequate context is sought which will enable both science and the political and creative freedom of persons and peoples to be realized in order to implement life that is free, democratic and humane.

This suggests that we might helpfully reflect upon life in our century by considering science and freedom and the conditions for their conjoined realization. For this, we shall consider key points in the philosophy of Kant in the hope that this will suggest ways in which the multiple traditions can make a substantive contribution to the conjoint realization of physical, socio-political and cultural well-being.

Descartes' requirements of clarity and distinctness for the human mind pointed modern philosophy toward what is fixed and necessary. Generally, this was below man; as human life and relationships transcend any neat categorizations. Freedom is by definition not necessitated, and love as self-giving is essentially unique and spontaneous. If freedom and love are the highest of human realities, then the search for what is required for them (and hence manifest by them) promises an especially penetrating exploration into the heart of being itself.

What is of special interest here is not only that, after Descartes, this search was taken up by Kant, but that, in this process, Kant came inexorably to an aesthetic context for reality and for thought. This may suggest areas in other philosophical traditions, such as those of Islam and Asia, which are increasingly central to the human quest of our time. Indeed, it is the intent here to suggest

that, far from being in impediment to progress, the metaphysical traditions of India may hold the key to employing the sciences in a way that truly promotes the development of a free people.

To explore this we will: (1) survey philosophical notions of freedom in order to search out the common area of autonomy in contrast to the necessary and universal realm of scientific laws; (2) see how the inadequacies of the minimal sense of freedom as choice found in the liberal tradition and common in our day point to the principled sense of freedom in Kant; (3) analyze the overall structure of Kant's Critiques as this leads the mind to the need for, and the notion of, an aesthetic context for realizing conjointly science and freedom in both its political and cultural dimensions; and (4) look for resources of the Hindu tradition to respond to this need.

Theories of Freedom

Every encyclopedia—especially philosophical ones—must contain a survey of a number of notions of freedom. What is of interest here, however, is not only to list the multiple notions of freedom, but to identify their range and inter-relations in order to arrive at some sense of the essence of freedom. In this there have been a number of basically convergent efforts. One is that of L.B. Geiger to winnow through the senses of freedom identified in Lalande's *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* (pp. 542-551). Geiger's study, done as part of a project for the *Dictionnaire des termes fondamentaux de la philosophie et de la pensée politique*, is limited to the seven definitions of Lalande and to their context in French philosophy.⁸

Here, however, we shall draw especially upon the survey carried out by of Mortimer J. Adler and the team of The Institute for Philosophical Research, published as *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom*.⁹ Their corporate examination of the main philosophical writings identified three correlated modes in which freedom has been understood, namely, circumstantial, acquired and natural, and the corresponding modes of self, i.e., "the ability or power of the self in virtue of which freedom is possessed," namely, self-realization, self-perfection and self-determination."¹⁰ This yields the following scheme:

*Modes of Freedom Modes of Self*¹¹

- 1. Circumstantial <————> 1. Self-realization
- 2. Acquired <————> 2. Self-perfection
- 3. Natural <————> 3. Self-determination

To this schema, political liberty could be added as a variant of circumstantial self-realization and collective freedom as a variant of acquired self-perfection. The modes of self correspond to the modes of freedom, each thereby constituting a class; e.g., self-realization (as permitting an individual to act as he wishes for his own good as he sees it) will always relate to the circumstantial mode of freedom. It is possible, however, that a mode of self might correspond as well to an additional mode of freedom. Thus, the circumstantial mode of freedom is significant not only for self-realization, but also for self-perfection and self-determination.

Using the above scheme the Institute team exemplified as follows the positions on freedom of some typical philosophers.¹²

- I. Circumstantial self-realization: Ayer, Bentham
- II. Acquired self-perfection: Plato, Spinoza

III. Natural self-determination: Descartes, Sartre

IV. Collective freedom: Marx, Nietzsche

N.B. Some philosophers could encompass two or more of these, while Aquinas, Locke, Maritain, Montesquieu and Simon encompass all four.

This categorization has a number of uses: first, it enables one, at a glance, to identify something of the understanding and concerns of a particular thinker regarding freedom; second, it enables one to gauge what comparisons between which philosophers might be possible and potentially helpful on a specific issue.

For our purpose of discovering not only the divisions, but the nature of freedom, this categorization serves a third purpose, namely, it can provide the material for an initial search for the common and, hence, the foundational notion of freedom. This will not be the same as a basic understanding of the ontology or psychology of the politics of freedom—that must be the search of particular theoreticians. However, if an area of convergence in the multiple understandings of freedom can be determined this can orient the attention of the historical and theoretical search toward answering the question, "What is freedom?" and thereby the question "What is the person?"

The team of the Institute for Philosophical Research began their dialectical search for the answer to the question "what is freedom" by dividing theories of freedom among three categories, namely:¹³

(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 the 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"; to this can be added:

(D) *Political liberty*; and

(E) *Collective freedom*.

Note that each of these statements is not a generic statement over and above which the particular theories in the category add a specific difference. Rather, they are analogous statements of the common content of the theories in that category. They are sufficiently open to embrace the different instances in the category and yet sufficiently distinct to enable these to be contrasted to the theories in another category. For example, (B) "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" states a common understanding, which is diversely realized by:

(B1) *Augustine*: To be free is to be able, through receiving God's grace, to escape from bondage to sin and to live in accordance with the divine law, expressing the love of God in everything one wills;

(B2) *Spinoza*: To be free is to be able, through the achievement of adequate knowledge of the eternal necessities, to conquer one's passions and live in accordance with reason or the laws of one's own nature; and

(B3) *Freud*: To be free is to be able, through acquiring insight, to resolve the conflicts within oneself and live with some approximation to the ideal of healthy or integrated personality.¹⁴

All of these differ from A and C in that none of these thinkers would say that A or C are instances of the freedom which they propose, namely, that to be free is: (A) "to be able under favorable circumstances to act as one wishes," or (C) "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."

If now we wish to use these three major types of freedom to look at a still further (X) level of generalization for a single analogous notion of freedom, then we could formulate this search in the following manner:¹⁵

A man who is able

(A) under favorable circumstances, to act as he wishes for his own individual good as he sees it

or

B) through acquired virtue or wisdom, to will or live as he ought in conformity to the moral law or an ideal befitting human nature

or

(C) by a power inherent in human nature, to change his own character creatively by deciding for himself what he shall or shall not become

is free in the sense that he (X).

In carrying out this process of generalization in order to determine what is common to A and C, attention to the following points will be helpful:

a. *Ability to Act*: the power to act appears in A, B and C. It should be taken as open not only to actuation, but to the possibility of acting or not acting, even if that ability is not exercised or is related to different goals. Thus it is:

- A. "the circumstantial ability to perform the movements called for by one's own desires and purposes," i.e., the good as one sees it for oneself,

- B. "the acquired ability to will or live as one ought," i.e. for a goal that is set for, and attracts, everyone, and

- C. "the natural ability to decide creatively the course of one's life or action" with a view to formative changes in one's own character.¹⁶

b. *Analogous Concept*: A general notion of freedom must be open to all of these as regards actuation or at least the power to act, the nature of the ability, as well as its goal. This openness, however, is not one of limitation achieved by simply omitting the difference; it is rather that of being broad enough to include all of these actually, though not explicitly.

c. *Self and Other*: Note that all these concern the self, whether as "self realization," "self-perfection" or "self-determination," and that all do this with some implied contrast to an "other." In the vast survey of related philosophic literature this contrast to the "other" appears in terms of freedom as arising from within, or from my own will in contrast to something or someone outside of myself, or even to the lower and morally intransigent side of human nature if it opposes one's

freedom. One's decisions and plans are one's own only if made by this present active self, and not merely to and for him.

In addition to *an ability to act in a certain way*, which is present in all conceptions of freedom, we now see that such ability or power is that whereby *the self is exempt from the power of another*. Through the exercise of such ability or power, what a man does is *his own act*. It proceeds *from his self*, and the result it achieves is a property *of his self*—the realization of his self, the perfection of his self, the determination or creation of his self. It is not something which happens *in him*, not something which is imposed *on him*, not something which is done *to him* or *for him*.¹⁷

The self, then, is the principle or source of freedom, of the acts he performs which manifest freedom. As the person is not free when subject to an alien power rather than to his own, the terms "independence" and "autonomy" are generally synonymous for "freedom" and "liberty." This is reflected in the treatment of freedom as liberation in ancient as well as contemporary times, of being one's own master (Aquinas, Spinoza) or of autonomy (Kant).

From the three general notions of freedom, Adler and his team drew the following most general statement of freedom: "A man is free who has in himself the ability or power whereby he can make what he does his own action and what he achieves his own property."¹⁸ This has two implications. First, freedom consists in being the active source of what one does or becomes, not, the passive object of what others do. Thus, what one becomes is the result of one's own making, and what one achieves is proper to oneself, i.e., his own or his property. Conversely, unfreedom consists in either lacking the power to make what one does one's own or being overpowered by another so that what happens to one is the work of another.¹⁹

Thence arises the following composite statement of freedom in its three modalities (A-C) and in its most general form (X):

A man who is able

(A) under favorable circumstances, to act as he wishes for his own individual good as he sees it

or

B) through acquired virtue or wisdom, to will or live as he ought in conformity to the moral law or an ideal befitting human nature

or

(C) by a power inherent in human nature, to change his own character creatively by deciding for himself what he shall or shall not become

is free in the sense that he

has in himself the ability or power whereby he can make what he does his own action and what he achieves his property.²⁰

What has been done thus far is to follow Adler's team at the Institute for Philosophical Research as it winnowed the breadth of philosophical literature to identify certain basic categories of freedom and then to draw out a general analogous statement of freedom. This has not been a

theoretical or deductive procedure, but a dialectical one. It looked historically for the various human understandings of freedom and drew from them a sufficiently open description of freedom to include—though not in explicit detail—the positive content of this basic and shared human project and experience.

Now we shall reverse the field, that is, we shall look into the philosophical basis from which have arisen the various theories of freedom identified in the above process of generalization. Our goal here will be to bring to explicit detail the bases, modes and goals of freedom.

What appears striking is that, if one takes not the ways in which some theories overlap and include a number of types of freedom, but the pattern of those which are focused upon only one type of freedom, or if one looks to the highest type of freedom which a theory can take into account, then one finds that each of the three types of freedom delineated by the Institute of Philosophical Research corresponds to an epistemology and metaphysics. Circumstantial freedom of self-realization is the only type of freedom recognized by many empirically-oriented philosophers; acquired freedom of self-perfection is characteristic of more rationalist, formalist and essentialist philosophers; natural freedom of self-determination is developed by philosophers who attend also to the existential dimension of being. This suggests that the metaphysical underpinnings of a philosophy control its epistemology and that especially in modern times this controls its philosophical anthropology and ethics. With this in mind, the following review of the three types of freedom will begin from their respective metaphysical and epistemological contexts and, in that light, proceed to the notion of freedom held by each.

Empirical Choice: Circumstantial Freedom of Self-Realization

At the beginning of the modern stirrings for democracy as noted above, John Locke perceived a crucial need. 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 white 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.²¹ From this 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.²²

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.

As noted above by Adler and his team, the decision in metaphysics concerning the nature of reality and the corresponding decision in epistemology determine our understanding of the nature and meaning of freedom and, indeed, of the person and its life. The results of the exclusions made according to this empiricism are devastating for human life and meaning: there can be no sense of human nature and, hence, no freedom of self-perfection; there can be no sense of human existence and, hence, no natural freedom of self-determination.

In empirical terms, it is not possible to speak of appropriate or inappropriate goals or even to evaluate choices in relation to self-fulfilment. The only concern is which objects among the sets

of contraries I will choose by brute, changeable and even arbitrary will power, and whether circumstance 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.²³ 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 the 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;"²⁴ Bertrand Russell sees it as "the absence of external obstacles to the realization of our desires."²⁵ 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.²⁶ "Liberty consists in doing what one desires,"²⁷ and the freedom of a society is measured by the latitude it provides for the cultivation of individual patterns of life.²⁸ 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 notion of privacy of Justices Holmes and Brandeis, 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 John 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.

Freedom of Law And Essence: Acquired Freedom of Self-Perfection

Kant provides the basis for another, much richer notion of freedom, which Mortimer Adler, in his study of freedom at the Institute for Philosophical Research, has called, "acquired freedom of self-perfection." It acknowledges the ability of the person 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 direction has been taken by such philosophers as Plotinus, Spinoza and Bradley who understood all 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.²⁹ Moral standards are absolute and objective, not relative to individual or group preferences.³⁰

But then we face the dilemma of freedom. If to be of 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 both cases the question is: 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 kind of question takes us to the intimate nature of reality and makes possible new discovery. I would suggest that it may even allow us to appreciate from within the more intuitive insight of the Vedas and, thereby, to engage that thought in new ways particularly adapted to the contemporary issue of freedom and person. To see this, we must look at the structure of the three critiques which Kant wrote between 1781 and 1790: The Critical Decade.

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 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 the need for any search beyond what was reductively sensible and, hence, phenomenal in the sense of being 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 be sought elsewhere, they must come from the human mind. Such *a priori* categories belong properly to the subject and precisely 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 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".³¹ 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."³² 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 this principle.

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."³³ 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 or a boat receding downstream.³⁴ 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 and in a certain relationship. Similarly, the boat is intuited successively as moving downstream, but 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,"³⁵ 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 is active, authentically one's own and creative. Ultimately, however, its work is not free, but necessitated by the categories or concepts as integral to the work of sciences which are characterized by necessity and universality.

How realistic then 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 necessity 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 an occasion not 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 crop irrigation. 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; that is, rather than ignoring the circumstances and laws of my physical being, I coordinate these and direct them for human purposes.

This much can be said by pragmatism. 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*.

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

Beyond the set of universal, necessary and ultimately material relations upon which he focuses in his first *Critique*, Kant points out that the human responsibility lies in the realm of practical reason. If man is responsible, then there is about him a distinctive level of reality irreducible to the universal and necessary 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. 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 all 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, namely, as expressions of a conscious life that is progressively unfolding and becoming more refined.

Many materialist philosophies of a reductionist character, such as positivism and the materialistic dialectic, would have been 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. The positivist hopes by means of Kant's categories to suffuse the concrete Humean facts with a clarity corresponding to the rationalist's simple natures, and thereby to achieve Descartes' goal of walking with confidence in the world.

For Kant, however, this simply will not do. Clarity which comes with the cost 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 as 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 second *Critique of Practical Reason* will be composed in terms of freedom; in the following two years he would write a third *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* in order to provide a context that enables 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.³⁶ 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.³⁷ This would degrade that which is the highest reality in all creation. Rather, freedom is 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.³⁸

The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment

Despite its importance I will not remain with practical reason, because it is rather in the third *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment* that Kant provides the needed context for such harmony.³⁹ He thus approaches the aesthetic sensibility of Confucius in articulating the cosmic significance of freedom. Kant is intent not merely upon uncovering the fact of freedom, but upon protecting and promoting it. He faces squarely modern man's most urgent question: how can this newly uncovered freedom 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 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. 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 would, indeed, have been killed; it would pulse no more as the heart of humankind.

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 Gandhi 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 the significance of culture and to awareness that being itself is emergent in time through the human spirit (see Heidegger above).

To provide this context, Kant found it necessary to distinguish two issues as reflected in the two parts of his third *Critique*. In the "Critique of Teleological Judgment",⁴⁰ he acknowledges that nature and all reality must be teleological, for 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 manifest 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 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",⁴¹ 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. 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?

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 the 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.

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.⁴²

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 how 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 subjected to its laws but restricted and possessed by them. One would be not a free citizen of the material world, but a mere function or servant. In his third *Critique* Kant unfolds how one can truly be master of one's life in this world, not in an arbitrary and destructive manner, but precisely as a creative artist bringing 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 of the free response it generates. It is our contemplation or reflection upon this which shows whether a proper and authentic ordering has or has not been achieved. What shows whether a proper and authentic ordering has or has not

been achieved is not a concept,⁴³ 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.

One could miss the integrating character of this pleasure or displeasure and its related judgment of taste⁴⁴ 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 *Critique*.⁴⁵ This 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 broader 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 a Roosevelt—and, supereminently, in a Gandhi or a 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, and thereby to evoke appropriate and varied responses from each according to his or her capabilities. The danger is that the example of such genius will be reduced to a formula, become an ideology and either exclude innovation or restrict it to a limited range of values. In reality, as personable, free and creative, and if understood as the work of the aesthetic judgment, their example is inclusive both 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,⁴⁶ 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 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 were seen to have stifled creativity and paralyzed the populace.

Kant's third *Critique* points in another direction. Though it integrates scientific 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. In turn, we evaluate these in terms of the free and integrating response of pleasure or displeasure, of the enjoyment or revulsion they generate most deeply within our whole person.

The Asian traditions probably could feel very comfortable with this if structured in terms of an appreciation of harmony. In this way, they could see freedom itself 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, thus understood, is both spectroscopy and kaleidoscope of being. As spectroscopy it unfolds the full range of the possibilities of human life, so that all can be examined, evaluated and admired. As kaleidoscope, it continually works out the endless possible 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 response not only of hate and disgust but especially of love and admiration.

In this manner freedom 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 life as rational and free in this world; it is *creative source*, for with the imagination it unfolds the endless possibilities of human creativity, 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 way of self-realization. In this way, freedom emerges as the dynamic center of human existence.

The Aesthetic in the Hindu Tradition

There is much in this which evokes the content and spirit of Hindu philosophy, and much which that philosophy can contribute in response to the needs such a path implies. Whether aesthetic content is to be found in Hindu culture is not at issue. The outstanding richness of its music, dance and architecture, not to mention the beauty of its patterns of family and village life, or the work of such outstanding poets and writers as Rabindranath Tagore – all reflect the richness of this culture in shaping life from its simplest patterns of human relations to the highest work in the humanities. Nor is there any question that this is a central element in many philosophical schools.

But the *advaita* of Shankara would seem to express the deepest kernel of the Hindu metaphysical inspiration. Some have said that the key role of *avidyia* therein removes definitive meaning from the realm of the senses and imagination, and hence that the basic metaphysics of Hinduism – or Hinduism basically – is at least insensitive to and distracts from, or even that it obstructs and is antipathetic to, the creativity needed by a people who would face aggressively the challenges of contemporary change. Even if it were a major element for the past, could it now play a part in constructing the future?

T.M.P. Mahadevan, a great *advaitin* scholar, was not only quite sensitive to this critique, but took it as a major challenge in response to which he wrote two lectures, published in 1969 as *The Philosophy of Beauty* by the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan as part of their Book University. Early in that work Mahadevan takes a number of basic steps.

First, he defends the seeming negative character of *advaita* in much the same way we saw St. Thomas developing the negative judgement in his approach to the initiation of metaphysics. This was not to reduce reality, but with Parmenides to remove any requirement that anything be limited in order to be: e.g., to be dual or changing, and hence limited, is not of the nature of being. The immediate implication of this is not to suppress the affective dimension and passions found in aesthetic sensibilities, but to sublimate them. As with Hegel, the unity is not an impoverished abstraction, but an integration of all in a higher mode. What is this higher mode? Following the *Pancadasi* Mahadevan points out that *sit-cit-ananda* is reflected in various ways. Existence is reflected in all things; this is joined with consciousness in the lower modes of the mind which still are marked by dullness (*tamas*) and passion (*rajas*). Only the modes of the mind where goodness (*sattva*) predominates reflect all three: existence, consciousness and bliss. Even here "the rule is: the more pure the mode the more intense and clearer is the manifestation of 'bliss'. . . . (Hence)

according to Advaitan aesthetic delight or bliss is a higher manifestation of Brahman than even knowledge or consciousness."⁴⁷ If we follow the orientation of the *Vedanta Sūtras* and begin with inquiry into Brahman, the true interpretation of all things is not from the point of view of limited and multiple beings and their utility. That would lead to a search for physical survival and that only in the most limited terms. Contrary to the *Gīta*, physical survival would become the absolute good; with Hobbes, all would find themselves in a war against all. In an utter inversion of values ego-serving conflict would be the key to one's reality and all would be condemned to a destructive life of conflict and violence. On the contrary, the Upanishadic vision of creation is not that of fulfilling either a need or an obligation, but rather that of plenitude and abundance acting in freedom and playfully. The famous *naturaja* expresses this as the dance of creation.

Hence, to interpret rightly the reality of nature we need to look at it not from the point of view of matter and quantity, but rather from that of God. "Nature, when contemplated, reveals a design which would be unintelligible if God as its ground were not postulated. . . . For such an infinitely ordered and variegated universe, no other cause or ground could be postulated than the omniscient and omnipotent God."⁴⁸

We appreciate this most according to non-dual existence reflected precisely in its highest mode as absolute in the sense of an unconditioned, simple in itself, and ultimate Good. "Beauty," writes Mahadevan, "is value that is intrinsic; it is the ultimate good."⁴⁹

From this follows the *Gīta*'s rule for creation and for creativity: "Whatever has glory, brilliance, and strength, know that to be a manifestation of a part of My effulgence."⁵⁰

For human life this has the greatest importance. We participate in the absolute. This is lived most truly and fully not by following out calculations of self-interest and utility, to which corresponds servitude. Rather it is in play that we live our freedom. This is not a rejection of the quantitative or of utility – all that is integrated but is given further meaning or sublimated in human creativity understood as manifesting a part of divine effulgence. An artist does not leave aside the dark, the ugly or the tragic, but reintegrates these according to the imagination within a divinely grounded vision in which all is redeemed and made part of the awe-inspiring play of Creation. This is real accomplishment; this is true life.

If so, then, how is it to be evaluated and directed? We could attempt to do so exclusively according to our physical nature or even according to the calculus of quantity or utility as is suggested by the modes of thinking which characterized the Enlightenment. But then we are sure to lose sight of the real goal, for we would be living according to the lower modes of the mind which is marked by dullness and passion. Rather we need to act according to a truly enlightened mode of the mind, which is marked most characteristically by bliss. What this is can be approached by reflecting on our experience of seeking the good. While the good has not yet been attained we desire it; upon its attainment, however, desire gives way to pleasure as we enjoy or are filled with happiness at the presence of the good which has been sought.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad*⁵¹ adds that in this joy it is the *Atman* which is the essence (*rasa* i.e. 'savour' or 'taste') that gives satisfaction and causes happiness. This is the blissful character of the Brahman. Enjoyment is the apprehension of *rasa* as preceded by longing. Or, more exactly, rather than it being the apprehension of *rasa* as a distinct object, it is the experience of *rasa*, the very savoring, suggested by G. Florival. The whole experience is one of unison through love with eternal bliss. This evokes that creativity which is the higher realization of our freedom. It is creative precisely to the degree that it reunites all in divine love.

If then today our challenge is to develop the capabilities of science in order to be able to respond to the material needs of our populace and to do this through, rather than against, human

freedom and creativity, then the Advaitic vision of nondualism has much to say. This is in deep accord with the *karma yoga* of the *Gita*: work, but do not be held in servitude to the goal; rather, live fully in the Lord; follow the joy that emerges in your heart, for it is the effulgence of the *Atman*; live not by calculation and competition, but by the deep pleasure found in manifesting the divine bliss in your world.

Existential Freedom: Natural Freedom of Self-Determination

Thus far, we have looked at two notions of freedom which, in their difference, can compliment and unfold one another in the modern effort of humankind to achieve maturity and play an increasingly responsible role in directing social life in our times.

First, we saw how, in the context of the Enlightenment and in order to make possible universal participation in social life, Locke limited the range of meaning to what was empirically available. This assured one sense of freedom, but limited it to choices between contrary qualities. The effort was well-intentioned, but, as with popular democratic culture today, he would seem to have tried too hard and compromised too much in his single-minded pursuit of *freedom of choice*. As a result, the very notion of freedom has not been able to sustain itself, but over time has turned gradually into the black hole of consumerism.

Second, we saw how Kant in his second *Critique* opened a new and much needed dimension of freedom based upon our nature or essence as free beings. This was based upon law, precisely as I assert for myself (autonomously) a law which is fit for all men (universal). It generates a sense of *acquired freedom of self-perfection* according to which I am able, through acquired virtue or wisdom, to will or live as I ought in conformity to the moral law or an ideal befitting human nature.

The aesthetic sense in Kant, which I believe to be central as well to the Hindu tradition, dramatically enriches the pursuit of this freedom. The aesthetic integrates body and spirit, opens all to high ideals and locates in one's free response to the beauty and harmony of the whole the norm of creative human engagement in reality. Kant's work may suggest ways of unpacking the classical Indian potential for contributing to the modern aspirations for freedom; Indian culture can flesh out with centuries of lived experience the abstract model which Kant could only sketch during the decade in which he wrote his three *Critiques*. Together they greatly enrich the Enlightenment effort at constructing freedom and the person by raising its goals. Moreover, they locate the exercise of human freedom, not merely in terms of the human essence as autonomous, but within our aesthetic response to a sense of beauty and harmony which transcends us and inspires awe and delight.

This is progress, indeed; but, in his own philosophy, Hegel both pointed out in theory and illustrated in practice the potential this opens for seriously undermining Kant's sense of freedom. For, if the required context for freedom is based upon proceeding only hypothetically or 'as if' all is teleological, then its very reality is compromised. If its exercise is restricted to the confines of the human imagination, then freedom becomes not only self-determining but self-constituting. Again, we have tried too hard and become trapped within what we can make or do.

We need to go beyond issues of nature and essence. Freedom is not only the articulation of a law, however autonomous and universal this might be (indeed, precisely to the degree that it is autonomous and universal) either in the pattern of Kant's second *Critique*, or at whatever stage of universalization of the sense of justice in the pattern of Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning. Freedom is not merely nature reflected in moral judgements, but human life and action. It is to be humanly, that is, to live fully; this is a matter not of essence, but of existence.

Progress in being human corresponds to the sense of being. This sense advanced from forms and structures, essences and ideas, in Plato, to act in Aristotle, and especially to existence in Christian philosophy. This definitively deepened the sense of human life with its triumphs and tragedies; it set the drama we are living in our day. For it calls insistently for a humanization of the application of our technological abilities and, indeed of life itself. This must be lived not simply in terms of essence, that is, of a moral law or of an ideal befitting human nature. Rather, it must be in terms of existence, that is, 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 do or shall become." This is the third and most radical freedom, namely, our *natural freedom of self-determination*.

Here then is the real issue; indeed, it is the issue of the foundation, nature and extent of reality itself. As the deepest active striving of the human spirit, freedom is of the order of existence; indeed, it is the very meaning of human existence. In turn, it gives full human meaning to the lesser freedoms, namely, to the ability to choose between contraries and to decree universal laws, which are but shadows of the freedom of self-determination.

But if the latter freedom is in the existential order, then the transcendent principle it requires must not be merely hypothetical ('as if'), but must really exist. If freedom presents us with a limitless range of possibilities, then its principle must be the infinite and eternal, the unique source and goal of all possibility. The Hindu tradition is without peer in its appreciation of the transcendent as the key to real liberation: it frees the human spirit from limitation to the restricted field of one's own slow, halting and even partial creative activity; it grounds one's reality in the Absolute; it certifies one's self respect and one's right to be respected by all; and it evokes the creative powers of one's heart.

The source of the beauty imaged, progressively revealed and resoundingly reaffirmed by humans at their deepest levels of heart and mind, must be actual as are the struggles of human life. It must also be infinite as the basis for human freedom and creativity. As such, these are ever open to new affirmation, rather than exhausted, closed, delimited or predetermined. Finally, it must be personal as the principle of life lived in knowledge of truth rather than in falsehood and deception, in love and goodness rather than in hate and evil.

This actual, infinite and personal absolute is what the Vedanta of the Hindus express so richly in the living terms of existence (*sat*), consciousness (*cit*) and bliss (*ananda*). It is also what Christians mean by God, and what they go on to unfold in terms of a Trinity of persons as Father, as Word (Logos or Son), and as Holy Spirit. It is what the Daoists suggest as the Spirit of all spirits and attempt to protect especially through negative terms that are echoed in Christian and Hindu negative philosophy and theology. For, precisely as Absolute, it must transcend the richest efforts of each people, while yet inspiring every person and all peoples in their own histories and cultures.

This takes us far beyond freedom as external choice between objects in our world and beyond freedom as the internal selection of universal principles for the direction of our action. It is rather self-affirmation in terms of our orientation or teleology to perfection or full realization. It implies seeking when perfection is lacking and enjoying or celebrating it as attained. It is in this sense that stability in one's orientation to the good has classically been termed holiness. One might say that it is life as practiced by the saints, but it would be more correct to say that it is because they lived in such a manner that they are called holy.

Thinking in these terms, it would be radically insufficient to reduce one's horizons to a single human person in isolation from others, in a merely self-centered and self-concerned manner, for then life would be stymied at the confines of but one person. Indeed, such a person would have

closed off his or her realization of being, which rather should be open to all of nature and especially to other persons. One's concern for perfection should extend to other persons, and even then not only as regards what I determine as my participation in being or even what I determine for them as their participation in being. Such an exercise of freedom on my part would return to me and remain limited within the confines of my being. Instead, by opening myself to others as free, that is, as they uniquely determine themselves, my engagement in being extends definitively beyond myself to their life and realization.

But persons are still limited, whereas my mind and heart are open to being without end. Situated in an existential context, the pointer of Kant's third *Critique* toward an infinite *telos* takes on further meaning. For it directs us toward the infinite, self-sufficient and properly creative source of our being. Corresponding to that act of infinite freedom by which we live and breathe and have our being, we unite with the act of being by which we are made to be, the act of love by which we have first been loved. Human growth in freedom is the process of self-correction and self-perfection to the point at which we are fully opened to that infinite act of freedom from which we come and to which we tend. The achievement of this openness is the state of Hindu and Buddhist Enlightenment and of Christian mystical union with the divine. There God loves himself in me: "I live now not I", says St. Paul, "but Christ liveth in me." This indeed is freedom writ large and the reason why such a person must be at the dynamic center of every human effort that is good and constructive. This is the real key to civic virtue; it is a transforming presence in the heart of everyone who suffers injustice and, hence, the source of new life for persons and for society.

However, it is possible for one to fall away from the ideal. Human self-consciousness is not only limited, but can be degraded; it can sink from being creative in sharing of self to a self-centered grasping for being which withholds it from others. In abuse of human responsibility, such defective modes reflect not merely their limitations as finite beings, but their refusal to open to others and their choice to close in upon self. In so doing, they abuse their freedom, which thus becomes at once not only their glory, but their exposure to moral evil and collapse.

The struggle to realize freedom and to overcome moral collapse is the content of the universal and basic moral norm: do good and avoid evil. For the Buddhist this goes back to the original inspiration of the Buddha to lead humankind out of suffering. Undoubtedly, through the centuries the scourges of hunger and sickness have been harsh indeed. If they are somewhat extenuated in our day, death and its preludes remain unavoidable. However, it is not the physical, but the moral and the existential suffering which are the most horrific and shocking. What outraged India in the last part of the 20th century was not that a million people went blind but that 100 prison inmates should be deliberately blinded. What terrifies and revolts is not the reality of accidental fires in our cities, but bride burnings and the moral decay they bespeak. What today causes widespread suffering is not plagues upon the land, but selfishness and exploitation in distribution which keeps the new abundance from alleviating the suffering of many.

Christianity too is centered upon this definitive human struggle. Christ has come to join humankind precisely in order to take evil upon himself on the Cross, and to overcome it in his resurrection to new life. Its purpose is not to deny, but to conquer evil. This is the challenge it extends and the hope it generates.

One Christian tradition holds that sin has corrupted human nature, Hegel would say that as a result the truth regarding the transcendent can only be revealed, though it can then be perfected by philosophy. In contrast, the Catholic tradition, which sees the effect of sin not as corrupting, but as weakening human nature, would consider insight regarding the transcendent source to be within the proper capabilities of philosophical reason. In either case, however, it is not a matter of abstract

theory, but of discovering that the foundations of freedom as lived and experienced existentially are to be found only in a living God who created us out of love. Christianity brings further 'good news', namely, that God sent his Son to proclaim through his Resurrection that our freedom cannot be defeated by evil, but is resurgent and in the end will triumph. This is the full truth about humankind.

To the Enlightenment sense of freedom as choice, awareness of the transcendent Creator adds that life is not only a matter of *having*, that is, of selecting between which physical realities we will consume, but of *being* with its characteristics of self-identity, communication, justice and sharing. Beyond this, awareness of salvation through the Cross adds that even suffering can be redemptive and lead to resurrection in a new birth in freedom.

To the aesthetic awareness of Kant, as described above, awareness of the transcendent as the context of human life adds a sense of human meaning, dignity and rights beyond anything that man can construct. It grounds the intuition of human meaning, dignity and rights. This, in turn, evokes a dynamic and creative response from humankind to the gifts of which its very reality is constituted. Historically as well as philosophically, this not only reflects the search of humankind for freedom in our day, but is its source and inspiration, as well as its bulwark against ideological reduction to anything constructed by man, including the community itself.

Conversely, the Enlightenment and Kantian aesthetic sense are important for the unfolding of the Christian vision. The Enlightenment has given egalitarian form to the modern sense of freedom and, hence, to the search for universal participation in social decision making. The aesthetic sense can do much to temper the aggressive excesses of a fallen and, hence, self-centered sense of personal identity by contributing a broad sense of harmony with both man and nature. This is needed in our ever more complex and crowded world.

Hinduism as centered on the sense of the Absolute, with its aesthetics, can provide the space for freedom and creativity in an increasingly technical world, particularly by grounding this in an open and unlimited sense of being. In this it points the way to a life in which science can be at the service of freedom, and freedom, protected by justice, can be lived as creative love.

Notes

1 H. Rousseau, "Etre et agir," *Revue Thomiste*, 54 (1954); Joseph de Finance, *Etre et agir dans la philosophie de Saint Thomas* (Rome, P.U.G., 1960).

2 Boetius, *De duabis naturis et una persona Christi*, c. 3.

3 Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979), pp. 48-50; "The Person: Subject and Community," *Review of Metaphysics*, 33 (1979-80), 273-308; and "The Task of Christian Philosophy Today," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 53 (1979), 3-4.

4 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, pp. 32-47.

5 This goes beyond Piaget's basic law that actions follow needs and continue only in relation thereto. Jean Piaget, *Six Psychological Studies* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), p. 6.

6 Mehta, pp. 90-91.

7 Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, p. 197.

8 "De la liberté, les conceptions fondamentales et leur retentissement dans la philosophie pratique," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 41 (1957), 601-631. See also Daniel Christoff, *Recherches de la liberté* (Paris: Bibliothèque de philosophie contemporaine, 1975).

- 9 Mortimer Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958), 2 vols.
- 10 Adler, I, 586.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 587.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 592-594.
- 13 *Ibid.*, p. 606.
- 14 *Ibid.*, pp. 606-607.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 608.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 609.
- 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 612-613.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 614.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 615.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 116.
- 21 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, A.C. Fraser, ed. (New York: Dover, 1959), Book II, Chap. I, Vol. I, 121-124.
- 22 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960).
- 23 *The Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).
- 24 *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, II, ch. 21, sec 27; vol. I, p. 329.
- 25 *Skeptical Essays* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 169.
- 26 Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom*, p. 187.
- 27 J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 5, p. 15.
- 28 Adler, p. 193.
- 29 *Ibid.*, p. 253.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 257.
- 31 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A 112; cf. A 121.
- 32 *Ibid.*, A 121.
- 33 Donald W. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1974), pp. 87-90.
- 34 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A 192-93.
- 35 Crawford, pp. 83-84.
- 36 Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. R.W. Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959), Part II, pp. 38-58 [421-441].
- 37 Plato, *Republic*, 519.
- 38 *Foundations*, III, p. 82 [463].
- 39 Cf. Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1982), Part I, pp. 1-2, pp. 39-73; and W. Crawford, espec. Ch. 4.
- 40 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1968), pp.205-339.
- 41 *Ibid.*, pp. 37-200.
- 42 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A112, 121, 192-193. Crawford, pp. 83-84, 87-90.
- 43 See Kant's development and solution to 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.
- 44 See the paper of 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, 2003) for an elaboration of the essential notions of the beautiful, the sublime and taste in Kant's aesthetic theory.

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

46 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.

47 T.N.P. Mahadevan, *The Philosophy of Beauty* (Delhi: Bharatya Vidya Bhavan, 1969), pp. 7-8.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 17.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 12.

50 *Gita X*.

51 ii, 7.

Chapter VI

Person as Culture: From Personal Interests to Cultural Traditions

Values

The drama of free self-determination, and hence the development of persons and of civil society, is most fundamentally a matter of being as the affirmation or definitive stance against non-being. This was elaborated at the very beginning of Western philosophy in the work of Parmenides, the first Greek metaphysician. This is identically 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 sustenance and 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. Hence, goods 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.¹

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 one's 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 what is ethically 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, 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.² Thus, 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 values do not create the object; but focus attention upon certain goods 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 endure, 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.³ 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 virtues are developed.

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.⁴

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.⁵ Freedom 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 of meaning 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.

As will be seen below this capacity is not unrelated to space and time and to their specific conditions. The good can be achieved only in the concrete. Hence creativity, 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 one's community as well as one's 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. However, 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 one is familiar; in their exercise, along with the coordinated natural dynamisms they require, one is practiced; and with practice comes facility and spontaneity. Such patterns constitute the basic, continuing and pervasive shaping influence of one's life. For this reason, they have been considered classically to be the basic indicators of what one's 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 exercise one's creativity 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.

Culture

Synchronic

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 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 into a fulfilling pattern. 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 of 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 has focused on the meaning of all this for a people and on how a people's intentional action went about shaping its world. Thus to an experimental science in search of laws he contrasts the analysis of culture 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 Thus there is need to attend to "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 This is culture taken synchronically or as constituting a particular nature.

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, which 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 projects with other persons and peoples, but cultural alienation between peoples. Today, as communication increases and as 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.

Moreover, 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 of civil society into which one enters.

Diachronic: Tradition

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 vivid in premodern and village communities, but would appear to be much less so in modern urban centers. Undoubtedly this is due in part 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 and in response to emerging challenges. 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. This diachronic sense of culture will be treated more below under the heading "Cultural Tradition".

But because tradition has sometimes been interpreted as a threat to the personal and to the social freedom essential to a democracy, it is important here to note that a 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.

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; it 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 of dissatisfaction, and finally of anomie and 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 *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. 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 decisions and mutual concern.

Tradition, then, is not, as is 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 the many facets of a culture, emerges progressively as something upon which personal character and society 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 as civil society.¹⁸

Ultimately, tradition bridges from ancient philosophy to civil society today. It bears the divine gifts of life, meaning and love uncovered in facing the challenges of civil life through the ages. It provides both the way back to their origin in the *arché* as the personal, free and responsible exercise of existence and even of its divine source, and the way forward to their goal; it is the way to both the *Alpha* and the *Omega*.

Cultural Traditions

Today, while moving from a centralized to a more open economy, the nations are engaged not only in balancing all the great forces of the world, but in integrating them into a new and viable whole; the future of civilization is in play. Truly humane progress will be possible only to the degree that peoples are able to find ways of inspiring their disparate elements with values in a way that promotes both the dignity of the human person and the social cohesion and cooperation of its peoples.

Prof. S. Shermukhamedov of Uzbekistan describes spiritual culture as

the system in which the values of human society and humankind are reflected, impressed and incarnated with their needs, wishes, interests, hopes, beliefs, persuasions. This is the world of emotions, sensations, aspirations, views, wills, impulses and actions, as impressed upon the internal world of man and realized through the interaction between society and nature in which man is the subject of national and common values. Man is the highest value and his life, goodness, interests, harmony, happiness are the goals of society.¹⁹

These words reflect an important shift taking place in contemporary culture.

From the time of the great trio of Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, thought has shifted in an objectivist direction. Concern was centered upon the way things were, rather than upon the human person who knows and engages them. This orientation was radicalized at the beginning of modern times which came thereby to be characterized by rationalism.

It is then of epic moment that in our day we should become aware not only of the achievement of this orientation, but also of its limitations and of the way in which it has held us captive. Now new concerns come to the fore reflected not least in the new hopes and aspirations of its peoples. This provides orientation for our search further into the nature of civilizations, their foundations and ways in which they can live together and cooperate in a global age.

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 ineffectual 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, where the normative factor is seen 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 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.²⁰ 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. Its characteristics of unity, truth and justice, goodness and love 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, the very reality of the life of persons and societies.

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 of personal consciousness²¹ – 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 life is built.²²

Conversely, this sense of the good or of value emerges through the concrete, lived experience of a people throughout its history and constitutes its cultural heritage. It 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),²³ "paradigmatic individuals" (Cua)²⁴ or characters who meld role and personality in providing a cultural or moral ideal (MacIntyre),²⁵ 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.

Civilizations

On proceeding into the new millennium we were at a point not only of a change of systems as with a substitution of political parties, but of revision of the very nature of world order itself. Earlier the issue was one of the possession of territory under the leadership of great Emperors or of physical resources and the military-industrial power that entailed. More recently we have seen the world divided by ideologies into great spheres. Since the end of the Cold War, however, it is suggested famously in the work of Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*,²⁶ that the world order is being remade on the basis of the pattern of civilizations. The tragic events of Oct. 11, 2001, show how violent this remaking can be.

This reflects a deep transformation in interests and epistemology. Before, attention was oriented objectively, that is, to things as standing over against (*ob*-against; *ject*-thrown) the knowing subject. In this perspective their quantitative characteristics, according to the classical definition of quantity as parts divided against parts, were particularly salient and were given major importance.

In this new century the subject and its intentional life – or subjectivity and values – come to the fore as phenomenological methods are developed for their identification and interpretation. It can be disputed whether it was philosophers who brought this realm of subjectivity into central awareness or whether it was attention to subjectivity which evoked the development of the corresponding philosophical methodologies. Probably the philosophical methods provided the reflective dimension and control over the new self-awareness of human consciousness. In any case, it is suggested that the new world order will be based not on the resources we have, but on the civilizations we are: not on having, but on being.

According to Huntington the notion of civilization seems to have developed in the 18th century as a term to distinguish cultivated peoples from the barbarian or native populations being encountered in the process of colonization. In this sense it was a universal term used in the singular. It implied a single elite standard of urbanization, literacy and the like for the admission of a people into the world order. When the standard was met the people was "civilized"; all the rest were simply "uncivilized".

In the 19th century a distinction was made between civilization as characterized by its material and technological capabilities and culture as characterized by development in terms of the values

and moral qualities of a people. The two terms tend to merge in expressing an overall way of life, with civilization being the broader term. Where culture focuses on one's understanding of perfection and fulfillment; civilization is more the total working out of life in these terms. Hence civilization is culture, as it were, writ large.

This appears in a number of descriptions of civilization where culture is always a central element: for F. Braudel civilization is "a cultural arena",²⁷ a collection of cultural characteristics and phenomena; for C. Dawson: it is the product of "a particular original process of cultural activity which is the work of a particular people";²⁸ for J. Wallerstein it is "a particular concatenation of worldview, customs, structures, and culture (both material culture and high cultures) which form some kind of historical whole."²⁹

Taken as a matter of identity it can be said that a civilization is the largest and most perduring unit or whole – the largest "we".³⁰ The elements included are blood, language, religion and way of life. Among these religion is "the central defining characteristic of civilizations",³¹ as it is the point of a person's or people's deepest and most intensive commitment, the foundation on which the great civilizations rest.³² Hence the major religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism) are each associated with a civilization, the exception being Buddhism which came as a reform movement, was uprooted from its native India, and lives now in diaspora among other nations.

Civilizations endure over long periods of time. While empires come and go, civilizations "survive political, social, economic even ideological upheavals."³³

International history rightly documents the thesis that political systems are transient expedients on the surface of civilization, and that the destiny of each linguistically and morally unified community depends ultimately upon the survival of certain primary structuring ideas around which successive generations have coalesced and which then symbolize the society's continuity.³⁴

But this does not mean that they are static. On the contrary it is characteristic of a civilization to evolve and the theories of such evolution are attempts to achieve some understanding of the process, not only of the sequence of human events but more deeply of the transformation of human self understanding itself. Famously, Toynbee theorizes that civilizations are responses to human challenges; that they evolve in terms of establishing increasing control over the related factors, especially by creative minorities; and that in the face of troubles there emerges a strong effort at integration followed by disintegration. Such theories vary somewhat in the order of stages, but generally they move from a preparatory period, to the major development of the strengths of a culture or civilization, and then toward atrophy. In any case, these imply cycles extending over very long periods.

It is significant that in the end, however, Huntington is not able to give any clear definition or civilizations or rigorous distinction between them. Whereas Descartes would require just such characteristics for scientific knowledge, Huntington notes that civilizations generally somewhat overlap, and that while no clear concept can be delineated civilization are nonetheless important.

Civilizations have no clear cut boundaries and no precise beginnings and endings. People can and do redefine their identities and, as a result, the composition and shapes of civilizations change over time. The cultures of peoples interact and overlap. The extent to which the cultures or civilizations resemble or differ from

each other also varies considerably. Civilizations are nonetheless meaningful entities, and while the lines between them are seldom sharp, they are real.³⁵

In this light it can be seen that a shift of world order to a pattern not of empires or commercial blocks, but of civilizations bespeaks a great development in human consciousness, beyond the external, objective and physical, to the internal and subjective, the spiritual and indeed the religious. In contrast to Descartes it appears that what is most significant in the relations between peoples, indeed what defines them as peoples, is a matter not accessible by scientific definition, but a matter of far more inclusive aesthetic appreciation. It is in these terms that personal life commitments and interactions between peoples are realized.

But if culture is a matter of values and virtues, that is, of subjectivity, it should be possible to gain rich insight into the reality of, and the relations between, cultures through a phenomenological approach calculated to examine the dimension of subjectivity from within and in its own proper terms. This will be the task of the following chapter which will look to the relations between cultures and peoples which has emerged as the central issue of our times.

Notes

1 Ivor Leclerc, "The Metaphysics of the Good," *Review of Metaphysics*, 35 (1981), 3-5.

2 *Ibid.*

3 *Laches*, 198-201.

4 *Metaphysics XII*, 7.

5 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, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1996), pp. 365-420.

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, "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).

9 V. Mathieu, "Civiltà," *ibid.*, I, 1437-1439.

10 G.F. Klemm, *Allgemein Culturgeschichte der Menschheit* (Leipzig, 1843-1852).

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, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), pp. 199-222.

17 H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1975), pp. 245-253.

18 *Ibid.* Gadamer emphasized 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 many countries.

19 "Issues Regarding the Interaction of Spiritual Culture and Social Progress," in *Spiritual Values and Social Progress: Uzbekistan Philosophical Studies I*, eds. S. Shermukhamedov and V. Levinskaya (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), p. 10.

20 Gadamer, pp. 245-253.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 258.

23 Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 12-13.

24 *Dimensions of Moral Creativity: Paradigms, Principles and Ideals* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978).

25 *After Virtue*, 29-30.

26 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

27 *On History* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1980), pp. 177, 202.

28 *Dynamics of World History* (La Salle, Il: Sheed and Ward, 1959), pp. 51, 402.

29 *Geopolitics and Geoculture: Essays on the Changing World System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

30 Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, p. 43.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 47.

32 C. Dawson, p. 128.

33 F. Braudel, *History of Civilizations* (New York: Penguin, 1994), p. 35.

34 A. Bozeman, *Strategic Intelligence and Statecraft* (Washington: Brassey's, 1992), p. 62.

35 Huntington, p. 43.

Chapter VII

Person as Relations: From Conflict to Convergence

The issue of human rights is first of all one of human dignity and the respect due to the human person as such, and hence to every and any human person. They are classified into three, reflecting their progressive articulation in the United Nations declarations: negative as rejecting actions that violate human dignity, e.g., torture; positive as affirming the goods to which all humans should have access, e.g., food, work and education; and cultural as extending to the spiritual dimension integral to the full development of human beings.

This latter group takes on special interest as we enter a global age in which peoples intersect and interact, not only along with their cultures, but in terms of these cultures. Thus, to treat of the theoretical foundation of human rights as the progress of the sense of person in a global age we must look at the nature of the interaction of cultures and civilizations.

This would appear to require two steps which will be the structure of this chapter. Part I provides the bases by considering the opening of human awareness of subjectivity in the last half of the last century and the access this provides for appreciating the nature and formation of cultures. Part II takes up the relations between civilizations, especially in their religious roots, for which it will be necessary to study: (a) the new global unity and a proportionate mode of thinking this unity (Nicholas of Cusa), (b) the way in which this is differentiated from within by each culture in its process of self-definition and transformation (analogy of proper proportionality), and (c) the relation between these cultural traditions and civilizations (the notions of participation and analogy of attribution).

Subjectivity, Cultures and Civilizations

The Opening of Subjectivity

In 1900, Whitehead would later write, he thought that physics was complete as a science and that only some details remained to be worked out. At the time atoms were considered the smallest building blocks of the physical world. During the succeeding century, however, physicists broke into the atom and managed in that radically new and totally unknown dimension to work out the yet more basic components of the atom and their interrelations. The result was a total transformation of physics and radically new human capabilities for transforming the physical world through this more basic level.

What would it mean, we might ask then, if we could discover not merely the interior make up of the lonely atom, but that of the human being? And what if this understanding could be had not merely for the human genome, but for the inner constitution and operation of the life of human consciousness with its capacities for creative freedom and social interaction?

This indeed is precisely what has happened in the last century. It explains why we are able now to talk of cultures and face the issue of intercultural relations in new, at times tragic, yet potentially hopeful ways.

The history of this development might be traced back politically to Masaryk, the Protestant founder of Czechoslovakia. He sent off the young Jewish scholar, Edmund Husserl, for studies in Vienna with the small gift of a writing box and the large gift of an introduction to Franz Brentano. From his Catholic heritage, Brentano was sensitive to Aristotle's notion of intentionality or the

inner directedness of the human mind and heart. This had been honed by centuries of experience in the interior spiritual life, classically described in *The Spiritual Combat* by Lorenzo Scupoli, with its great coterie of the giants of the Catholic spiritual tradition from Augustine to St. Theresa of Avila.¹

Later in his search for the foundations of arithmetic Husserl was led ineluctably to the essential operation of human consciousness. Where objectively the number 3 may consist of three units, arithmetic is rather a matter of being able to hold these three simultaneously and to manipulate them through patterns of relationships.

But where some had classified this as psychology and interpreted it in the external objective categories of the sciences, Husserl, by following with great acuity the notion of intentionality received from Brentano, was able to discover the distinctive character of human consciousness and develop a pattern of techniques for uncovering it or bringing it to light – as indicated by the etymology of the term ‘phenomenology’: *phe* (light)-nomen-ology.

The difficulty with this, consisted not in its brilliant accomplishment, but in its being only part, if an essential one, of the understanding of human consciousness. For if human consciousness were left to itself then it would be a consciousness of consciousness, ricocheting back and forth as in a hall of mirrors and thereby entrapping the human spirit in itself. It was the accomplishment of his successor, Martin Heidegger, to open Husserl’s phenomenology to the metaphysical level where the work of human consciousness could be appreciated as the emergence of being into time. In this light the work of human consciousness was no longer a matter of private dreams or even of mere objective correspondence; rather truth was an unveiling of being from, via, and as, the work of human consciousness.²

Heidegger’s successor, Hans-Georg Gadamer, was able to appreciate this in its yet broader character as not solely that of an isolated consciousness, but rather of the human person as born in, and of, a family and raised in a community with its distinctive symbol system, language and history. To this he responded with the development of a historical hermeneutics as a process of interpretation of this conscious evolution of communities which, writ large, are cultures,³ and written yet more broadly are the civilizations, which Huntington described as the largest "we".⁴

The Development of Cultures and Civilizations

Let us briefly review once again this emergence of being as culture in the human person and the community described at greater length above. To do this we must note briefly the character of being by returning to the early Greek philosopher, Parmenides, the first to identify being, in his famous *Poem* identified a basic rule for thinking about being, namely that it is never to be confused with, or reduced to, nonbeing.⁵ This is apparent in more overt terms through our experience of our inability to annihilate anything – even a rock when crushed will always leave a remainder. But being not only resists non being, it is active and, as can be seen in plant life, when given the conditions will grow, flower and bear fruit in pursuit of its proper *perfection* (i.e., to make [*facere*] through and through [*per*]). At the animal level these functions are carried out in a conscious manner: the animal seeks out its sustenance and defends its life, even ferociously when necessary.

All of this is present in the human person, who adds self-consciousness and self-determination. When to this is added the imagination, the human person is able to work out endless ways of responding to the environment – physical, social and spiritual – in pursuit of self-realization or perfection at all these levels.

In the light of this emergence of being in the complex unities which are human persons and communities, it is possible now to garner a deeper sense of the reality that is culture. If it be true that the human person and community as self-conscious and imaginative have multiple, almost limitless ways of pursuing their perfection, then it becomes necessary to set priorities, that is, to give greater weight to some than to others. Etymologically, to weigh more (*valere*) is the root of 'value'. This might be a matter of external objects of preference, but here it is especially of those more internal and spiritual qualities which shape our action.

In turn, a pattern of values and actions will develop a set of special capabilities or strengths (*virtus*, whence "*virtue*"). Virtues interlock with values in a mutually reinforcing symbiosis that progressively shapes the overall context of personal and social life. Concretely this is the way children can be raised or cultivated; hence the term "*culture*" as the way to cultivate the soul.

But, of course, circumstances change; new challenges and opportunities arise. Hence the culture is under continued reevaluation by each generation which must decide what to pass on to its children and how to adapt it in order that it be life giving for them. The content of this continued process of testing over time, reevaluation, adaptation, application, and passing on (*tradere*) is termed the "*tradition*".

A cultural tradition is marked then by three characteristics:

- First, it is fundamentally a creative work of freedom. As freedom is the inner exercise of the unique human existence, it is a unique expression of the life of a people as consciously lived and freely committed. This then needs to be understood as it were from within as one's deepest life commitment.

- Second, as it is the only real possibility available to a person or people for a life of meaning and dignity for themselves and their children, nothing will be defended more rightly or more fiercely when necessary.

- Third, as a culture is the effect of the exercise of human freedom exercised consciously at the level of spirit, it can be said rightly that culture is the place where the Spirit of a people dwells. The cultural heritage of a people is the proper effect of the work of the Spirit with and through them; it is the cumulative result of divine providence leading the people through history.

Global Unity

The new global reality is essentially a new awareness of unity. This emerged visually with the landing of the astronauts on the moon in 1969. What they *found there* was uninteresting. But what they *did there* transformed human self-understanding, namely expand human consciousness to the earth as a whole – a single globe, round and beautiful.

Since then we have moved inexorably in this wholistic direction. Gradually we have begun to appreciate the environment as one, so that all human planning must take into account the effect which the project will have on the overall ecology, local, national and global. With the end of the cold war this has become true in the economy as it has organized itself as a single world system; in politics as the various regional and overarching unities have developed; and in informatics as a single and integral world outlook is increasingly disseminated and assimilated.

The coordinated impact of all these dimensions constitutes a change of horizon which is not only quantitative and incremental, but qualitative. Life is being lived differently, indeed globally, in our day.

This means that new thinking is required for this new age. Modern times extending over the previous four centuries was rightly called the age of reason as all was reduced thereto; it was indeed a hegemony of rationalism. To begin this all prior knowledge was excluded (Locke's blank tablet),⁶ placed under doubt (Descartes),⁷ or simply smashed (Bacon's idols)⁸ in order to rebuild exclusively with clear and distinct concepts. Such concepts will be univocal, universal and necessary, for from them all unique difference and hence freedom has been removed. In this process of analysis in search of the basic components and their synthesis, the focus is on the parts and their interrelations; their synthesis as a whole eludes one's grasp. In these terms it is possible to carry on negotiations to determine which part will be forfeited for what other, but the sense of the whole corresponding to the organic character of a culture, civilization or globe is simply not available. Dialogue between civilizations is not possible.

To these processes of discursive reasoning is contrasted *intellection* or understanding by which one grasps a whole, and in terms of which its parts are then appreciated. Rice⁹ contrasts the two as the experiences, on the one hand, of walking through a valley, in which one first encounters each object one by one and then assembles them, and, on the other hand, seeing all from a hilltop, whence all is seen as a whole and the parts are seen in their inter-relations. Intellection is a distinct act of human consciousness and whose practice we need to refresh in our day.

In this light Nicholas of Cusa speaks of four progressive levels of unity:¹⁰

1. the simple unity of any individual being,
2. a complex unity assembling multiple simple individuals,
3. a global whole with its diversity, about which we are directly interested here, and
4. the absolute unity of God himself.

Globalization directs our attention to #3, but as we shall see not without the engagement of the others.

As we noted above the development of human technological capabilities now urges upon us environmental concerns. We have to think of the impact on the overall ecology of the use of rivers for expelling industrial wastes, or of the use of carbohydrates as fuel upon the ability of the ozone-sphere to protect us from the radiation of the sun.

When now we think in contemporary terms of globalization the earlier thought of Nicholas of Cusa finds new application. This appears when we consider globalization as a matter not only of a single economic or political system (hard power), but also of information and communication (soft power). Here hermeneutics is called upon to play a special role. What it suggests is not the imposition of an abstract universal which would suppress the unique differences which are characteristic and indeed essential to the various cultures. Nor is hermeneutics a simple transfer of a component from one culture to another for, as in medicine, the challenge is the way an organic reality rejects any addition from an alien source and how this can be overcome.

Hence, hermeneutics looks rather for an inner transformation of a culture, stimulated by seeing desirable elements in other cultures, but achieved not by transplantation from without, but precisely by drawing creatively upon one's own cultural resources.

Note that this respects the freedom and cultural identity of a people. It does not simply adjust their culture according to international or world economic and political dictates, but works to adjust the economic and political order according to what the people want to be and to become, or more probably to achieve a proper accommodation between the two.

Nicholas of Cusa, who often is described as the last of the medievals and the first of the moderns, considered *intellection* of the whole as the key to understanding. That is, to think in terms of the whole and to retain this as the basis of the meaning of all the particular components of the whole, which then are appreciated precisely as contractions or limited realizations of the whole: the whole as contracted to this or that. This echoes, in reverse, the classical notion of participation, not in its meaning as *mimesis* or image, but rather in its sense that the multiple images never exhaust the whole.

This has two immediate implications for Cusa. First, that the multiple are complementary one to the other, for the other is that contraction of the whole which I fail to realize myself but which – thinking always in terms of the whole – my meaning requires. Second, that the multiples are therefore essentially related one to the other. Just as the father is such only through the son and vice versa, the very definition of the one includes the reality of the other. This, rather than conflict and competition, can be the basis for human cooperation in a global age.

Pluralism and the Convergence of Civilizations

As works of creative human freedom cultural traditions are differentiated from within. They are similar as being pursuits of their own perfection in their own way. The similarity here is had not by omitting or abstracting elements in order to achieve sameness or univocity between cultures, or by lessening the fervor with which each pursues their own perfection and in their own way. Rather, it lies in the very vigor of the pursuit of perfection by the many peoples each in their own manner.

This reflects the seeming paradox that as free, distinct and unique they are similar in the very uniqueness and distinctiveness of their free pursuit of perfection. How is this to be understood?

Cultural Differentiation from Within: Analogy of Proper Proportionality

Cornelio Fabro concludes the second of his two major studies of participation¹¹ with a chapter on analogy, which he describes as the language of participation. To look further into the nature of relationships between cultures, it will be helpful to employ the tools of analogy and the long discussions on its nature and multiple modes.

What is salient for us is that analogy is first of all contrasted to univocity. Univocous terms have always and only the same meaning. It is the strength of science to proceed exclusively by this manner of term; as a result the conclusions are not only exact, but necessary and universal in application. But such terms are obtained by omitting what is unique to each. Though this is acceptable in the realm of things or objects, cultures, as we have seen, are effectively the cumulative freedom of a people. Freedom, in turn, is precisely and essentially a unique affirmation of a being, and expresses in turn the uniqueness of its author. If it has been the tragedy of the past that this uniqueness has been suppressed and lost, it is the hope of the future that abstractive processes can now be supplemented by other modes of knowledge sensitive to the uniqueness of cultures. Hence for work on culture and their relationships we need to move to another type of term, not univocous but analogous.

Beside univocity there is another type of predication, namely, equivocity, in which what is predicated is simply different in each case. This has a number of types. In one the same term happens to be used of two things only by accident without any relation between them. Thus, the term ‘pen’ is used for an instrument for writing and for a place for holding pigs. But, of course,

the cases of equivocity which are of interest to us are those where the same term is used intentionally.

One is the analogy of attribution or a "three term" analogy.¹² Here a term is applied to two or more cases due to the fact that each is dependent upon the same one reality as its cause. The perfection exists formally only in the one cause or primary analogate, but the name is applied to the others inasmuch as they depend upon that one. Typically this is the case of healthy as applied to food and to a scalpel. We shall return to this below.

Another type of analogy is that of proper proportionality or a "four term" analogy. This consists of at least two proportions which realities are not identical or equal to each other, but are similar only in the proportion that each represents within itself, i.e., in the relations of A to B and of C to D

A:B :: C:D

Note that this is not metaphor in which what is real is only one of the proportions, of which the other proportion is only illustrative (the real smile on the face being described by an imaginary sun on the valley, or vice versa). In contrast, here in the analogy of proper proportionality both proportions are real.

In the effort to analyze the nature of the analogy of proportionality in the early 1930s in the face of the totalitarian threats of the times, Penido saw that it was seen necessary to underline the fact that this was not a half way point between univocity in which all were the same and equivocity in which all were simply different, for if the uniqueness of each were not assured from the beginning, Penido found, it could not later be regained.¹³ Hence the definition of this analogy as somewhat the same and somewhat different was rejected. Instead it was emphasized that this was in fact a matter of equivocity in which the two analogates were first of all simply different or equivocal. Thus, each element is distinct in the analogy:

the existence of A the existence of B
----- : : -----
the essence of A the essence of B

There is nothing of A in B, neither its existence nor its essence.

This is important for cultures as the products and bearers of human freedom in all of its uniqueness. One is simply not the same as the other in any part. Yet in the midst of the differences the two are somewhat the same in that each is a relation of its unique existence to its proper essence or an actuation of essence by its own proportionate existence. They are differentiated from their deepest principles, yet both are somewhat the same as realizations of existence, each in its own way.

When applied to culture as works of human freedom it can be seen that each culture is differentiated from its deepest origin, that is, in the very nature of its arising from human freedom. Their degree of sameness lies in each culture being a unique way of striving after its own perfection. Consequently, attenuating the exercise of what is proper to my culture or religion is not a way of relating to, being more cohesive with, or being one with other cultures or religions. Rather, it is precisely in the uniquely personal exercise of one's freedom, i.e., in one's total effort to realize one's *esse* and achieve fulfilment according to one's own nature and culture, that we are alike. As free humans are similar precisely in and by their free exercise of being by which,

paradoxically, they are at the same time most unique in themselves and most distinctive vis or vis others.

Convergence of Civilizations: Analogy of Attribution

There is a danger here rightly noted by Prof. Gyekye,¹⁴ namely, that by so stressing the uniqueness and diversity of the many cultures and locating this in the vigorous pursuit of perfection in one's own terms each might be trapped in isolation in one's own culture, that each life might be simply incommensurable with other cultures, which then would be unable to comprehend or worked with.

In the four term analogy of proper proportionality it is necessary to assure that each pair, while not equal or identical (univocous) with the other, nonetheless does have real similarity to the others. For this we need to call upon another type of analogy, the three term analogy of attribution, by which two are similar by their causal relation to a third on which they both depend. Here the proper perfection being considered is in the third, i.e., in the one upon which the others depend. This is the creative power of the divine source on which all depend, and which is unique to the absolute One in which all participate. This is the one in the *pros hen* analogy of being in Aristotle¹⁵ or the *mimesis* of Plato. But, because Plato and Aristotle were working in terms of substance as form, this participation was in an identity of kind: it explained things only in terms of their species, the perpetuation of which was their final purpose.

In the subsequent development of appreciation of existence in the tradition from the early Church Fathers and the medieval Islamic, Jewish and Christian philosophers this came to be seen as a matter not only of formal participation, but of intensive existential participation as developed by Cornelio Fabro.¹⁶

What is essential in this existential, transcendental or metaphysical realization of participation is not that each is a replication of the same form in an identity of kind. Rather each is an actual realization of being according to the exercise of freedom that has come to constitute this as a unique culture. Yet each is similar in being related to the one cause on which each depends. Hence there is a similarity in each of the effects of the absolute one in that each depends for its being on the One Creator, source or efficient cause.

If now we reverse the type of causality in order to speak in terms not of the efficient cause or source, but of final cause, end or goal something very interesting emerges that is especially appropriate to the issue of cultures. As seen above cultures are ways of cultivating the soul, i.e., ways in which one's good or perfection can most appropriately be pursued. When this is deepened to religions – which S. Huntington notes are the basis of civilizations and hence of cultures, as the specific relation (re-ligatio or 'binding back', as an etymology of 'religion') to the one God – then we find that each religion is totally distinct yet convergent in its direction to the One. In this case, it is not only that the religions are analogous by a proportion of proportions which expresses their intense and unique pursuit of their own perfection, but that all, while coming each from a distinct quarter, converge because they tend toward the same Goal.

In this light, the danger of a relativism in which each is incommensurable and incomprehensible to the other falls away and does so in the very distinctiveness of the pursuit by each which is at root pursuit of the one divine. Rather than being simply isolated from, and against, one another, they are both unique and convergent in their deepest search for perfection and self-realization which is participation in the one divine. From this follows a founded hope, namely, that the more the cultures approach the one goal of their pilgrimages the more they will be able to

appreciate the significance and complementarity of each other. In other words the cultures will be natively more cooperative with one another precisely to the degree that they advance in their own realization.

Conclusion

In this way our global age opens new hopes:

First, as seen in terms enriched by human subjectivity the various cultures can be read from within and thereby seen, as with Heidegger's *dasein*, as the mega manifestations of Being in time.

Second, cultural traditions as the cumulative freedom of a people are unique to the life project of each and are to be protected and promoted.

Third, employing Cusa's ability to think in terms of the whole, the many cultures come to be seen as complementary and interrelated one with another.

Fourth, in order to explore this in greater depth the analogy of proper proportionality enables one to appreciate something truly amazing and unexpected, namely, that it is in the very distinctive and unique pursuits of the good by each culture they are similar. This is not in some formal abstraction cut off from life or applied univocously to the destruction of the multiple cultures. Hence, Christians can appreciate and admire the single minded adhesion to the One by Moslems and are able to do so through their own unique experience of devotion to the divine.

Fifth, when the mutual appreciation of cultures in their most basic pursuits is clarified by means of the analogy of attribution taken in terms of final causality as each culture pursues its perfection, the image this forms is that of Isaias in which all peoples of the earth are on convergent pilgrimages to the Holy Mountain, where God will be All in all.

Notes

1 Lorenzo Scupoli, *The Spiritual Combat* (London: Burns, Oates and Washburn, 1935); Augustine, *Confessions* (New York: Knopf, 2001); and Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle* (Garden City, N.J.: Image Books, 1961).

2 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Albany: SUNY, 1996).

3 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*.

4 Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*.

5 Fragments 3 and 6 in G.F. McLean and P. Aspell *Readings in Ancient Western Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1970), p. 40.

6 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Collier, 1965).

7 René Descartes, *Meditation on First Philosophy*, trans E.S. Haldane and G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911).

8 Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum* (New York: Library of Liberal Arts, 1960).

9 Eugene Rice, "Nicholas of Cusa's Idea of Wisdom," *Traditio*, 13 (1957), 358.

10 David de Leonardis, *Ethical Implication of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998), pp. 47-50.

11 Cornelio Fabro, *Participation et Causalité selon S. Tomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: Université Catholique de Louvain, 1961), and *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino*.

12 See J. Ramirez, P.O. "De analogia secundum doctrinam Aristotelico-thomisticam," *Ciencia tomista*, 24 (1921), 34-38.

13 See M.T.-L. Penido, *Le role de l'analogie en theologie dogmatique* (Paris: Vrin, 1931), pp. 37-40, 53-57; cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 16, a. 6.

14 Kwame Gyekye, *Beyond Cultures: Perceiving a Common Humanity: Ghanaian Philosophical Studies, III* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004).

15 Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978).

16 Cornelio Fabro, *Participation*.

Chapter VIII

Person as Gift: From Love to Global Peace

Self-Concern and Self-Transcendence: The Contemporary Problematic

A dialectic of the personal and the depersonalizing appears to be one of the paradoxes of recent experience. For a number of economic, educational and other reasons, the past decades have been marked in many parts of the world by a massive migration from the countryside into the towns and cities.¹ At first it was thought that the size of the town and of the factory would relieve the personal pressures of village life, that when the obligation of a more extended family and the all-seeing eyes of the neighbors were remote, persons and families could be truly free. Tolerance understood in this passive manner as non-interference – or was it non-caring? – was considered desirable and, indeed, appears to have constituted no small attraction, drawing many young families to the city.² In fact, however, the problems of life are never so easily solved. Upon reflection, it can be seen that the attempt to dispense with so basic a dimension of the person as his/her social character was doomed to failure, for it generated through social dissatisfaction and deep loneliness a living death.³

Further, the ever more close interaction of increasingly diverse peoples, which has characterized modernization, urbanization and nation-building, could only exacerbate, rather than resolve, problems of living with others. As the level of work rises above a mere carrying out of orders, as parents begin to play an active role in planning goals for schools and health, civil society emerges. And as people take a more active role in a democratic system, and as all of these economic, educational and political decisions increasingly affect and are affected by national and international life, the level of interaction between persons increases geometrically. Decisions come to be made less individually and autocratically, and more through discussion in the home or workplace, community or nation, indeed the world. Tomonobu Imamichi speaks of a basic inversion of the practical syllogism reflecting the fact that energy, transportation and communications are provided by a developing technology and now are largely in common possession. It is not I, but *we*, who have these means; hence, it is *we* who must choose. Further, it is no longer a matter of choosing in terms of a goal to which they will be applied. Now the means are so large that we are burdened with the responsibilities of husbanding these massive means with which we now are charged and determining goals which render them profitable and regenerative.

Anonymity and disengagement from others is neither realizable nor desirable. Modern life intensifies the need to interact positively with an ever expanding range of peoples, traditions and interests, and this at ever more penetrating levels of life and work.⁴

The problem is one of self-identity in interaction with others, of the constitution of the human person in free and responsible interchange. Hence, growth in self-knowledge and self-identity is now required if we are to move from a passive posture of patience to a positive search, to assimilate views drawn from the experiences of others, and to weld them into the complementary systemic relations required for modern living.⁵

A brief catalogue of present tensions suggests the depth and difficulty of the problem of taking the step from passive tolerance to active inter-change and unity. First, within the person there exist multiple tensions between, on the one hand, the traditional content of one's culture built upon community and, on the other hand, the cumulative and often depersonalizing demands of a life

whose every phase is ordered according to the abstract rationalizations of industry and commerce, educational systems and political theory.

Secondly, between social, national, and other groups – and on the basis of the most subtle shadings of color or style of hair, birth or personal mannerism – one group comes to be considered not merely slightly different, but markedly inferior, or somewhat threatening. Even where no differences exist, some negative evaluation is imposed in order not fully to accept or recognize a group's freedom and dignity. Often the group resides in a distinct sector of a country or even of each town, surrounded by a climate of apathy or, more probably, of incipient antipathy. In some cases, they are cast out to swell the growing tide of the world's 14,000,000 refugees, where they languish in camps, wander in hunger, and are indiscriminately exploited or even attacked. This is a primary problem of our time.

Thirdly, this phenomenon of alienation reappears between countries and continents; it shadows man's every advance. As the ability is developed to communicate and interact with peoples and cultures ever more distant and diverse, the modalities of alienation keep step, adopting ever more sophisticated and powerful economic and even military forms.

At the present juncture, we face a particularly exacerbated form of these tragic tensions. After a half to three quarters of a century of attempts to supplant the natural bonds of human community by a notion of class scientifically constructed upon the triumphant industrialization of the machine age, peoples were freed to seek their destiny once again. Suddenly, it has become urgent to face ancient frictions as well as more recent and unresolved grievances – often the results of forced transport of peoples in cruel and despotic attempts at social engineering and territorial expansion. What is more, this must be done in the context of new and unaccustomed independence and before the civilizing factors of the various cultures have been able to be identified, much less rebuilt.

This is the excruciating, lived dimension of the basic metaphysical problem of self-identity and, hence, of otherness. To ignore the depth of the contemporary problematic would restrict one's response to the level of compromises and accommodations possible in terms of the particular sciences. These alleviate the symptoms while delineating the terms and planting the seeds for subsequent confrontation and conflict.

The real problems of interrelation between persons and cultural groups can be faced only by looking more deeply into the nature and origin of self-awareness and of self-identity to see whether this sets one against others or, on the contrary, unites persons; and, whether and how this can ground positive interaction or cooperation in the face of the intercultural tensions – even the clash – of civilizations of our day.

The previous chapters have suggested ways of understanding: the person in terms of living and creative traditions; harmony as a philosophy of freedom, of transcendence as a foundation for the dignity and meaning of human life, and of suffering as a path to resurrection and life. This chapter will look ahead, not in the sense of a man-made utopia – because that would restrict human freedom since it could never reflect the full richness of life – but in seeing the person as gift and the implications of this for harmony and peace.

It is possible to develop such a vision in terms of beauty and the aesthetic order, but in so doing it is necessary to conceive this in such a way that it does not detract from, but transforms humankind and its interactions in space and time. Above we saw that in terms of existence and unity the many could be reconciled in the vision of the Transcendent One: as all persons are participations in this One they are brothers and sisters one to another. The danger remains that this would be overcome by either/or self-centeredness, on the one hand, and an overriding emphasis upon community, on the other.

It would be possible to build the vision in terms of truth, or consciousness, also as treated above. This is more commonly found in philosophies of justice, whether in the liberal mode of Rawls or in that of critical theory. But, if the problem of egoism is not resolved, there is danger that focusing upon justice might lead to being dragged back into conflict over possessions and profits.

To protect against this and to open the road to creative progress, it is important to go further in terms of the good and of love. There are two approaches to this, one directly in terms of being, the other in terms of our self-consciousness as persons.

As noted above, in the appreciation of being as standing against nonbeing or nothingness lies the basis for the notion of "perfection," in the sense of the complete realization of a being according to its nature. When realized, this balance of the nature and actuality of being constitutes a stable state; but when not yet realized it is the basis for seeking "perfection" – a plant grows, an animal seeks food, and human seeks to know. In this way the good, as the perfection of being, is the basis of the dynamism of the human search, not only as realizing the achievement of perfection, but of awakening the search thereof.

This participational relation of all limited beings to the All-perfect divine as source and goal creates a dynamic field for all beings in which the human will is able to choose any instance of perfection in its search for its perfection. Yet at the same time, it is not necessitated by anything less than Perfection Itself. The all-perfect is then the creative context of human life. Unfortunately, if one's search for perfection closes upon self, this very dynamism becomes corrupted into a basis for conflict with others.

Once placed within the context of the transcendent as infinite and All-perfect, however, something more appears which transforms the total meaning of life. For then one observes that the All-perfect source has created not out of a need or self-seeking; the work of creation is not a search for self-realization, but rather a sharing of perfection. In this, being comes to be seen in a dramatically new light, namely, not simply as self-seeking, but as self-sharing and self-communicating. The dynamism of being, then, is much more than a mean struggle for survival; it is rather a search for creative realization and sharing.

Affectivity

This insight, derived from the creative love of the divine and concerning the basic generosity of being, is ever in conflict with the creature's self-centeredness which shrinks the self to ego as each person desires to establish him or herself by him or herself. Milton's account of *Paradise Lost* becomes too truly a parable of our lives, describing in classic terms what Sartre states more technically as modern man wanting to be both 'in-himself' and 'for-himself'.

There are reasons in the very nature of modern thought why this has become a special problem in our times. In order to achieve scientific control of life in terms of mathematical clarity and empirical evidence, the dimension of teleology by which persons are drawn beyond themselves was put to one side. Also excluded from consideration was affectivity, one of the idols in Bacon's terminology. The result has been a highly rationalized and analytic view of life in which all that is not subject to being reduced by the mind to simple empirical components or as a distinct part of Descartes' "man-machine" was rejected. In these terms the affective dimension of life came to seem irrelevant to understanding the person for it had no place in rational calculation. Humankind itself was to be understood by reduction to single, simple and indifferent individuals as its basic

reality. The result was a sense of isolation in a lonely crowd, and accompanying asocial or antisocial behavior.

Indeed, these proclivities have come to be so ingrained in some cultures and are so characteristically modern that it would seem less likely that the implications of universal principles such as those of human rights would be appreciated, much less be able to overcome self-centered concerns. Hence, it is necessary to look foundationally into human experience itself and follow the way in which, at the various levels this bespeaks affectivity, and thereby engagement with others. These are not compromises of our rights (Hobbes), but modes of self-realization in the context of time and space.

An important philosophical development of our times has been phenomenology as a method of looking into human consciousness (Husserl), especially in its embodied spatial and temporal condition. Here the usual horizon of perception is reversed. The approach is not that of a detached observer who perceives only external realities as objects. Nor is it that of the human mind in a process of active self-reflection and self-determination. Instead the point of reflection is that of affectivity as the originary mode of finite being, that is precisely its capacity for reception. Just as a painful impression is not something distinct from its perception but is the presentation of the pain itself, so affectivity is itself a presentation in subjectivity of the reception of being.

To appreciate this it should be noted that time has a reversible character. There is retention from the past as this goes through the process of self-constitution and hence must retain from the past what it accomplished (otherwise there would be but a series of discrete moments and no constitution of self). There is also protention, a reaching toward the future, toward realizing all that is hoped for. The two mutually imply each other, similar to the way in which one hand cannot touch the other without being touched. I do not constitute myself in time without retention of the past, but such retention implies that each moment is future oriented.

This retention from the past is not merely speculative; it is an active process of positive constitution. Further, as it is the constitution of my self, it has an affective and even passionate character. Looking toward the past there is fascination with the sense of original paradise or perfection, which is combined with anguish at its loss. At the same time, the protention toward the future is essentially a desire of the perfection it promises yet anguish at the direction of life toward death. Thus, in affectivity the extension or distension of life from birth to death intersects experientially or perpendicularly with the intentionality of feeling or affectivity, both positive and negative, – of hope and fear, as Plato says in his *Laches* – to constitute our lived experience.

Lived precisely as mine, this constitutes my life as a deeply experienced emotive and emotional reality, reversibly both moving and moved. Indeed, the degree of its affective intensity, whether positive in enjoyment or negative in horror, constitutes the qualitative level of our life. Hence, if one wishes to transcend, in the sense not of dismissing but of sublimating the quantitative reductionism that is the effect of the scientific fascination of the modern mind, then it is to this qualitative dimension, realized in affectivity, that one should turn.

Gift

This affective sense is most alive in our response, not simply to our various physical sensations, but to other persons to whom we turn in elation and sorrow and hence in whom we peer most deeply into ourselves. "In introopathy, I situate myself both here and there, as the other of the other but with an otherness which is mine"⁶, so that reversibly, in Husserl's words, "to feel one's body is also to feel it as for the other".⁷ This is most important for our sense of self-

awareness, for this takes place in the context of relatedness: it is in the other that I come to recognize myself. In this lies the radical corrective to self-centeredness in the human experience of pride which is the root of all evil and sin. For in this light I am decentered: I lose my sense of being the whole in relation to which all else is subordinated. Instead, it is in the other that I appreciate myself as personal.

This has great meaning when seen in terms of the origins of our bodily life from our parents and particularly the psychological implications of this origination. Here again we are not taking the position of an impartial observer of some isolated and objective fact, but are interested in the affective dimension as expressive of the qualitative character of our life. But if "what is lived affectively is seen only afterward in its effect upon behavior in the world"⁸, then we should look into the psychoanalytic interchange of human life in order to appreciate the deep affective reality of retention and protention, our deepest hopes and fears, from which this emerges.

When we do so we see that the affectivity of the child is derivative not of a mere biological event, but of the mutual recognition or openness of the parents to each other. Emerging from this the infant enters into finite existence as a realm of meaning already marked by the established loving relation between one's parents. This points one beyond the Oedipal stage. By identification with the parent of the same sex one enters into one's proper existence. This is not a role added on indifferently, but the beginning of one's proper mode of existence.

As specified sexually in the body one's identity is properly relational; it is toward the other sex. As received from the meaning-giving act of procreative love of the parents this is not a mere physical fact, but an inscription of the child into the circle of meaningful relations with its polarity of anguish and desire. This interdependent existential relationality is constitutive of the relational growth of the person.

Taken as such, this teaches the child the symbolic dimension of a sense relationship. In the experience of Oedipal jealousy, by living affectively the reality of the sexual difference the child discovers the meaning of the notion of "*différence*" in general, that is to say, the notions of relationship, connection and symbolic meaning. He or she grasps the field of meaning as such and what underlies every form of rationality.⁹

Thus, for the human person what begins in the sexual *différence* where all differences are by the same token relational in the affective order of meaning, expands along with the development of consciousness into the broad panoply of the physical universe as a meaningful whole and through all the modes of personal and social encounter. This generates the truth of cultures and of civilizations with their scientific and aesthetic, ethical and political articulation.

As noted above this affective pattern of extended and sophisticated hopes and fears is not an object of observation that can be properly thematized. Rather, as a system of correlations of the experience of anguish and desire, it is our life-world which, writ large, is not simply our experience of being as if of an object, but is the life of being as received, lived passionately, and transmitted to others.

In the light of this reflection on the affective dimension of being a number of considerations emerge. First, a philosophy constructed on a physical and quantitative paradigm is in principle inadequate to take account of the human and social quality of a persons' life. Such a scientifically calculable approach to reality expunges from life all meaning and value. It threatens the culture not only of one people, but of humanity as such. This is the terrible pathology of the Enlightenment

which comes increasingly to consciousness and calls for a post-modern world. This must consist not in a solitary, skeptical sense of rejecting foundations and principles as many would want, but in sublimating these within the free and creative life of the spirit lived passionately and essentially with others.

Thus, the affective experience of meaning through desire and anguish manifests much that is of the greatest importance for human life in our times. A metaphysics and ontology, or study of being, carried out as if being or existence were indifferent to consciousness and bliss, would be an abstraction in which the term 'being' would have extension (that is, can refer to each thing), but not the intention or depth of meaning required as the context of a life of meaning and value. This implies, in turn, the need for a metaphysics of Being which is "love," for it is this which gives meaning to humanity. This is not an arbitrary construct reflective only of the human, but a sharing by all in that bliss which is eternal and gives temporal life great meaning and beauty. One key manner in which to look at human life then is that of gift, reflection thereupon should provide the foundation projecting one into cooperation with others as neighbors in a life whose purpose is sharing in eternal bliss (*ananda*).

Lived temporally and in interrelation, otherness intersects at the existential level of anguish and desiring. This is realized concretely from birth until death against the original background of giving life from generation to generation. This implies for being a personal and, therefore, affective dimension. Transposing the Heideggerian context, this evokes the Being which "loves" man and gives him meaning.¹⁰

Person as Given

This can be approached in another phenomenological manner by reflecting carefully on the mode of operation of our own conscious life. One place to begin is with the person as a polyvalent unity operating on both the physical and non-physical levels. Though the various sciences analyse distinct dimensions, the person is not a construct of independent components, but an identity: the physical and the psychic are dimensions of myself and of no other. Further, this identity is not the result of my personal development, but was had by me from my beginning; it is a given for each person. Hence, while I can grow indefinitely, act endlessly, and do and make innumerable things, the growth and acts will be always my own: it is the same given or person who perdures through all the stages of his or her growth.

As noted in the previous section this givenness appears also through reflection upon one's inter-personal relations. I do not properly create these, for they are possible only if I already have received my being. Further, to open to others is a dynamism which pertains to my very nature and which I can suppress only at the price of deep psychological disturbance. Relatedness is given with one's nature and is to be received as a promise and a task; it is one's destiny. What depends upon the person is only the degree of his or her presence to others.¹¹

Unfortunately, this givenness is often taken in the sense of closure associated with the terms 'datum' or 'data', as hypothetical or evidential. On the one hand, in the hypothetical sense a given is a stipulation agreed upon by the relevant parties as the basis for a process of argumentation: granted X, then Y. The premises of an argument or the postulates in a mathematical demonstration are such. On the other hand, in the evidential sense, data are the direct and warranted observations of what actually is the case. In both meanings, the terms 'given' or 'data' direct the mind exclusively toward the future or consequent as one's only concern. The use of the past participle

of the verb stem (*data*) closes off any search toward the past, so that, when one given is broken down by an analysis, new givens appear. One never gets behind some hypothetical or evidential given.

This closure is done for good reason, but it leaves open a second – and, for our purposes, decisively important – sense of ‘given’ which is expressed by the nominative form, ‘donum’ or gift. In contrast to the other meanings, this would seem to point back, as it were, behind itself to its source in a manner similar to the ways historians use the term ‘fact’. They note that a fact is not simply there; its meaning has been molded or made (*facta*) within the ongoing process of human life.¹² In this sense, it points back to its origin and origination.

However, this potentially rich return to the source was blocked by the shift at the beginning of the 19th century from an empiricist to an anthropocentric view. In this horizon, facts came to be seen especially as made by humans. These were conceived either as individuals in the liberal tradition, or as classes in the socialist tradition – to which correspond the ideals respectively of progress and praxis. However, because what was made by humans could always be remade by them,¹³ this turned aside a radical search into the character of life as gift. Attention remained only upon the future, understood simply in terms of man and of what man could do either individually or socially.

There are reasons to suspect that this reductive humanism is not enough for the dynamic sense of a cultural heritage and a creative sense of harmony as cooperation with others. Without underestimating how much has been accomplished in terms of progress and praxis, the world-wide contemporary phenomenon of alienation not only between cultures, but from one’s own culture and people suggests that something important has been forgotten. First, by including only what is abstractively clear these approaches begin by omitting that which can be had only in self-knowledge, namely, one’s self-identity and all that is most distinctive and creative in each people’s heritage. Focusing only upon what is analytically clear and distinct to the mind of any and every individual renders alien the notes of personal identity, freedom and creativity, as well as integrity, wholeness and harmony. These characterize the more synthetic philosophical and religious traditions and are realized in self-knowledge, deep interpersonal bonds,¹⁴ and under the personal guidance of a teacher or guru.¹⁵

Second, there is the too broadly experienced danger that in concrete affairs the concern to build the future in terms only of what has been conceived clearly and by all will be transformed, wittingly and unwittingly, into oppression of self-identity and destruction of the integrative work of cultures, both as civilizations and as centers of personal cultivation. Indeed, the charges of cultural oppression and the calls for liberation from so many parts of the world raise founded doubt that the humanist notion of the self-given and its accompanying ideals can transcend the dynamics of power and leave room for persons, especially for those of other cultures.

Finally, were the making, which is implied in the derivation of the term ‘fact’ from ‘facere’, to be wholly reduced to ‘self-making,’ and were the given to become only the self-given, it might be suspected that we had stumbled finally upon what Parmenides termed "the all impossible way" of deriving what is from what is not.¹⁶ His essential insight that all is grounded in the Absolute – which is shared by the Hindu, Islamic and Judeo-Christian traditions – is a firm guard against such a self-defeating, stagnating and destructive route.

Person as Gift

It is time, then, to look again to the second meaning of 'given' and to follow the opening toward the source implied in the notion of gift. Above, we had noted some indications that self-identity and interpersonal relatedness are gifts (*dona*). Let us now look further into this in order to see what it suggests regarding the dynamic openness required for cooperation between persons and cultures.

First, one notes that as gift the given has an essentially gratuitous character. It is true that at times the object or service given could be paid for in cash or in kind. As indicated by the root of the term 'commercial,' however, such a transaction would be based on some merit (*merito*) on the part of the receiver. This would destroy its nature as gift precisely because the given would no longer be based primarily in the freedom of the giver.

The same appears from an analysis of an exchange of presents. Presents cease to be gifts to the degree that they are given only because of the requirements of the social situation or only because of a claim implicit in what the other might have given me. Indeed, the sole way in which such presents can be redeemed as gifts is to make clear that their presentation is not something to which I feel merely obliged, but something I personally and freely want to do. As such, then, a gift is based precisely upon the freedom of the giver; it is gratuitous.

There is here a striking symmetry with the 'given' in the above sense of hypothesis or evidence. There, in the line of hypothetical and evidential reasoning, there was a first, namely, that which is not explained, but upon which explanation is founded. Here, there is also a first upon which the reality of the gift is founded and which is not to be traced to another reality. This symmetry makes what is distinctive of the gift stand out, namely, here the originating action is not traced back further precisely because it is free or gratuitous. Once again, our reflections lead us in the direction of that which is self-sufficient, absolute and transcendent as the sole adequate giver of the gift of being.

Further, as an absolute point of departure with its distinctive spontaneity and originality, the giving is non-reciprocal. To attempt to repay would be to destroy the gift as such. Indeed, there is no way in which this originating gratuitousness can be returned; we live in a graced condition. This appears in reflection upon one's culture. What we received from the authors of the *Vedas*, a Confucius or an Aristotle can in no way be returned. Nor is this simply a problem of distance in time, for neither is it possible to repay the life we have received from our parents, the health received from a doctor, the wisdom from a teacher, or simply the good example which can come from any quarter at any time. The non-reciprocal character of our life is not merely that of part to whole; it is that of a gift to its source.¹⁷

The great traditions have insisted rightly both upon the absolute reality of the One and upon the lesser reality of the multiple: the multiple is not the Real, though neither is it totally non-reality. Anselm's elaboration of the notion of privation contains a complementary clarification of the gratuitous character of beings as given or gifted. The notion of privation was developed classically by Aristotle in his analysis of change, where privation appeared at the beginning of the process as the lack of the form to be realized. He saw this as more than non-being, precisely in as much as it was a lack of a good which is due to that subject. Hence, in substantial change, because the basic potential principle is prime matter to which no specific form is due, privation plays no role.

Anselm extended this notion of privation to the situation of creation in which the whole being is gifted. In this case, there is no prior subject to which something is due; hence, there is no ground

or even any acceptance. Anselm expressed this radically non-reciprocal nature of the gift – its lack of prior conditions – through the notion of absolute *privation*.

It is *privation* and not merely negation, for negation simply is not and leads nowhere, whereas the gift is to be, and once given can be seen to be uniquely appropriate. It is absolute privation, however, for the foundation is not at all on the part of the recipient; rather it is entirely on the part of the source.¹⁸ This parallels a basic insight which is suggested in the *Upanishads* and is perhaps the basic insight for metaphysics.

In the beginning, my dear, this world was just being (*Sat*), one only, without a second. . . . Being thought to itself: ‘May I be many; may I procreate.’ It produced fire. That fire thought to itself: ‘May I be many; may I procreate.’ It produced water. . . . That water thought to itself: ‘May I be many; may I procreate.’ It produced food. . . . That divinity (Being) thought to itself: ‘Well, having entered into three divinities [fire, water, and food] by means of this living Self, let me develop names and forms. Let me make each one of them tripartite. (*Chandogya Up.*, 6.1-3, 12-14.)

To what does this correspond on the part of the source? In a certain parallel to the antinomies of Kant which show when reason has strayed beyond its bounds, many from Plotinus to Leibniz and beyond have sought knowledge, not only of the gift and its origin, but of why it had to be given. The more they succeeded, the less room was left for freedom on the part of man as a given or gift. Others attempted to understand freedom as a fall, only to find that what was thus understood was bereft of value and meaning and, hence, was of no significance to human life and its cultures. Rather, the radical non-reciprocity of human freedom must be rooted in an equally radical generosity on the part of its origin. No reason, either on the part of the given or on the part of its origin, makes this gift necessary. The freedom of the human person is the reflection of one is derivation from a giving that is pure generosity: a person is the image of God.

In turn, on the part of the gift this implies a correspondingly radical openness or generosity. The gift is not something which is and then receives. It was an essential facet of Plato’s response to the problems he had elaborated in the *Parmenides* that the multiple can exist only *as* participants of the good or one. Receiving is not something they *do*; it is what they *are*.¹¹⁹ As such, they reflect at the core of their being the reality of the generosity in which they originate.

The importance of this insight is attested from many directions. In Latin America, some philosophers begin from the symbol earth as the fruitful source of all (reflected in the Quechuan language of the Incas as the "*Pacha Mama*"). This is their preferred context for their sense of human life, its relations to physical nature, and the meeting of the two in technology.²⁰ In this they are not without European counterparts. The classical project of Heidegger in its later phases shifted beyond the unconcealment of the being of things-in-time, to Being which makes the things manifest. The *Dasein* provides Being a place of discovery among things.²¹ Being maintains the initiative; its coming-to-pass or emission depends upon its own spontaneity and is for its sake. "Its ‘there’ (*Dasein*) only sustains the process and guards it," so that, in the openness of concealed Being, beings can appear un-concealed.²²

The African spirit, especially in its great reverence of family, community and culture – whence one derives one’s life, one’s ability to interpret one’s world, and one’s capacity to respond – seems uniquely positioned to grasp this more fully. In contrast to Aristotle’s classical ‘wonder,’ these philosophers do not situate the person over against the object of his or her concern, reducing both

to objects for detached study and manipulation. They look rather to the source whence reality is derived and are especially sensitive to its implications for the mode and manner of one's life as essentially open, communicative, generous and sharing.

Harmony and Generosity

In the light of this sense of gift, it may be possible to extend the notions of duty and harmony beyond concern for the well-being of those with whom I share and whose well-being is, in a sense, my own. The good is not only what contributes to my perfection: I am not the center of meaning. Rather, being is received and, hence, is essentially out-going.

Seen in terms of gift, person and community manifest two principles for social dynamism in the development of a cultural tradition of harmony: complementarity which makes the formation of culture and interchange possible, and generosity which passes it along in an active process of tradition. First, as participants in the one, self-sufficient and purely spontaneous source, the many are not in principle antithetic or antipathetic one to another. Rather, as limited images they stand in a complementary relation to one another as participants or images. This is reflected in the enjoyment experienced in simple companionship in which, by sharing the other's experience of being, each lives more fully: the result is more than the sum of its parts. What is true here of individual persons is true as well both of groups of peoples and indeed of peoples and of the cultures they create through self-knowledge. It is this complementarity, derived from their common origin, which makes cooperation in work and decision making, whether in commerce or in culture, fundamentally possible and ultimately desirable.

This has two important implications for the person and for relations between peoples. Where the Greek focus upon their heritage had led to depreciating others as barbarians, the sense of oneself and of one's culture as radically gifted provides a basic corrective. Knowing and valuing oneself and one's culture as gifts implies more than merely reciprocating what the other does for me. It means, first, that others and their culture are to be respected simply because they, too, have been given or gifted by the one Transcendent source. This is an essential step which Gandhi, in calling outcasts by the name "harijans" or "children of God," urged us to take beyond the sense of pride or isolation from which we would see others in pejorative terms.

But mere respect may not be enough. In fact I and another, my people and another, originate from, share in and proclaim the same Self, especially as Good or Bliss. This implies that, to the degree that our cultural traditions share in the good, the relation between the integrating modes of human life is in principle one of complementarity. Hence, interchange as the effort to live this complementarity is far from being hopeless. In the pressing needs of our times, only an intensification of cooperation between peoples can make available the indispensable immense stores of human experience and creativity. The positive virtue of love is our real basis for hope.

A second principle for interchange is to be found in the participated – the radically given or gifted – character of one's being. As one does not first exist and then receive, but one's very existence is a received existence or gift, to attempt to give back this gift, as in an exchange of presents, would be at once hopelessly too much and too little. On the one hand, to attempt to return in strict equivalence would be too much, for it is our very self that we have received as gift. On the other hand, to think merely in terms of reciprocity would be to fall essentially short of my nature as one that is given, for to make a merely equivalent return would be to remain centered upon myself where I would cleverly trap, and then entomb, the creative power of being.

Rather, looking back I can see the futility of giving back, and in this find the fundamental importance of passing on the gift in the spirit in which it has been given. One's nature as given calls for a creative generosity which reflects that of one's source. Truly appropriate generosity lies in continuing the giving through participating in one's tradition, shaping it creatively in response to the needs of the day and the discoveries of the era, and handing on this good to others. This requires a vast expansion or breaking out of oneself as the only center of one's concern. It means becoming effectively concerned with the good of others and of other groups, and for the promotion and vital growth of the next generation and of those to follow.

Implications for Social Life

The implications of such generosity are broad and at times surprisingly personal. First, true openness to others cannot be based upon a depreciation of oneself or of one's own culture. Without appreciating one's worth, there would be nothing to share and no way to help, nor even the possibility of taking joy in the good of the other. Further, cultural interchange enables one to see that elements of one's life, which in isolation may have seemed to be merely local customs and purely repetitive in character, are more fundamentally modes in which one lives basic and essential human values. In meeting others and other cultures, one discovers the deeper meaning in one's own everyday life.

One does more than discover, however. One recognizes that in these transcendental values of life – of truth and freedom, of love and beauty – one participates in the dynamism of one's origin and, hence, must share these values in turn. More exactly, one comes to realize that real reception of these transcendental gifts lies in sharing them in loving concern in order that others may realize them as well. This means passing on one's own heritage and protecting and promoting what the next generation would freely become.

Finally, that other cultures are quintessentially products of self-cultivation by other spirits as free and creative implies the need to open one's horizons beyond one's own self-concerns to the ambit of the freedom of others. This involves promoting the development of other free and creative centers and cultures which, precisely as such, are not in one's own possession or under one's own control. One lives, then, no longer in terms merely of oneself or of things that one can make or manage, but in terms of an interchange between persons as free and peoples of different cultures. Personal responsibility is no longer merely individual decision making or for individual good. Effectively realized, the resulting interaction and mutual fecundation reaches out beyond oneself and one's own culture to reflect ever more perfectly the glory of the one Source and Goal of all.²³

This calls for a truly shared effort in which all respond fully, not only to common needs, but to the particular needs of each. This broad sense of tolerance and love in a time of tension has been described by Pope John Paul II as a state in which violence cedes to peaceful transformation, and conflict to pardon and reconciliation; where power is made reasonable by persuasion, and justice finally is implemented through love.²⁴

Notes

1 Vance Packard, *A Nation of Strangers* (New York: McKay, 1972).

2 Richard Sennett, *Authority* (New York: Knopf, 1980), pp. 84-121.

3 David Riessman, *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1961); J. B. Lotz, *The Problem of Loneliness* (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1967).

- 4 Peter Drucker, *The Age of Discontinuity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).
- 5 Imamichi, *ibid.*, pp. 4, 6 and 8.
- 6 Florival, p. 5.
- 7 *Expressed Philosophic Premise*.
- 8 Florival, p. 1.
- 9 Florival, p. 8.
- 10 Florival, pp. 10-11; M. Heidegger, "L' homme habite en poète" in *Essais et conferences*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p. 244.
- 11 Maurice Nedoncelle, "Person and/or World as the Source of Religious Insight" in G. McLean, ed., *Traces of God in a Secular Culture* (New York: Alba House, 1973), pp. 187-210.
- 12 Kenneth L. Schmitz, *The Gift: Creation* (Milwaukee: Marquette Univ. Press, 1982), pp. 34-42. I am particularly indebted to this very thoughtful work for its suggestions. I draw here also upon my "Chinese-Western Cultural Interchange in the Future" delivered at the International Symposium on Chinese- Western Cultural Interchange in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Arrival of Matteo Ricci, S.J., in China (Taiwan: Fu Jen Univ., 1983), pp. 457-72.
- 13 Karl Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, nos. 6-8 in *F. Engels, Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy* (New York: International Publishers, 1934), pp. 82-84. Schmitz, *ibid.*
- 14 A.S. Cua, *Dimensions of Moral Creativity: Paradigms, Principles and Ideals* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1978), chaps. III-V.
- 15 W. Cenkner, *The Hindu Personality in Education: Tagore, Gandhi and Aurobindo* (Delhi: South Asia Books, 1976).
- 16 Parmenides, *Fragment 2*.
- 17 Schmitz, 44-56.
- 18 Anselm, *Monologium*, cc. 8-9 in *Anselm of Canterbury*, eds. J. Hopkins and H. W. Richardson (Toronto: E. Mellen, 1975), I, pp. 15-18. See Schmitz, 30-34.
- 19 R.E. Allen, "Participation and Predication in Plato's Middle Dialogues" in his *Studies in Plato's Metaphysics* (London: Routledge, Keegan Paul, 1965), pp. 43-60.
- 20 Juan Carlos Scannone, "Ein neuer Ansatz in der Philosophie Lateinamerikas," *Philosophisches Jahrbuch*, 89 (1982), 99-116 and "La Racionalidad Científico- Tecnológica y la Racionalidad Sapiencial de la Cultura Latino Americana," *Stromata*(1982), 155-164.
- 21 William J. Richardson, *Heidegger: Through Phenomenology to Thought* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1967), pp. 532-535.
- 22 Joseph Kockelmans, "Thanksgiving: The Completion of Thought," in Manfred S. Frings, ed., *Heidegger and the Quest for Truth* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1968), pp. 175-179.
- 23 Schmitz, 84-86.
- 24 John Paul II, "Address at Puebla," *Origins*, VIII (n. 34, 1979), I, 4 and II, 41-46.

Epilogue

Perspectives for Living Together in a Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious World

Introduction

To identify and respond to the challenges encountered in today's multi-cultural world one needs first to identify the distinctive nature of these newly global times. Further, if religion is the way we trace such questions back to the source and goal of life and live what Paul Tillich would call our "ultimate concern,"¹ then it is no surprise that the dialogue between religions is basic to the present concerns for living together.

Yet, attention to culture and cultural diversity is quite recent in philosophical and religious circles. If Aristotle is right in saying that philosophizing begins with wonder, then certainly it is something to wonder about that today's key issue of cultural identities and the relations between them has come so recently to human attention. It was not until the World Congress of Philosophy in 1988 in Montreal that the issue of culture was publically recognized as a philosophical issue, and even then under the strenuous objections of many for whom culture was still the exclusive domain of anthropology. At the same time scholars in the religious field were attempting to work out the basic terminology of "culturation," "inculturation," "enculturation," etc. Today, however, we describe the major contemporary challenge in terms of the problematic posed by living in a world we describe precisely as "multi-cultural" and "multi-religious." We must ask then what is this new awareness of culture in terms of which we now describe even our own identity, and in terms of which we are so recently and so strenuously challenged?

The Emergence of Subjectivity and Culture

Since Plato and the death of Socrates the philosophical search in the West had been for objective knowledge, for separate ideas or forms as stable points of reference to guide us in the process of living together. This search was radicalized in the Enlightenment which sought a new beginning through the radical exclusion of all that was not known clearly and distinctly, and was therefore to be placed under doubt or symbolically smashed as an idol.² By 1900 Alfred North Whitehead considered the work this entailed, at least in physics, to be essentially complete.

At the same time, the Protestant Jan Masaryk, who was to be the founding father of Czechoslovakia, sent off to Vienna the young Jewish scholar, Edmund Husserl, with two gifts. One was the small gift of a writing case; the other was the huge gift of an introduction to the Catholic Professor, Franz Brentano, who was steeped in its long tradition of scholarship relating to the Spirit since the early days of the Church. As structured with the help of the Islamic and Christian study of Aristotle in the high Middle Ages and nurtured in the spiritual explorations of Teresa of Avila and other masters of the spiritual life this tradition enabled Brentano to bring to light the significance of intentionality as the distinctive interior life of human consciousness.

Edmund Husserl later applied these lessons when, in search of the roots of the mathematics, he found it necessary, like Augustine and Descartes, to turn within to human interiority and thus to human intentionality. In so doing he developed a process termed "phenomenology" or "bringing truth into the light (*phe*)". The danger that he might be trapped in these inner pathways of consciousness, where ideas might reflect only other ideas as in a hall of mirrors, showed Heidegger

the need to shift the focus of phenomenology from consciousness alone to the emergence of being through human consciousness, the *dasein*. In this light the continuing work of creation, of which Being is the proper source, effect, and goal, now appeared as an unveiling of Being in space and time precisely through the creative work of human intentionality.³

We should note that this is not a matter of particular beings, either objects or subjects. What breaks into explicit human consciousness is neither God as creator nor oneself as creature. Rather, it is God's work of creating, that is existence or *esse* precisely as act, and man's work in shaping this act creatively constituting thereby a distinctive culture. This is the new content of human consciousness at the turn of the millennia. It was suggested in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* on Holy Scripture; developed in the Vatican II documents: "The Church in the Modern World" and *Nostra Aetate*; and has been the key to such later documents as *Progressio Populorum*.⁴

In Eastern Europe John Paul II drew upon Roman Ingarden's phenomenology, elaborated it with Karl Rahner and others at the Vatican Council, and subsequently developed a renewed human self understanding.⁵ This philosophical anthropology, in turn, generated *Solidarity* and thereby the liberation of Eastern Europe from the hegemony of Soviet dialectical materialism.

This creative emergence of being into time via the *dasein* or human consciousness has two implications: the one is culture and hence multi-culturality, the other is religion and hence a plurality of religions.

Culture. First, the emergence of being via, and as, human consciousness engages both intellect, will and imagination. It is a matter first of human freedom, that is, of self-determination and self-responsibility. This is also a matter of human self-creation, for the emergence of being into time through the exercise of human freedom is most properly a matter of disposing or shaping one's being in the very process of its reception

Second, this creative shaping of one's life is done in setting orders of preference, i.e., values, as to ways of living and seeking fulfillment. Thus some peoples as in the Orient give preference to harmony and organize their life accordingly, whereas others in the West may give preference to competition and order their life quite differently. Moreover, they focus upon developing the corresponding virtues, strengths or capacities in order to be able to realize these values. Together their combination of values and virtues orders their life in a distinctive manner and thereby constitutes a culture or way in which life can be lived and the young can be raised to be proper members of their community.⁶

Third, as carried out by peoples long separated in space, who through time faced their own specific set of historical challenges, this has generated distinctive civilizations or total ways of life and a sense of identity which Huntington has called the "largest we," bound together by blood, soil, history and culture.⁷

Today we are fated to live with new awareness or consciousness of the reality of culture not only as something in which we find ourselves or which is imposed upon us, but which through our history we have created and for which we are responsible. Culture is this cumulative freedom of a people. Thus, the total weight of the responsibility for having so implemented and shaped our being comes down upon us as upon no generation before – what Milan Kundera calls "The Unbearable Lightness of Being."⁸ Bearing this unbearable burden has become the new challenge of life in a multicultural world.

Religion. Moreover, if culture is awareness of God's creative gift of being and our overpowering responsibility for shaping this divine gift, then it is but natural that we thank God

for this gift, seek his help in bearing this burden, and live in founded hope that a faithful life will lead to fulfillment in his love. As all of this is the essence of religion, at its base life is ultimately religious. It is not surprising then that Huntington should conclude empirically that in fact each civilization is rooted in a great religion and, conversely, that each great religion generates its own civilization.

The Problem of Multiplicity: The One and the Many in Terms of Culture and Religion

This problem arises from a special conjunction—the perfect storm, so to speak. On the one hand, there is the new self-awareness of human freedom as creatively shaping, and thereby constituting each culture as unique. In a highly diversified world this entails an ever more intense awareness of the multiplicity of cultures and civilizations. On the other hand, there is the process of "globalization" which brings these cultures and civilizations together in increasingly intense interaction with one another. Together these generate a new mode of the classical issue of unity and multiplicity, now in terms of the relatedness of the many cultures, religions, civilizations and peoples which constitute our world.

Ancient clues for understanding and responding to this can be found in Plato's notion of participation. Cornelio Fabro closes his second volume on participation, *Participation et Causalité*,⁹ with a chapter on analogy as the language of participation. Let us look there for clues on how we might handle three central issues generated by the recent emergence of awareness of culture as described above.

First, the *uniqueness of each culture*. As a culture is created by the free self-determination of a people it is unique to that people. Like each act of freedom it is not only from that agent, but is the responsibility of that agent and could be done by no one else. Each culture is the distinctive manner in which a specific people realizes its life or *esse*. It is according to its own formative decisions and commitments for which that people is responsible.

Cultures then are unique inasmuch as each people realizes its life or being, not as an univocal instances of the same specific type, but in its own existentially proper manner as shaped over time by the creative exercise of its own freedom making its own decisions and commitments. It is crucial to the exercise of human freedom then that the cultural uniqueness of each people not be compromised, but rather maximized. There must be no dismissal of human creativity, no lobotomy of peoples in search of a common or universal least-common-denominator. The real challenge now is rather to be able to live fully our unique identities in the newly global context.

Second, *similarity between cultures*. This lies paradoxically in the effort of each people to live its own proper culture in its own way, that is, not univocally, but according to an analogy of proper proportionality. Just as the *esse* or life of people A is realized according to the pattern of life which people A has developed through the centuries, so also the *esse* or life of people B is realized according to the nature or creative efforts developed by people B shaping its own pattern of life. Thus

Esse or life of people A *Esse* or life of people B

Essence or culture of people A Essence or culture of people B

The similarity lies in each person or people striving to live its life or *esse* to the fullness of the essence or nature or pattern of life that is its own culture.

Where before philosophers spoke of an abstract, universal and invocous nature (e.g., rational animal), now however it is possible to take account from within of the long exercise of freedom by a people in their concrete circumstances. The nature according to which we live is not a generic freedom, but the actual cumulative freedom that has constituted our culture as the pattern in terms which we see, judge and act. Similarity in these existential terms is realized not by diminishing or compromising one's identity or culture, but in the living of it to the full.

Third *complementarity between cultures*. The unity between cultures is complementary according to an analogy of attribution. A being acts and causes according to its nature or essence. Hence, the cause of the *esse* or existence of each of the multiple peoples or cultures must be Being whose very essence is to be (*esse*), that is *Esse* itself (*Ipsum esse*). As such it is unlimited, infinite and hence unique. Plato's insight regarding participation means that all else are limited effects, participations or images of this One. But if each culture is a limited but unique manifestation of the One infinite existent the facet each expresses must be complementary to all other such manifestations.

Fourth, *the convergence of cultures*. The relation between cultures must be one of convergence. Living is a matter not of theory but of teleology for, as noted, all are not only from the One by the efficient causality of the creator, but also are in pursuit of that One as goal and Omega: each culture, in pursuing its own unique and limited perfection, pursues more ultimately the perfection which is one and infinite. Therefore, as mentioned above, each culture is not only both similar in being a pursuit of its own perfection by an analogy of proper proportionality and complementary by an analogy of attribution based on efficient causality. Moreover, all cultures are convergent in that each in its own distinctive manner tends toward the one divine or infinite perfection in an analogy of attribution based on final causality. In striving actively for their own perfection as images the same one perfection all draw together in a convergent manner. This dynamic pursuit of perfection is the way Iqbal contrast the more theoretical, detached and distant work of philosophy to religion, which he pictured as active, engaged and uniting one with another.

Implications for Living Together in a Multicultural and Multireligious World

A first implication of the recognition of a culture as being the cumulative freedom of a people is that all means or structures for living together must avoid any sense of domination or suppression of the freedom of the other, any reduction of the other to either a clone or a client. Rather stress must be placed upon recognizing others as fellow free and creative humans. All are pilgrims on the path of development in search of peace and justice. This is the condition of human growth is the search for ever more full participation in truth, goodness and beauty. This entails a number cautions regarding things to be avoided while revealing a number of principles and conclusions.

It cautions against:

- a pseudo generosity, based on the supposition that what one has worked out should be imposed upon all others;
- a pseudo stability, which for a limited time can come from overwhelming power ruthlessly applied;
- a pseudo peace, that comes from suppression as practiced in the so-called *realpolitik*.

Instead, for living together it is necessary to recognize:

1. that all are created equal and therefore free
- and hence that peace lies in the mutual promotion of the pursuit of human fulfillment;
2. that the human person is essentially relational
-and hence that our futures are so bound together as to require mutual recognition, respect and cooperation; and
3. that peace can be had only from the free pursuit of harmony
- and hence that in a global age "blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall possess the land."

From this we can draw the following principles for life in a multi-cultural and mutli-religious world.

- that skills for responding to, and cooperating with, other cultures are more important than ideological pseudo justifications of oppression;
- that the only real safeguard is not closure upon one's own protection, but openness of heart to the existential concerns of others and the cultures they have struggled to create; and
- that the true *realpolitik* is that imaged by Isaias, namely, all peoples each on their own pilgrimage and all converging on the one holy mountain where God will be All in all.

The hope then – and the task of this new century – is that, as we approach the Divine center and in so doing draw closer to one another, we will be able to hear and appreciate the hymns that are the lives of other peoples, raise our voices together, and unite all peoples, cultures and religions in a great symphony of peace.

Notes

1 Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, I (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1951), I; *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

2 Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, IV; *Meditation on First Philosophy*, I.

3 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1962); M. Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. A. Schuwer and R. Rojcevicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

4 *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. W. Abbot (New York: America Press, 1966).

5 *The Acting Person*, trans. A. Potocki (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1979).

6 George F. McLean, *Freedom, Cultural Traditions and Progress* (Washington, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2000), pp. 5-43.

7 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997), p. 43.

8 Milan Kundara, *Unbearable Lightness of Being*, trans. M. Heim (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

9 Cornilio Fabro, *Participation et Causalite* (Louvain: Univ. de Louvain, 1961).