Unity and Harmony, Love and Compassion in Global Times

by
George F. McLean

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FOREWORD

With the dawn of the millennium humanity awoke to find itself in a new place, facing radically unfamiliar challenges. The great polarity which a mere decade before had marked modern times now suddenly dissolved and a global whole ensued.

Previously an effort to prioritize and protect the individual from the assimilative power of the social whole had marked the West, while a search to prioritize and protect the community from the dissolutive efforts of individualism had been the focus to the East. In the half century following World War II each alternative had coalesced within itself and against the other to form an intensely bipolar and bitterly divided world.

Suddenly, however, with the end of the Soviet Union and its universalist aspirations this bipolarity collapsed. It was expected to be succeeded by a unipolar world under the sole remaining superpower. Plans were drawn up for a world in a peace imposed by the sole unchallengeable military machine and for its own self-interest. Such a plan would soon prove vain, as universal subjection was answered by universal opposition and unconventional warfare challenged hegemonic force.

The proper issue had never been how people could be united by intimidation and force, though often this had mistakenly been supposed possible. Rather, in view of the character of the human person the real question was how the many could unite freely, one with another, to form a properly human community. This effort to situate the multiple individuals within a unity which promoted, rather than destroyed them, had existed as long as history could recall and prehistory could suggest. The process was not uniform or unidirectional. Families experience adolescence as a period in which family members seek to establish their sense of identity through alienation from the intensive family unity experienced in their younger years. Yet once their identity is firmly established most are able to reintegrate into the family unity more intensively because more self-aware and free. In this lies hope for the future, namely, that human comity can be established not by reduction, but by intensification of distinctive self-identity when applied through complementarity and cooperation rooted in a bond of unity.

Yet this very hope is differently understood. On the one hand, in the modern West it has been more common to focus upon the uniqueness of each individual and to look for only external linkages between them: the center is the self with relations being conceived in utilitarian terms of self-interest. In contrast, on the other hand, in more ancient times and among non Western peoples human relations appear

to be more organic, social and family oriented. There the unit is less the single individual than the family whole in terms of which one comes to understand one's life and duties, and through which one is mediated to the broader social whole. In the more individualist context the national challenge is to enhance the relations that constitute the larger society, in the latter social context the challenge is to appreciate the uniqueness and creativity of each person within that society.

In present circumstances, however, both of these challenges become more difficult and complex. Materialism and consumerism enhance the search for self-gratification which diminishes social concerns, while rising prosperity increases the disparity in economic welfare between city and country and between rich and poor. The sense of shared social unity diminishes at the very moment it is needed in order to take the step toward constituting a people, nation and world that is unified in its care and concern for all its members. The temptation is to look rather inward to one's own concerns and ignore those who are less well-off as outside of these concerns. Here the above mentioned tendency to return to the good of the whole, as in the case of family members upon achieving a more mature sense of self, does not operate and dissolution of the social comity becomes more marked.

Here we meet the present paradox: as goods become more abundant and sufficient for all, their distribution becomes markedly more uneven, divisive and even impoverishes many. The global communication through which we meet different peoples and ethnicities both across civilizations and in our ever more cosmopolitan cities threatens to be characterized by prejudices and alienation.

Is it possible for a society to overcome this dynamism so that self-identity is not a closure against others but relational, and self-determination is marked by social concern? To answer this pressing question both within each country and between civilizations we need to look deeply into the principles of unity and cohesion in order that self-identity be developed in terms of the ability to relate to others.

To examine this issue the present work will follow the history of notion of unity in human thought and behavior. Part I will carry out an archeology of unity as the most basic manners of thinking and living. Part II will look to the role of unity in the constitution of humans to see how they can be not only individuals in the unity of a species as in Greek thought, but unique persons who, through their uniqueness and freedom, are members of the social whole as entailed by the Christian and Islamic monotheistic vision of the Middle Ages. Finally, Part III will build on the global character of our times which call for a new paradigm. Beyond that of Western nominalism which saw all as a set of totally diverse singulars, this must restore and advance the sense of the unity of the whole in which we now live. For this the Eastern sense of

relatedness will be important. But to be significant it cannot be simply juxtaposed or superimposed on individuality to gather all together in their diversity. Rather the unity must be understood deeply enough to constitute equally not only the unique diversity of every person and thing, but their relatedness as well. This will require a search for the significance of *Tian Xia* (all under heaven) as the unifying principle of all that comes under it.

Beginning from the archeology of unity in Part I, the project of philosophy in this, as perhaps in all times, constitutes less a problem than an engagement in the exciting – even breathtaking – search in and through all of life's challenges for glimpses of the whole we inhabit and hence of the path ahead.

George F. McLean

PREFACE

Vincent Shen

George McLean's *Unity and harmony, Compassion and Love in Global Times* is the most thoughtful and intriguing work on the philosophical theme of human solidarity or relationality and the harmony human beings should be able to obtain through love and compassion. Indeed, he has traveled philosophically all the way through primitive thinking, myth, Greek and mediaeval philosophy, modern philosophy, up to postmodern thought and the challenges of globalization. By this he has shown well how the unconscious unity that existed already within the deep structure of early human nature, was developed and articulated by Greek and mediaeval philosophies, and is enhanced with individual consciousness in modern times. This deeply rooted original unity is now to be revitalized as a well-articulated unity so that human beings can live together in harmony at this time of gloabalization, understood by Confucius as all under heaven (*tianxia*).

Therefore, George McLean's message is very clear: the individual, so much cherished by modern society and modern philosophy, should be better understood as "human person," who is born with, and should now explore, his/her interrelatedness with many others and revitalize the lost unity in order to live in harmony. Human beings have to recover their profound unity by living harmoniously together.

The real question for him is: how can the many unite freely, one with another, to form a properly human community? As he has well illustrated with a world-wide family experience: in the adolescent period, young people seek to establish their sense of identity through alienation from the intensive family unity. However, "once their identity is firmly established, most are able to reintegrate into the family unity more intensively because more self-aware and free." For George, self-identity is not a self-enclosure against others but relational, and self-determination is marked by communal and public concern. In my words, the human self is born, grows and evolves among Many Others.

For this purpose, McLean first carried out an archeology of human unity, before he moved on to the role of unity in the constitution of human beings. He sees them as "not only individuals in the unity of a species as in Greek thought," but "unique persons who, through their uniqueness and freedom, are members of the social whole as entailed by the Christian and Islamic monotheistic vision of the Middle Ages." At the end, he builds on the global character of our times which call for a new way of thinking "that restores and advances the sense of the unity

of the whole in which we now live." It is here that he suggests the Eastern sense of relatedness should be of great importance.

Indeed, this book comes out at the right moment when China, one of today's greatest powers, is launching 'Build-up a Harmonious Society' as its political guideline. The targeted "harmonious society" is defined by China's President Hu Jintao as "a society with socialist democracy and rule of law, fairness and justice, integrity and friendly love, fullness of vitality, social stability and orderliness, and harmonious interaction between human and nature." As I see it, this is indeed a radical change from China's vehement and hostile class struggle during the cultural revolution period to today's political program of harmonious society. This change reminds me of the philosophical wisdom in Chinese Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhang Zai's (1020–1077) saying that 'when there are struggles there are hostilities, while all hostilities are at the end to be solved in harmony.'

McLean's vision of harmony is also inspiring for today's world as a whole, where difference and otherness are ever producing conflicts everywhere. We are living in a world where there is no place without the presence of many others having different perspectives of otherness: in gender, in family and educational background, in profession, in scientific discipline, in ethnic group, in value and belief system, in cultural traditions, in ways of life, in religion, . . . etc. Especially in the globalization process, people in the world feel so close to each other, on the one hand, and are so vulnerable and susceptible to conflicts of all kinds, on the other. In responding to today's urgent situation full of conflicts created by the self-enclosure of the different parts, the issue of harmony becomes urgent. We humans should look not only for peaceful coexistence, but also for the optimal harmony of mutual enrichment; this must not be limited to a static harmony, but open to a dynamic one.

George McLean is concerned, at the end of this book, with the possible contribution to the world's harmony from the East. For this reason he invited me to write this preface to say something about the concept of harmony in Chinese philosophy. This prompts me to write a few words about harmony in Confucianism and Daoism, though this preface could serve as well as post-script.

In brief, both Confucianism and Daoism would agree with what the *Yijing* (*Book of Changes*) says, "While each one fulfills his/her/its true nature and destiny, all together they achieve an optimal harmony." This goes well with McLean's emphasis on individual freedom as the positive legacy of modernity, and hence the need to bring all individuals in freedom to a communal harmony that transforms individual life into a harmonious relationship. The problem one may note here is: if each and every person is free to be him/herself, how together can there be achieved an optimal harmony? To this, Confucians and Daoists answer

differently. Confucians would attempt to achieve harmony by appealing to the ethical ability of humaneness *ren* in each person and to the coordination by *li*, the ritual, transcendentally founded on *ren*. Daoists would refer to a deeper compliance with the Heavenly *Dao* (laws of nature) and the spontaneous coordination of all beings by their following *Dao*'s original generosity in working for the goodness of Many Others.

Right from its beginning, Confucians understood that human beings were born among Many Others and therefore at risk of conflicts of all kinds. However, they would make an ethical effort to obtain optimal harmony through the mediation and regulation of *li* (the ritual), as thus more human than animals. Harmony is essential in the Confucian understanding of the role of the ritual. As Youzi, a disciple of Confucius, said: "Of the things brought about by the rites, harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the Former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small." The ritual, *li*, as an overall concept of cultural ideal, could be understood as a graceful order of human actions leading to optimal harmony.

The function of *li* depends on two complementary processes: the one from one's self-awareness to ground *li* in one's sense of rightness, *yi*, and the sense of rightness *yi* in one's humanity *ren*; and, the other, the moral effort to manifest one's moral ability of *ren* to *yi*, then from *yi* to the harmonizing *li*. Confucian ethics is thus a dynamic model of coming and going within these two moral movements, extending thereby to larger and larger social units such as family, community, state, and all under heaven. For Confucianism, the dimension of meaningfulness in human existence is to be understood within the context of ethical relations among humans, nature and Heaven, in a pattern of life imbued with a sense of beauty in an order that is harmony.

In contrast to Daoism that tries to obtain harmony by way of overcoming oppositions in strife, Confucianism tries to obtain optimal harmony by way of extending each person's virtuous life. Besides virtues such as *ren*, *yi*, *li*, *zhi*, people can enlarge their existence, by way of *shu* (altruistic extension), to larger realms of existence from oneself to many others, to family, to social community, to the state, to all under heaven (*tianxia*), termed today as globalization.

Confucius sometimes understood both *ren* and *shu* in the spirit of negative golden rule, "do not impose on others what you yourself do not want." We should note the close relationship between *ren* and *shu*, given the fact they are both defined by the negative golden rule. Also, a positive golden rule was given by Confucius as an answer to the question about the concept of *ren*, "A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes others, wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others to be prominent." Both the negative

and positive versions of the golden rule are, in Confucian eyes, based on a reciprocal basis as to the relation between self and Multiple Others. A Confucian existence is an ever-expanding life based on self-cultivation, extending from self to larger and larger social groups, to all under heaven, even to the whole universe, as Zhang Zai has suggested. While self-cultivation and self-perfection are more on the part of the individual, the harmonious relation with many others should be achieved in the social, political context, and even in the whole universe.

By contrast, Daoism looks for optimal harmony by letting all beings unfold their being fully and freely with the principle of original generosity prior to reciprocity, instead of doing this by ritual mediation. Laozi uses the metaphor of sound to represent harmony. First, musical sounds, 'Refined notes and raw sounds harmonize with each other'. Second, the innocent crying of a newborn baby, who 'screams through the entire day, and yet his voice does not get hoarse. Such is the height of harmony'. On the ethical and political level, Laozi criticized Confucian values as resulting from the loss of deeper solidarity in human relationship, similar to what George McLean has shown to us in the first part of this book. For Laozi, there was a deeper solidarity among human beings, even among all things, by the fact that all were given birth by the *Dao*, as the outcome of its original generosity, much more profound than mere filial piety and loyalty.

Laozi's idea of harmony had its cosmological and ontological foundation. *Dao* as the original harmony was itself the original generosity that gave birth to all things. "Dao gave birth to One, One gave birth to Two. Two gave birth to Three. Three gave birth to all things. Everything carries *yin* on its shoulders and *yang* in its arms, and blends these vital energies (*qi*) together to make them harmonious." *Dao* as the Origin launches the process of differentiation and complexification that might cause strife and therefore harmony emerges from them by way of coordinating the rhythmic interaction of contrasts or oppositions such as *yin* and *yang*: harmony is the optimal coordination of the opposites.

The Daoist idea of original generosity was not at all limited to Confucian ethics and a politics of reciprocity. As I see it, Laozi presents to us an ethics of generosity par excellence that is based on a profound ontological and cosmological foundation. Laozi shows that *Dao* is the unfathomable, inexhaustible Ultimate Reality that took the first initiative to go beyond itself to give birth to myriad things in its act of giving birth. This is textually supported by the recently discovered bamboo slips text named *Heng Xian* (The Constant precedes), arguably produced at a time between the *Laozi* and before the *Mencius*. There we read, "The Constant precedes *you* (being) and *wu* (non-being). It is simple, quiet . . . and, tired of staying in itself, and not tolerating being

itself, it rises and creates space . . ." Thus, Classical Daoism expresses the idea that the *Dao* is generous, by going beyond its self-sufficiency, "tired of staying in itself", in taking the initiative to give birth to all things.

On the human level, the sage, taking the generosity of *Dao* as his/her exemplary model and incarnating the way of *Dao* in his/her person, is also generous to all things with gratuitous gifts and takes generous giving as the way to enrich his own life. "The sage never accumulates for himself, he takes it to be more in himself in doing more for others; he takes it to be richer in him in giving more to others." Optimal harmony is also a political ideal for Laozi: "Not governing the nation through intellectual discrimination is a blessing to it…To be aware of this standard is profound attainment. Profound attainment is deep and far-reaching. It is the reversal of ordinary things, yet it leads to optimal harmony with the *Dao*."

Based on the Confucian and Daoist visions of harmony, the way of life and the politics that we need today in the process of globalization should be a politics of generosity and mutual enrichment. Our search for meaningfulness begins with our act of going outside of ourselves and going towards Many Others. This act presupposes an original generosity otherwise there will be no reciprocity and dialogue at all. Marcel Mauss proposes in his *Essai sur le don* that reciprocity is the principle by which society is made possible, which could be true in both the classical and modern world. However, I want to point out that, now we need a new model. Prior to every situation of reciprocity, there must be already the act of going outside of oneself to the other, the act of strangification, as the act of original generosity, which accordingly makes the reciprocity possible. Therefore, the ethics and politics of generosity and mutual enrichment should replace those of mere reciprocity in the time of globalization.

I do agree with George McLean that the ultimate energy behind all these is love and compassion. Instead of thinking as did Heidegger, who considered *Sorge* or caring for one's own being as the most original mode of human existence, I consider Love or generous caring for Many Others as the most original mode of our human existence. This is shown by our unconscious desire directed always towards other things and other persons, the original project of which could be fulfilled only when we do good to many others. That is why I see this altruistic energy related to Many Others as the most original mode of human existence. We may term it as love and compassion all the way to its conscious expression and ethical efforts at fulfillment.

For me, Professor George McLean is indeed a generous and global thinker. He thinks deeply and thoroughly on today's philosophical and cultural issues, and travels around the world to promote the mutual

understanding of different cultural traditions. Indeed, he exemplifies a life of openness and generosity, love and compassion, to many others, a genuine Christian spirit of agape, unselfish care and altruistic effort for Many Others. This work is not only an intellectual achievement, but is also based deeply in own his ethical praxis. I trust it will be enjoyable and inspiring for all readers, as it has been for me.

PART I

AN ARCHEOLOGY OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY IN HUMAN AWARENESS

CHAPTER I

TOTEMIC UNITY AS KEY TO COMMUNITY IN THOUGHT AND ACTION

A METHOD FOR AN IN-DEPTH EXPLORATION OF UNITY

In this search for the meaning and role of unity in human thought we must begin by reviewing our human resources in order to learn from them, to draw them forward, and to apply them in new ways for our newly global times. If modern times have been built on an excessive individualism leading in the end to alienation, there will be need to rediscover more basic principles of unity.

Looking back to totemic and mythic thought we find resources for unity that are common to all cultures and civilizations. To the degree that the earlier remains as a substratum for what succeeds the achievements of the earliest totemic and mythic societies remain available. Here we shall look to the early, basic levels of the experience of all peoples to see what insights regarding the unity and the interrelatedness of human persons, and indeed regarding the nature of unity itself, can be drawn from that vast extent of human life experience.

One approach to understanding the foundations of human life would be to turn to physics at the subatomic level and to try to achieve there a theoretical understanding of the laws of matter. But if taken in strictly material terms this inevitably would reduce all thereto and lose what is properly human.

Another approach would begin there but understand these laws in relation to the characteristics to human beings and to society. This has been traced cumulatively by Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his work *The Phenomenon of Man*. By his principle of unity, via levels of complexity he marshaled the discoveries of the many sciences to follow the progressive organization of matter from sub-atomic particles to the human person. There his vision of unity continued to order non-material reality toward ever increasing unity via levels of simplicity. Increasing complexity up to the human level and then increasing simplicity were integral to the continual and progressive intensification of unity at all levels.

Another approach would be to focus upon that which is proper to humans, namely their social life and to follow this from its earliest forms. Even here, however, we need guidelines if our effort is not simply to gather together all that can be known in whatever detail, but to analyse this in such wise as to enable it to reveal its structure and

direction. Hegel has done this for the realm of the Spirit, but with such brilliant rigor that he would seem to have overachieved leaving little space for human freedom and creativity and hence for that which is most real about humankind.

Hence, we shall turn neither to the physical sciences nor to ideal schemata, but to the experience of humankind in its progressive development. The significance of this is only now emerging as human awareness moves beyond the strictures and closures of an objectivist modern rationalism to take account as well of human subjectivity and hence of cultures and civilizations. Thus, it becomes newly important to understand our cultures in depth and thereby reach back to the earliest stages of human social life. A method for doing this was elaborated by the Swiss psychologis and structuralist Jean Piaget in his study of child development. [1] We shall look at this with a view to applying it to elaborating a scientific structure, not as with Piaget for an interior analysis of psychological development, but in order to examine in-depth the successive stages of our human cultures.

Hence we will consider the sequence of the progressive awakening of cognitive capabilities charted in the work of Jean Piaget and summarized by him in "The Mental Development of the Child." [2] We will review, first, Piaget's general explanatory theory for the progression from one cognitive level to the next; second, the cognitive, affective, behavioral and physiological components or dimensions of a personality; and third, the differentiated and sequenced levels which obtain in the development of these components. This should enable understanding of how the synchronic distinction of modes of thought based on the psychological structure of the human person becomes as well a diachronic pattern. Found in personal psychological growth, we shall project this development through time as a progression in the levels of consciousness of entire peoples and their living of this expanding awareness in their social life.

A Theory of Development. To help understand the progression from one stage to the next Piaget elaborated a theory based upon the notion of equilibrium, its loss and reconstitution.

Any stage in the growth of persons constitutes an equilibrium or integrated state of its component factors in which persons are able to make their contribution to others and to society as a whole. An equilibrium is upset by a need, such as hunger, which in turn leads to the

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[1] Jean Piaget, *Six Psychological Studies*, trans. A. Tenzer (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

[2] Jean Piaget, "The Mental Development of the Child," *ibid.*, chap. I. (Page numbers in the text refer to this work.)

activity required in order to satisfy the need and to restore the equilibrium. Where the need can be satisfied by competencies already possessed, such as eating to satisfy hunger, doing so simply restores the previous equilibrium with the same competencies had before at that level. However, where the need can no longer be satisfied by capabilities already possessed, new ones must be developed. The subsequent state integrating these new capabilities, constitutes a new and higher equilibrium. This overall structure of development holds true of the range of transformations from a child's learning to walk, through the green revolution in agriculture, to the stages in the history of astronomy.

Such development implies elements of both continuity and differentiation. There is continuity because in the higher stage the capabilities of the previous stage are not lost, but perfected. The infant's ability to move its limbs in crawling is not lost, but remains as a substructure and is perfected when the child learns to walk. These abilities are perfected still further when he or she learns to run and then adds the syncopation needed in order to be able to dance. Throughout, the earlier capabilities are retained and increasingly perfected. Where this is not the case what would be had would be not development but mere change, not improvement but mere substitution.

Conversely, development also implies differentiation because the adoption of one from among the many different possible modes of activity for responding to a need means that this type of activity will be the more developed. As further needs arise it is easier to respond by further developments in this same line than by activating other capabilities which, though in principle equally effective, concretely are less available to this person or people. A family, for example, may solve its food problems by either more intensive farming or more intensive fishing, but seldom by both. The same is true with the virtues of patience and courage. Progressively, one capability or mode of action atrophies as the other is repeatedly employed and developed. Thus, over time and in interaction with their physical and social environment, each people evolves distinctive cultural patterns of values and virtues along with its history.

Components of Personality. In order to render the general theory more concrete Piaget distinguishes four dimensions of a personality all of which advance in some union:

(1) The cognitive, by which we are aware of things as they exist over against ("ob-ject") ourselves as knower, even if these be about ourselves. This is the life of our senses and intellect, namely, of sensation and intelligence. When intellectual knowledge achieves

reflexion upon itself, it is no longer only objective, but subject centered as well.

(2) The affective, by which we respond to things with feelings and emotions, such as empathy and love, or rejection and hate.

(3) The behavioral, by which we act personally and eventually socially.

(4) The physiological, by which we are constituted bodily or organically.

Piaget describes the coordinated overall development of all four components as follows:

> The basic unity of the processes from the construction of the practical universe by infantile sensorimotor intelligence leads to the reconstruction of the world by the hypothetico-deductive thinking of the adolescent, via the knowledge of the concrete world derived from the system of operations of middle childhood.
>
> We have seen how these successive constructions always involve a decentering of the initial egocentric point of view in order to place it in an ever-broader coordination of relations and concepts, so that each new terminal grouping further integrates the subject's activity by adapting it to an ever widening reality.
>
> Parallel to this intellectual elaboration, we have seen affectivity gradually disengaging itself from the self in order to submit, thanks to the reciprocity and coordination of values, to the laws of cooperation. Of course, affectivity is always the incentive for the actions that ensue at each new stage of this progressive ascent, since affectivity assigns value to activities and distributes energy to them.
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> But affectivity is nothing without intelligence. Intelligence furnishes affectivity with its means and clarifies its ends. It is erroneous and mythical to attribute the causes of development to great ancestral tendencies as though activities and biological growth were by nature foreign to reason. In reality, the most profound tendency of all human activity is progression toward equilibrium. It is reason, which expresses the highest forms of equilibrium by reuniting intelligence and affectivity.

From this a number of points stand out:

(a) That development of thought capabilities is from unity to the ability to integrate ever broader fields of multiplicity. In these global times with information and influences coming from all sides and at all levels this alerts us to ask whether new modes of understanding are needed and can now be developed.

(b) That the earlier stages are not dispensed with, but serve as substrata for subsequent understanding. This suggests that approaches such as those of Locke's blank tablet or Bacon's smashing of the idols may be too radical, casting away the bases and resources for newly needed insight. Encapsuling man in man rather than locating him in an open and transcendent universe could be ultimately self-defeating.

(c) That the development of the higher level of understanding takes place in response to the challenge to cope with the welter of new factors. This recalls Aristotle's image of the battle in which one is forced to move back to an ever higher position in order to avoid being overwhelmed and to be able to respond adequately to the evolving complexity of the scene.

(d) That all dimensions of the personality are involved and must move ahead together. Hence it is not only the cognitive development that can stimulate a step ahead; to think so is a limitation in awareness characteristic of modern rationalism. Engines of development are the new cognitive capabilities, the new psychosomatic growth of the individual, the new social circumstances. Certainly all must be involved and all interact mutually, but through and by all of these the identity of a person and the cultural identity of a people is in a process of transformation. What then is the real context of the new possibilities that are ever opening to challenge human creativity, and what is the goal which guides each people in their own circumstances toward good rather than evil, toward life rather than death?

To apply this to the search for the common and earliest foundations of human self-awareness and personal dignity we can look to Heidegger for some helpful suggestions. His assessment of the relation between Plato and the pre- Socratics provides both a key to his articulation of the task to be undertaken and an illustration of a method for its accomplishment. Pre-Socratic philosophy reflected in a general and unsophisticated manner the variety and powerful vitality of reality. To improve upon this vision Plato had focused on forms and natures, ideas and essences. He elaborated all this with such great dialectical brilliance that Whitehead considered all of Western philosophy since then to be a set of footnotes to Plato's writings. Unfortunately, the progress made in the conceptual clarification of the variety of kinds in nature was accompanied by a corresponding loss of sensitivity to the

power and activity of nature, that is, to its existential reality. To remedy this loss Heidegger held that we must now return to the vision of the pre-Socratics in order to retrieve its dynamic existential element. Substantive forward progress in Western philosophy today, that is, the development of insight that is radically new, will depend not only upon incremental conceptual development of forms, but upon reaching back prior to Plato in order to develop the activity or existential reality which had been omitted.[3]

This example from Heidegger's thought is replete with indications for a methodology for our project. First one needs to look at thought historically. This does not mean merely the forward direction of Hegel's search for ever more formal articulation. Like genetic strains in horticulture, these become increasingly enslaved to ever more specific conditions as they become increasingly remote from their origins. On the contrary, what is most essential must be sought where in principle the forward process of scientific conceptualization cannot operate. It must be sought in that which is essentially unscientific according to the terminology of the "scientific interpretation that brands as unscientific everything that transcends its limits."[4] Radical newness is to be found, if anywhere, not in further elaboration of what already has been conceptualized, but in a step backward *(der Schritt zurück)* into that which was in some way present at the beginning of philosophizing and has remained unspoken throughout. "Far from having been thought or even having been thinkable, this reality has been obscured by the objectifying effect of much of the thought which has been developed thusfar."[5]

The task then will be not merely to restate in a more perfect manner what already has been stated less perfectly, but to open

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[3] "Our asking of the fundamental question of metaphysics is historical, because it opens up the process of human being-there [in its essential relation — i.e., its relations to the essential as such and as a whole —] to unasked possibilities, futures, and at the same time binds it back to its past beginning, so sharpening it and giving it weight in its present. In this questioning, our being-there is summoned to [its history in the full sense of the word, called to history and to] decision in history." Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 36-37 and 32.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[5] "The criterion of the unthought demands that the heritage of thought be liberated in respect of what still lies in reserve in its `has been' (*Gewesenee*). It is this which holds tradition initially in its sway and is prior to it, though without being thought about expressly as the originative source." Heidegger, "Letter on Humanism", trans. by E. Lohner, in W. Barrett and H. Aiken, *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), pp. 270-302.

ourselves to the reality toward which our historical efforts at conceptualization and indeed the very project of conceptualization as such is not directed. Thus, one finds in the term 'metaphysics' reference to that which lies "beyond" (*meta*) the project of definition and conceptualization of the material order which Aristotle had carried to its principles in this *Physics*. The *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* states that "when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self then . . . what should one think and through what, . . . through what . . . should one know the Knower.[6]

One method for developing a greater awareness of this foundation of thought consists in looking back as far as possible into its origins in order to rediscover what subsequently has been left unsaid because, it seems, too rich for the limited capacities of categorization. This is a return to our beginnings precisely in order to begin again in a new and more radical manner. To do this one must avoid projecting the limitations of one's own conceptualizations upon the origins. Hence, the manner of approach must not be only that of defining, which, literally, is to 'delimit,' though systems of philosophy need this in their structured processes of reasoning. Instead, philosophy must broaden its approaches to that of enquiry, that is, of opening to what has been left unsaid.

It would appear important, therefore, to look back into human experience for the mode and content of thought which preceded not only the beginnings of philosophy in the proper sense of the term, but even the forms of mythic symbolization which specify the distinctive cultures. To do this we must employ data from anthropology regarding life in primitive societies throughout the world. This, in turn, will require the development of a philosophic hermeneutic adapted to discovering in the simplest forms of the lived experience of humankind what is truly foundational, and therefore common to all.

The term 'primitive' itself is in need of rehabilitation along etymological lines as first and hence basic for all else. It is a fundamental fallacy, notes Heidegger, to believe that history begins with the

> backward, the weak and helpless. The opposite is true. The beginning is strongest and mightiest. What comes afterward is not development but flattening the results from mere spreading out; it is inability to retain the beginning . . . (which) is emasculated and exaggerated into a caricature.[7]

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[6] *Br. Up.*, IV, v. 15.
[7] Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, p. 130.

How can these beginnings be known? Because they precede not only the philosophical tradition, but even the pre-philosophical oral tradition as expressed in the myths, it is necessary to invert the general hermeneutic directive to attend to the words themselves. Instead, the following special hermeneutic principles must be followed in analyzing and interpreting the philosophic significance of our origins, namely: (a) the manner of acting will be more significant than what is said; (b) the manner of thinking and feeling will not be separable from the manner of acting; and (c) the preconditions or conditions of possibility for this manner of thought, feeling and acting will be the most significant of all.

What has been seen above suggests that we look back then to the earliest forms of social life and reexamine the progression of philosophy with the above principles of development in mind, namely, that the earlier is not crude but basic and remains as the substratum of all that follows.

To implement this, the remainder of the chapter will take the following four steps. First, an anthropological analysis of the totem, as the means used by the primitives for social self-identification and coordination, will determine the structural characteristics of their life and thought. Second, an internal analysis of these structures and their transformations will show that they depend for their meaning upon a unity or whole. Third, further hermeneutic reflection will identify where this unity is to be sought in the life of the primitive. Finally, awareness of this unity will be located in the notion of the totem as a plenitude and in the participational vision of reality which that entails.

A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF UNITY IN PRIMITIVE THOUGHT

Formal Structures

Anthropologists during the XIXth century remarked the constant tendency of primitive peoples in the most disparate places to identify themselves and their relations with other humans and with nature in terms of a totem. This might be a bird, animal or, at times, even an inanimate object or direction. As all areas of life in these simplest societies were predicated upon the totem, their culture has come to be called totemic.

Lévi-Strauss's *Totemism* is a history of the anthropological work done on this notion in the XXth century,[8] and thereby a history of anthropology itself since 1910. It begins with a severely reductionist

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[8] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

critique of the notion of totem by positivist anthropological theory.[9] The notion, however, proved to be so essential that it could not be dispensed with. Hence there followed four steps by which successive schools of anthropology progressively reconstructed the formal structure of the totem. Not surprisingly the steps are those by which one constructs a formal analogy of proper proportionality of the form A : B :: C : D.

First, A. P. Elkin identified the simple logical relation A : C between e.g., a bird and a tribe. This had both an analytic function for classifying groups so as to set rules for inter-marriage, and a synthetic function expressing continuity between man and nature. L. Lévi-Strauss points out that this empirical approach contributed some appreciation of the synthetic significance of the totem in expressing relatedness between man and nature and continuity between past and present. Nevertheless, this interpretation was inadequate for indicating why this entailed that ancestors have totems with animal forms and why the solidarity of the social group needed to be affirmed in a plurality of forms. In time this made it necessary to add new functional dimensions to the first empirical explanations.[10]

Second, Malinowski added subjective utility or pragmatic value to this relation, pointing to the biological significance of the totem as good to eat or to its psychological importance in controlling fears. (To this Radcliffe-Browne added the insight that totemism constituted an instance of the ritualization of relations between man and animals.) Malinowski interpreted this in functional terms to mean not that totems are objects of ritual and are sacred because they had already been made social emblems, but that totemic societies chose animals to serve as social emblems because they already were objects of ritual and that this in turn was due to the fact that they were important material and spiritual influences in their lives: e.g., they were good to eat. In this light the social factor is primary, while the ritual and religious dimension is secondary and a function of natural interest.

However, the difficulty with such utilitarian explanations is that they cannot explain sorts of totems which were not useful, i.e., not

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[9] In that context earlier research into the origins of Indian thought such as that of A. Keith (*op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 195-97) tended to discount the significance of the totem, pointing, e.g., to the absence of one or another specific factor, such as ritual eating, which was in no sense essential to the notion. The subsequent anthropological work described here, by which the notion has been scientifically reconstructed, provides the basis for restating the question. This is the more true as Keith himself argues, even regarding the meaning of Brahman, from the fact that a notion such as that of a supernatural power pervading the universe is generally found in all other tribes in other parts of the world, having been a basic factor in early Indian thought. *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 446.

[10] *Totemism*, pp. 56-58.

edible, etc. [11] Consequently, a psychological dimension was added, namely, that the totem helped to allay fears. But this explanation also confronted a daunting series of difficulties. [12] (a) Anxiety cannot be the cause, but only a concomitant, for it itself is due to the way one subjectively perceives a disorder. (b) An explanation cannot be found in a connection of articulate modes of behavior with unknown phenomena, for what is incomprehensible cannot be the explanation, but only an indication of the need to seek the explanation elsewhere. (c) Members of a group do not act according to their individual feelings; rather, they feel according to the way they are allowed, obliged or accustomed to feel. Customs and norms come first and give rise to internal sentiments and the circumstances in which these can be displayed. (d) It is not feelings which give rise to rites, as if religious ideas were born of effervescent social surroundings, but rites which generate feelings, i.e. religious ideas are presupposed for such emotions. Therefore emotions are not explanations, but the results of either body or mind. Lévi-Strauss concludes that the real cause must be sought either in the organism by biology or in the mind by psychology or anthropology.

However, he has already demonstrated that a biological, behaviorist or utilitarian psychological analysis of human emotions does not suffice, for these are generated in terms of circumstances beyond the self, not vice versa. Hence, he points his structuralist analysis to objective analogy. This leads to its prerequisites and thereby to the metaphysical level. Thus to explain the special use of certain types of animals anthropologists went beyond subjective utility to objective analogy.

Third, the relation of a tribe and its totem was stated by M. Fortes and R. Firth merely in terms of direct resemblance or external analogy of the members of a tribe or clan to their totem. For example, just as tribe C is similar to the eagle (A : C), so tribe D is similar to the sparrow (B : D) or A : C :: B : D.

Fourth, A.R. Radcliffe-Browne corrected this by noting that the analogy was not between sets of similarities, but between sets of differences. Just as the high-flying eagle (A) is different from, but related to, the low-flying sparrow (B), so the members of two tribes (C and D) are both distinct and related, i.e., A : B :: C : D. The totem then was not necessarily good to eat, but it was good to think.

These four steps reconstructed the essential analogy of forms in the totemic relation. But this was not yet structuralism, i. e. structure alone, for content had not yet been reduced to form. Lévi-Strauss took that step and directed attention to the logical connection between the

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[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 59-65.
[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 66-71.

pairs of opposites i.e. between A : B on the one hand and C : D on the other. He located the principle of the unity between the species chosen as totems and their tribes in a formal condition, namely in their having in common at least one formal characteristic which permitted them to be compared.[13]

  If, in fact, this condition and hence the unity of such structures requires other factors beyond the order of form and structure, the investigation of such factors would require methods of analysis different from structuralism. We have begun, however, with the formal in order to be able to draw upon the extensive developments in the abstract theoretical side of the science of anthropology. With the tools of philosophical hermeneutics we can now reflect upon the formal structures in order to establish whether further meaning regarding unity is to be sought in totemism and if so where it is to be found.

Unity as Prerequisite of Totemic Thought

  The Principle of Form. There are, indeed, reasons to believe that more is required than can be articulated in Lévi-Strauss's purely formal structural analysis. First of all, his thought in classifying the pairs of species is categorical in nature and therefore has all the limitations of definition which concerned Heidegger. Bernard Lonergan described it as a method of determination which therefore has limited denotation and varies with cultural differences. Lévi-Strauss's condition for the totemic relation between the pairs A : B and C : D, namely that the pairs have in common at least one characteristic in terms of which they can be compared, cannot be fulfilled by categorial thought alone. Because categorial thought consists of forms which are contraries and hence limited, none of its objects could constitute the common element required for the total unity of structures. In principle the search for the basis of the unity, even of formal structures, cannot be carried out in terms of the limited denotations of abstractive knowledge. Instead there is required transcendental thought or intending which is "comprehensive

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[13] *Ibid*, pp. 87-88. Cf also *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 93. In *Totemism* (p. 82) he notes that E. E. Evans-Pritchard had held that the primitives looked upon the totemic animals and the tribes as collateral lines descending from God as their common origin, which implied that their reality or content was essentially related. This would correspond to some degree to Heidegger's "unthought" which founds the meaning of all things and unites them among themselves. For the structuralist, however, content is not distinct from form.

in connotation, unrestricted in denotation, invariant over cultural change."[14]

The need for this comprehensive cognitive unity is confirmed by Jean Piaget from the nature of structuralism itself. He criticizes Lévi-Strauss for attending too exclusively to structure, form and essence, which abstract factors, he claims, can be explained psychologically by the mere permanence of the human intellect. What is more fundamental for structuralism is the fact that structures are generated by a system of operational structural transformations. These transformations require a principle which cannot be impersonal for it is the cognitive nucleus common to all subjects. Neither can it be individual for, through the series of transformations in which the structure is constituted on ever new and broader levels, this subject is progressively decentered.[15] Hence, in principle it must be beyond any contrary or any concept; it must be unique and comprehensive. Much as Nicholas of Cusa's "folding together" or *complicatio*, the system of structural transformations points to a unity which is not reducible to any individual.

Thus the first level of reflection upon the structural analysis of totemism in terms of form alone points to what Heidegger referred to above as "the unthought". He identifies a number of its characteristics. It must be one, unlimited, and spirit; it is the principle of all transformations and the basis of the unity, form and content of all structures.

A further, hermeneutic level of reflection by Paul Ricoeur in his essay, "Structure and Hermeneutics," identifies where this principle of the totemic relation is manifested. Above we questioned the self-sufficiency of the notion of a common characteristic by which the totemic species and the tribe are compared. Ricoeur continues this question noting that, while structural relations are based proximately upon semantic analogies, more fundamentally they depend upon real similarity of content.[16] For this reason, the totemic relations or

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[14] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), p. 11. Sergio Moravia cites passages from Lévi-Strauss which indicate some recognition of this need. They speak of spirit as subject of the universal categories, and of the transformation of structures as the unconscious activity of the spirit. *La ragione nascosta, scienza e filosofia nel pensiero di Claude Lévi-Strauss* [Firenze: Sansoni, 1969], pp. 325ff.

[15] Jean Piaget, *Structuralism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), pp. 139-142.

[16] "A careful examination of *The Savage Mind* suggests that at the base of structural homologies one can always look for semantic analogies which render comparable the different levels of reality whose convertibility is assured by the "code". The "code" presupposes a correspondence, an affinity of the contents,

homologies between species in categorial terms presuppose as the condition of their possibility a more fundamental unity of meaning; this, in turn, presupposes a corresponding unity or whole of meaning and of being. There is

> no structural analysis . . . without a hermeneutic comprehension of the transfer of sense. . . . In turn, neither is there any hermeneutic comprehension without the support of an economy, of an order in which the symbol signifies . . . (for) symbols symbolize only within wholes which limit and link their significations.[17]

Further, this fundamental whole or plenitude of meaning is both cognitive and affective, for humans first perceive meanings through feelings. Hence, the concrete logic of the primitive will have not only cognitive, but affective aspects, and both will be essential to our search. Earlier in this century, the philosopher anthropologist, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, pointed out that the two were not yet distinguished in what he termed the "collective representations" by which the members of a particular tribe interpret and respond to other persons and to nature. The totemic logic of proportionality between humans and animals unfolds against the background of a general cognitive-affective sense of kinship between humans and totemic animals. It is to this collective representation of kinship that we must look in order to discover the awareness of the unity or plenitude of reality and meaning upon which the totemic relation was grounded.

The Principle of Existence

The scientific constructs and models which help to interpret life abstract from time, i.e., they are synchronous. It must be urged that they express the form only and not the content or the reality; they are not life, but only "a secondary level of expression, subordinate to the surplus of meaning found in the symbolic stratum."[18] The actual appearance of this meaning takes place only in diachronous relations, that is, those in which the "disinterested, attentive, fond and affectionate love (of

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that is, a cipher." Paul Ricoeur, "Structure and Hermeneutics" in *The Conflict of Interpretations, Essays in Hermeneutics* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 56. See also Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1975).

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 48 and 56, n. 18.

kinship) is acquired and transmitted through the attachments of marriage and upbringing."[19] For that fundamental and foundational meaning we must look to this existential process, to the life of the family in its simplest human contexts of tribe and clan. Remaining unthought, it is the principle of all beings and meanings.

Further, the search for this principle must inquire without imposing delimiting categories. Hence, our questions must not concern individual realizations, for the "unthought" is never adequately expressed in any individual life or any combinations thereof. Instead our questions must concern the conditions of possibility for concrete life as lived within the unity of a tribe, indeed of any and all tribes. This exceeds even the diachronous succession of generations, while being pointed to by those concrete tribal lives as the condition of their possibility.

A PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF TOTEMIC UNITY AS BASIC TO BEING AND THINKING

The Question

In directing our attention to the simplest societies, sometimes called "primitive," this term is to be taken not in the sense of deficient or crude, but of that which is first, which manifests what is fundamental or basic, and hence is indispensable. Our method then will be to search for what is basic in the sense of being required or essential for human life in society.

In investigating any matter it is necessary to have a question so that the investigation can be directed to significant evidence, which then is assembled in order to provide meaningful insight. Like a searchlight, a question does not create the object, but enables it to stand out for observation and interpretation.

The basic issue might be stated in the following manner. On the one hand, the life of people who live together, whether in a tribe or clan, a village or city, or even on a global level, requires an attitude between persons and peoples which is not one of antipathy, for then cooperation would be impossible and murder would reign. Nor can it be one merely of indifference, for then we would starve as infants or languish in isolation as adults. Rather there is need of a way to consider others in a positive manner in order to be able to establish cooperative relations and, where possible, mutual care and concern.

On the other hand, persons are individual, distinct and irreducible one to another or to a community, party or commune. This

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[19] Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*, p. 37.

constitutes the perennial human dilemma which was writ large in the Cold War between the extremes of the individualism of the liberal "free world" and the collectivism of the communist world, while the "third" world was basically proxy to one of the two or to the tension between them.

The overriding and perennial question is how distinct people with their proper autonomy can look upon each other not negatively or indifferently, but positively and with concern both to promote the good of the other and to see the other as good for oneself? That is, what links us together; in what terms and on what level can people think of the good both of oneself and of all?

The Response

What is striking is that throughout the world in the earliest and simplest of societies peoples answered this question in a similar way, or by a common means. Each tribe identified a totem and in terms of this understood their relations among themselves, to other peoples and to nature. We must look more closely at this phenomenon.

It is unfortunate that the work of Lévy-Bruhl which first pointed this out has been received with such anxiety in the African context, for it would appear to contain basic keys precisely for appreciating the present foundational importance of African thought for all other modes of human awareness. Lévy-Bruhl was himself a positivist in ethics and its logic. However, on analyzing the thought patterns reported in the early 1900s by persons returning to Europe from other parts of the world he identified a mode of thought which was not merely an assembling and sorting out of multiple atomic components, but was marked by a central sense of unity. To his credit, rather than dismiss this as superstitious or insignificant, he opened the way to recognizing this crucial and foundational sense of reality. Compared to his positivist logic, this was something other, which he unfortunately termed 'pre-logical.' Some took the explicit horizontal or chronological implication of the term and willfully turned it into a vertical, evaluative category. Try as he did, in his *Cahiers* and elsewhere, to correct this meaning imposed upon his thought and even to do away with the term "pre-logical" which was being misinterpreted, he was never able to do so.

Instead, the term was caught up in the important and positive assertion of the significance of African thought, but with a complex political shift. On the one hand, for many years in order to assert the equality of African culture with that of other regions it was denied that there was anything proper to its logic. Even after independence from colonial rule, Europe was still taken as the standard and the concern of many was to assert that African thought was no different. On the other

hand, the situation was complicated further by the desire of many to affirm that Marxist class analysis was universal and thus appropriate for interpreting the African reality, which of course would be undercut were it to be recognized that Africa had a distinctive logic. A decade was lost discussing whether there was anything which could be called African philosophy. What was not appreciated was that if African culture had distinctive characteristics it might make a special contribution to world philosophy, and even, as is suggested here, to enabling other philosophies to appreciate their own foundations and consequently to appreciate more fully their own content. In this light the term "primitive mind" is appreciated more properly not negatively or pejoratively, but positively as meaning primary and foundational.

Lévy-Bruhl pointed out first that the mode of thinking was one of "collective representation".[20] This is important to note, for since the Enlightenment Western thought has been basically analytic in nature. With Descartes we look for clear and distinct ideas regarding the minimal units of an object of reason or a problem and then seek to assemble these with equal clarity. Our mind becomes specialized in grasping limited things as divided and contrasted one against the other. We tend to lose capacities for the synthetic processes of thought and hence for attention to the unities within which the pieces have their origin, meaning and purpose, and *a fortiori* for the One "from which, in which and into which all exist" (the opening words of the Hindu *Vedanta Sutras*).[21]

In contrast, in the term 'collective representation,' "representation" is used intentionally as more general and inclusive than concepts or even cognition; it includes sense as well as intellectual knowledge, affective reactions as well as knowledge, and indeed motor responses as well as knowledge and affectivity.

Further these representations are "collective" in a number of senses. First, they are socially conditioned: the same event may be a cause of fear in one tribe and of laughter in another. Second, they concern the total meaning of an event and for the whole of life. Third, they are not conceptual exclusions identifying each thing in contrast to all others after the manner of analytic compartmentalization as mentioned above, but synthetic in that they see each as participating in a whole. The importance of this synthetic or unitive character is reflected in the fact that to be ostracized is to be excluded not only from a particular community, but from human dignity itself. The evil of slavery in Africa today lies less in bondage, than in the loss of the bond to one's

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[20] Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think* (Les functions mentals dans les societes inferieures; New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), p. 62.

[21] *Sutras*, I, 1, 2.

community, for the unity of persons or of a people is the fundamental key to one's humanity.

Further, such attitudes must be more than merely subjective. If they have promoted, rather than destroyed, human life through the aeons of so-called primitive life, they are ways in which humans cannot only feel, but be, well. They must then reflect something essential and objective regarding human reality, and this must be the more true of that which makes them possible. What then is the condition of possibility of these positive attitudes between persons or towards one another in a tribe or clan?

This question was studied by Lévy-Bruhl in his work, *How Natives Think*, on the cognitive-affective collective representations of the first and simplest societies. His investigations led him to the totem as that in terms of which these peoples saw themselves to be united according to what he termed the "law of participation". That is, in the most disparate places and climes tribes identified an animal or thing as their totem, its specific nature being differentiated according to the locale. Their perception of their relation to this totem was not simply that of a person to one's ancestors from whom one is descendant, to one's name by which one is externally designated, or to a later state which one will enter following death. Lévy-Bruhl notes that under questioning, totemic peoples reject all such relations as inadequate. Rather, the members of the tribes insisted that quite directly they are their totem. "They give one rigidly to understand that they are araras (a bird that is the totem of this people) at the present time, just as if a caterpillar declared itself to be a butterfly." They understand their relation to the totem to be one of simple identity, which Lévy-Bruhl describes as "a mystical community of substance."[22]

This participational mode of identity is both a way of thinking and a way of being. It is the former in that it does not work in terms merely of spatial relations. For example, no matter how far a hunter is from his camp, what his wife does or does not eat is thought to effect his success or failure in the hunt. This does not mean that a sensitivity to spatial relations is absent; indeed it is amazingly acute: some South Sea islanders are said to be able to navigate over great distances without landfalls or navigational equipment. Rather what this indicates is that their thought processes regarding unity and relatedness are not controlled by, or reducible to, spatial considerations. Things could be caused and moved at a distance. Thus, telekinesis, which some now would call witchcraft, was considered an actual happening. Nor is this thinking held to temporal relations, for one's ancestors were considered to live still and to effect their lives. Finally, it is not merely a functional

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[22] *How Natives Think*, p. 62.

relation, for they think not externally only, that is, in terms of themselves and what others can do for them, but in terms of a real internal unity with others.[23]

Again this does not mean that there is no sense of time or of the sequence of events. Rather the sense of time is not simply external or one of exclusion, that is of parts or moments outside of other parts or moments, but one of inclusion. In sacred time moments perdure and are ritually present. This is particularly manifest in creation myths which express the basic reality of life and are formative of its every facet. This was detailed by the Dogon sage, Ogotemmêli, and recorded by Marcel Griaule in *Dieu d'eau: entretiens avec Ogotemmêli.*[24]

Finally, such thinking is not in terms of functional relations in which one thing is done in order to cause another. Hence, the fact that a hoped-for result does not follow in space or time, does not discourage repetition of the practice. A totemic people does not appear to base its understanding of the meaning and purpose of things on practical success or failure. Thus, as noted above, whereas some anthropologists would say that something was chosen as a totem because it was good to eat or for some other practical purpose, Lévi-Strauss noted rather that the totem was not good to eat, but good to think.

Totemic people think then not just in terms of themselves and others as separate, but in terms of the whole and of unity in the whole. This surpasses spatial, temporal or functional, i.e., external, relations. It is rather a unity of being. Primitive peoples are, and understand themselves to be, a unity with, in and by the totem.

Hence participation in the totem is not only a way of thinking, but also a way of being; indeed it is the former because it is the latter. This expression of one's identity in term of one's totem, such as "I am lion" or "I am araras", is not only to assume a common name as might a sports team; nor is it to indicate something past or future as if I used to be a lion, or have descended from lion, or after death will become a lion; nor is it to indicate that I am presently some part of lion such as its eye or tail; nor finally is it to state kinship with lions.[25]

Instead, such statements, totemic peoples insist, express an actual and essential identity which is veritably symbiotic in character. The life of the person is that of the totem. Thereby, all the members of a tribe are most profoundly one with the others from their beginning and by the very fact that they have come to exist, just a I am a brother or

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[23] *Ibid.*, pp. 61-63.

[24] Marcel Griaule, *Dieu d'Eau: Entretiens avec Ogotemmêli* (Paris: Fayad, 1966).

[25] *How Natives Think*, pp. 4-7.

sister to any other child in my family not on the basis of something I do, but by my very emergence into being.

This unity then is in no wise merely an abstract identity of essence or nature, such as would be reflected by a structuralist analysis of forms. Rather, it is a concrete, living, existential identity or participation in the totem. It is in these terms that the primitive interprets his or her entire life, determining both the real significance of the actions he or she performs and hence what he or she should and should not do.

> In analyzing the most characteristic of the primitive's institutions — such as totemic relationship . . . — we have found that his mind does more than present his object to him: it possesses it and is possessed by it. It communes with it and participates in it, not only in the ideological but also in the physical and mystical sense of the word. The mind does not imagine it merely; it lives it. . . . Their participation in it is so *effectually lived* that it is not yet properly imagined.[26]

This insistence upon unity with the totem manifests a state of both thought and feeling prior to the dominance of objectification whereby things and persons are seen as objects over against me. Unity has not yet been attenuated by multiplicity; it is a concrete identity, indistinguishably both objective and subjective.

This mode of understanding was first termed by Lévy-Bruhl, not anti-logical or a-logical, but "pre-logical."[27] In this he reflected his own initial positivist bias that there could exist only a series of single and externally related units, and consequently that any logic must consist simply of such terms. In his posthumously published *Carnets*, however, he retracted the term `pre-logical', for his investigations had shown that the primitives did indeed have a consistent pattern of meaning. L. Apostle has analyzed this in detail in his work on African philosophy, *African Philosophy, Myth or Reality?* and concluded to the need to recognize in it a proper, if not a perfect, logic.[28]

Primitive societies were not held together by understanding everything as a series of units of which the totem is but one. Rather, the totem was understood to be the one in which all the others had their identity, meaning, and unity among themselves. Such a reality cannot be

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[26] *Ibid.*, pp. 324, 362.

[27] *Ibid.*, ch. III.

[28] L. Apostle, *African Philosophy: Myth or Reality?* (Brugges, Belgium: Story, 1980).

just one being among others. As that in terms of which all members in the tribe — no matter how many — have their meaning, the totem is for that tribe the fullness or plenitude of reality and meaning in which all live or participate as a community. It is the key to the meaning of all, the intensive center of all meaning. It does not participate in the individuals; rather, the individuals participate in it. In Augustine's classic terms: "It is not I who first loved You, O Lord; but You who first loved me." Due to this symbiosis of people with their totem, the primitive's knowledge of reality expressed in the totem is immediate, rather than inferential.

In turn, a person's relation to other members of the tribe and to nature is understood in terms of their relation to their totem. Through participation in the common totem the many members of the tribe are intimately related one to another; like brothers, they see themselves to be more deeply united than distinguished.

This is reflected in varied forms of contact, transference, sympathy and telekinesis as, in the above example, when the success of a hunter is understood to depend more radically upon what is, or is not, eaten by his wife at home than upon any other factor. These and other examples manifest an intense understanding of the unity and relatedness of the members of the tribe in a manner not dependent upon surface spatio-temporal or empirical factors. It is not that such empirical and spatial relationships are not also known and acted upon by the primitive. But they see the basic reality of their life to be participation in the totem and on this they base their interpretation of the nature and the reality of their relationships to one another and to all else.

THE TOTEMIC UNITY AND THE MEANING OF HUMAN LIFE

Social Unity: the Horizontal and Vertical Dimensions

This concept brings important insight to the question of unity and distinctiveness which have so divided the modern mind as characterized by a rationalist and analytic mode of thinking. The totem is not one in a series, but the unique reality in which each and all have their being — and, by the same token, their unity with all else.

This is the key to social unity. Each is not indifferent to all else or only externally or accidentally related to others in terms of temporal or spatial coincidence or functional service. Rather all are in principle and by their very being united to all, to whom they are naturally and mutually meaningful. Hence, one cannot totally subject anybody, or indeed any thing, to one's own purpose; one cannot take things merely as means in a purely functional or utilitarian manner. Instead, all persons are brothers or sisters and hence essentially social. This extends as well

to nature in an ecological sensitivity which only now is being recuperated.

What is impressive in this is that all are united but without the loss of individuality. Instead, each individual, rather than being suppressed, has meaning in the unity of the totem. Hence, nothing one does is trivial, for every act is related to the whole. No one is subservient as a tool or instrument; all are members of the whole. As each act stands in relation to the whole whose meaning it reflects, everything is of great moment. There is justice and there are taboos, for there are standards which are not to be compromised.

What then should be said of the totem as the key to a meaning in which all participate. For a number of reasons some would answer that it is absolute and even divine:

- it is the key to the unity of persons, recalling the religious statement of the brotherhood of man in the fatherhood of God;
- it has the absolute meaning of a religious center: analogous to the one God of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism; and
- it is the key to the sacred meaning and dignity of all.

Others, such as the Buddhists, would speak in negative terms of the "non-self" in order to protect its absolute character from the restrictive character of human conceptualization. But, in all these ways the totem is source, center and goal.

Perhaps, however, it might be called the proto-foundation, in that while this principle of unity is privileged and not reducible to humans, neither is it explicitly appreciated as being distinct from, and transcending the contents of this world. Indeed the effort of the mystic at the high end of the religious spectrum is precisely to overcome separation from the foundation of all. The direction is immanence and interiority, namely, to appreciate the unity of human life with its source and goal, and to do so perhaps less by achieving transcendence than by entering more deeply into the center of one's own interiority. In this light totemic thought emerges in its true importance as something not to be escaped from, but to be recaptured and lived in new ways in the midst of our much more complex society and more technically organized world.

This is the more neutral proto position which will be diversely developed in East and West; it provides the basis for both civilizations and has the roots of the characteristics of the later search by each classical culture for the resources of human life and the general direction of their distinctive efforts:

(a) It began from a reality that did actually exist, namely, the successful and progressive life of peoples through the thousands of centuries which constitute almost the entirety of human experience.

(b) It sought the principles of this existence, namely, the content of the understanding which made possible their successful human life.

(c) It concluded in that totemic unity and fullness in which people had both their being and their unity.

Thus, it established the plenitude of, and participation in, the foundational totem as principle both of the human mind and of social life.

This is not restricted to the Western awareness of a transcendent cause of all,[29] but is foundational for both East and West. (a) Being essentially anthropological in character, it began with people in the primitive stage of their development. (b) Being essentially hermeneutic in method, it attended to the conditions of possibility for the understanding manifested in their life. (c) This combination of anthropological and hermeneutic factors concluded to the plenitude, not as it is in itself or as cause distinct from effect — the much later science of metaphysics will be required for that — but only as appreciated by the primitive mind in its totemic mode.

This difference should not be considered to be merely negative. The thought of the primitive is not merely a poorer form of what people in subsequent ages would do better with improved tools. Indeed, the attempt to improve its identification and description tends to lose some of the original sense. Heidegger pointed out that it is only by returning to the origins that important progress can be made. I would like to suggest three ways in which this is true of a return to the totemic vision if made through the combined tools of anthropology and philosophical hermeneutics.

Unity as Foundation of the Human Person

Philosophical Reflection. Human progress is made in part through the ability to understand in increasingly more formalized terms and systems the relationships which obtain in society, in nature, and between the two. If these scientific elaborations are not to be merely empty signs, hypothetical systems or external relations, they must draw upon the meaning of life itself, first expressed humanly in terms of the totem. This will be required not only for their certainty as noted by Descartes, but for their content and unity as pointed out by the classical realist philosophies. This will be particularly necessary if the process of

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[29] See ch. VI below.

development is to implement, rather than to supplant, human values and humanity's transcendent aspirations.

What has been said of the sciences should, with appropriate adaptation, be said of philosophy and its metaphysics as well. It is the task of philosophy as a science to establish with rigor its processes of definition, reasoning and conclusion. The intelligibility of the entire science is dependent upon the intelligibility of its subject, being. In turn, it is the search for that intelligibility which has ever led the mind to reasoning regarding the plenitude of being of Plato's "One" or "Good,"[30] Aristotle's "life divine,"[31] Heidegger's "Being,"[32] or Iqbal's "total absolute".[33]

All are clear that this plenitude cannot be constituted by any limited instance or any combination thereof. Indeed even Plato's notion of *reminiscentia* or remembering may be more helpful than is generally thought if employed in terms not of the hypothesis of a prior existence of the individual in a world of ideas, but of the real experience of our totemic ancestors. The totemic peoples subjected to the acid test of time the proposition that if human life is to be lived it must be lived in terms of a unity, a whole, a plenitude of reality in which all have their being and meaning. This was the cultural heritage they bequeathed to subsequent ages. South Asian thought reflects this in being characterized by a quest for the highest value of life, for *moksa* or spiritual freedom. The Greeks reflected this in their myths, in which context Plato was able to proceed from multiple instances of goodness to the one Goodness Itself which, as the sun, gives light to all in this cave of time. The so-called 'later Heidegger' came finally to focus on this as the ground from which all beings emerge into time. Iqbal saw it as the basis for all human knowledge.

Return to the One Source of Human Life. This is not only a question of the past. Gandhi has pointed out that a new nation cannot be built unless it finds its soul. Menendes y Pelago said this well:

> Where one does not carefully conserve the inheritance
> of the past, be it poor or rich, great or small, there can
> be no hope of giving birth to original thought or a self-
> possessed life. A new people can improvise all except

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[30] Plato, *Republic*, 508.

[31] *Metaphysics* XII, 7.

[32] *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Rowe, 1962).

[33] *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. in Saeed Sheekh (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy and Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989).

> intellectual culture, nor can an old people renounce this
> without extinguishing the most noble part of its life and
> falling into a second infancy similar to senile imbecility.

What Gandhi added was that this spirit or culture is to be found not only in books, but in family and village life. Though some have taken this as an issue of economics, in fact it is one of metaphysics.

How is such a metaphysics to be elaborated? Here the original suggestion of Heidegger assumes particular importance. He noted that philosophic traditions, in proceeding to ever more intensive analysis and clarity trade existential content in order to gain formal clarity. From within the scholastic contexts of both East and West it is protested — I believe rightly, but heretofore in vain — that the vital significance of the classical analyses is not appreciated. As interpreted by the rationalism which has characterized modern thought, Marx rightly considered all such analyses as at best ideological superstructures which obscure attention to the reality of life.

In response, following Heidegger's suggestion, we have stepped back to a point, prior to Plato's and Aristotle's development of selective analyses, at which life was lived in communion, rather than seen in abstractions. We have stepped back beyond philosophy and even myth to totem. There, a crude but robust sense of the plenitude of reality and of participation is to be found. It gave men who had naught else an awareness of their unity one with another and an appreciation of the importance of the actions of each. With that, and that alone, they were able, not only to traverse the vast seas of time, but to arrive with such treasures in the form of epics, myths and hymns — rightly considered "sacred" — that our several civilizations have lived richly merely on the interest of such a patrimony.

To live wisely on the interest of this treasure, it behooves one to be as clear as possible concerning the capital; this is especially true in philosophy. Both as a sequential process of evolving human understanding and as Heidegger's process of retrieve, it is essential to know what came before in order to plan one's next step and to have the materials with which it can be fashioned. A significant body of scholarship works on the basis of a supposed evolution from polytheism to monism. Others would hold that monism is the more original and that the evolution consisted in the progressive introduction of a plurality of gods. The two suppositions are used by their proponents, not only to order chronologically the Vedic hymns and passages in the *Upanishads,* but to interpret the meaning of their key phrases and ideas. The same can be said regarding such key notions as matter and spirit, monism and pluralism.

In fact, the totem is none of these, but expresses the unity and plenitude from which subsequently some will evolve an explicit monotheism, while others will develop theories regarding the development of the physical universe. Both will have their roots in the unity which is the totem, but neither will exhaust its potential meaning. More importantly, neither will be completely deprived of the unspoken totemic context of their meaning. Hence, as we shall see, it is erroneous to interpret Vedic thought or pre-Socratic philosophy with modern glasses as a proto-idealism or a proto-materialism, that is, as a poor form of what is now articulated in clear and distinct modern terms. These force one to choose and hence to reduce reality; the content made present in totemic thought is rather the fullness of reality which Hinduism will try to express in positive terms and Buddhism will try to protect from reduction by human conceptualization. Both will be needed in order to suggest the fullness of meaning made present in totemic thinking.

Foundations of the Meaning of the Person in the One. Precisely because this vision of unity in plenitude is foundational for the human person, the steps taken in the initial phases of its clarification and articulation will be statements of what is essential in order that life be lived and lived well in a particular culture. In the East the *Vedas* express these conditions of possibility. Professor T.N.P. Mahadevan marked well that they can no more rightly be said to be produced than Newton can be said to have produced, rather than to have discovered, the law of gravitation. They are indeed discovered or "heard" (*Sruti*) as one bores deeply into the accumulated sediment of our long experience of living, till finally "like joyous streams bursting from the mountains" the sense of Unity comes forth as revelation of the Real.[34]

There is difficulty, however, in restricting one's views simply to the words of the scriptures, for faith then becomes fideism. As century succeeds century the words lose their existential content, become empty signs, and are filled with ideas which are at best ephemeral and possibly even dangerous. In time they come to be progressively less understood and then ignored. For the active philosopher dedicated to wisdom and to comprehension these dangers are greater still. It is the philosopher's special task to work out the order of being and meaning, to clarify the significance of the steps in the reasoning processes, and to test and ground their principles. This is done so that the One in all and all in One, the plenitude and the participation by which we live and breathe

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[34] T.N.P. Mahadevan, *Invitation to Indian Philosophy* (New Delhi: Heinemann, 1974), p. 14. The simile is taken from the *Vedas*.

and have our being, may pervade our minds, inspire our hearts, and guide our steps.

It is then supremely wise of Islamic philosophers such as Suresvara to recognize that their reasoning processes are only preparatory, ground-clearing operations, whereas the knowledge of the One arising from Sruti or sacred text is immediate and non-relational. It is not the product of their reasoning, and hence exceeds the self-restrictions which rationalism would impose on the human mind and heart. Rather, it is made known by Scripture through implication. Here the philosopher meets the real challenge of metaphysics and joins with the seer in concern for that which surpasses names and forms (*nama rupa*).

As negative statements must be based upon positive content, the Buddhist "non-self" is possible only in the light of the Hindu "self". The philosopher's negative statements that Brahman is "other than the unreal, the insentient, and the finite," needs to be based upon positive awareness of "non-relational, non-verbal content".[35] The philosopher must ask in what way such meaning is present to the awareness of the one who hears *Sruti*. The strong emphasis in Indian as well as totemic thought upon unity would seem to suggest or facilitate the appreciation of a presence which is revealed – Heidegger would say "unveiled" – in the words of the sacred text.

It has been the burden of this chapter to suggest that this presence can be further appreciated if we look, not to the individual alone, but to the mother-lode of human experience lived intensively in family and clan. There it is commonly found that parents convey to their children a vibrant and concrete, if relatively inarticulate, sense of such characteristics of existence as its unity, truth, and goodness. The above analysis showed how the totem expressed in a non-verbal manner an awareness of the plenitude of being in which all are united. It indicated also the manner in which some of this meaning might now be retrieved.

If, indeed, some non-verbal awareness of unity and participation is present as the basis of all truly humane life, then:

- metaphysics may not be an esoteric concern; the realities with which it deals may be much more present than the data for which one needs telescopes, expeditions, laboratories and computers;
- action with which Marx was concerned may be a basis for understanding, just as *karma yoga* or the way of action may be integral to *jnana yoga* or the way of knowledge; and

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[35] R. Balasubramanian, *Taitttiryvpanisad Bhasyavctika* (Madras: Center for Advanced Study in Philosophy, University of Madras, 1974), p. 180.

- freedom as reflecting the true nature of man,[36] may have been lived in the simplest and most familiar of surroundings not as the elaborate Garden of Paradise of later creation stories or in Rousseau's abstract state of nature, but deeply in the very sources of human life. If Piaget's suggestion is correct that the earlier remains as the substratum of the later, the task of emancipation concerns not only our economic and political relations to others but more fundamentally the rediscovery of our roots.

In the words of Chakravarti Rajagopalachari of Madras:

> Whether the epics and songs of a nation spring from the faith and ideas of the common folk, or whether a nation's faith and ideas are produced by its literature is a question which one is free to answer as one likes. . . . Did clouds rise from the sea or was the sea filled by waters from the sky? All such inquiries take us to the feet of God transcending speech and thought.[37]

CONCLUSION

In sum, the totem was not simply one animal among others, but in a sense limitless for, no matter how many persons were born to the tribe, the totem was never exhausted. Further, the totem was shown special respect, such as not being sold or used for food or other utilitarian purposes which would make it subservient to the individual members of the tribe or clan. Whereas other things might be said to be possessed and used, the totem was the subject of direct predication: one might say that one had a horse or other animal, but only of the totem would one say that one is, e.g., lion.

The totem, then, was the unique, limitless reality in terms of which all persons and things had their being and were interrelated. It was the sacred center of individual and community life in terms of which all had meaning and cohesion. It made possible both the human dignity and interpersonal relations which are the most important aspects of human life. It did this with a sense of direct immediacy that would be echoed, but never equaled, in subsequent stages of more formal thought.

This is more foundational and immanent than even most later religious formulation for it states the basically transcendent character of all human life. A true humanism then sees the absolute source and goal

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[36] S. Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), I, 58.

[37] C. Rajagopalachari, *Ramayana* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1976), p. 312.

not as something distant which is added to a universe that is first experienced as basically secular. Rather it is the basic and essential insight of even the simplest forms of human community for which it provides both the inspiration and the guide.

For this reason as subsequent chapters follow the development of more sophisticated modes of intellection reflected in correspondingly complex social structures, they will continuingly reflect upon the state of what has come to be called civil society. Whereas the evolving legal social structures will reflect the evolving capabilities of the human mind the relatively informed civil society will reflect the basic social relationships or unity of a community. This is the original and foundational sense of unity which Heidegger notes as being not poor and weak but most rich and fruitful. We will look to this as the continuing touchstone of unity throughout.

In contrast then to the rationalist attempt to remove such issues from pubic life which it thereby impoverishes, totemic thought enables one to see that the issue is not whether there be room for such cosmic and integrating vision alongside public life or how to protect one from the other, but how this originary vision of unity and can help to assure the community of persons in the midst of present ennui, alienation and conflict.

CHAPTER II

MYTH: THE EMERGENCE OF DIVERSITY WITHIN UNITY

INTRODUCTION

The present chapter concerns a later, yet still pre-philosophical, period, namely, that of myth, hymn and epic. This will be studied as an evolution or transmographation of human life from understanding all in terms of an externally sensible reality as totem to more internal imaginative terms, somewhat as a moth develops into the quite different form of butterfly. The earlier tradition of the totem manifested the original human awareness to be one of unity rather than of diversity for its self-understanding was based on the absolute unity and plenitude of the totem. In contrast, the tradition of myth begins a progressive recognition of the diversity of people within this basic unity. This process will be followed in the subsequent parts on the initiation of philosophy and its evolution through time.

In this process we shall encounter a new set of issues. In Chapter I we asked first and in principle about how development takes place, enabling new questions to be asked and new insights to be acquired, and about the relation between the content of earlier and subsequent stages of thought? Here we must look concretely at the nature of the transition from the primitive to the mythic stage of consciousness, and at how this unfolding of totemic thought opens a new dimension of human self-understanding and fundamental awareness. This will be important for the development of diverse cultures and civilizations for it is such basic understanding that grounds and distinguishes the various civilizations as is noted by S. Huntington in his *Clash of Civilizations and the Making of the New World Order* and hence the possibilities of peace in our global times. This chapter will focus on Hesiod's *Theogony*.

Epistemologically the transition from totemic to mythic thought was a response to the need for a new way of thinking. In the totemic phase of human existence the life of each person or family was basically similar to all others. Each did all that was required for their life and the basic unity of all was symbolized in terms of a totem which in the locale was directly present to their external senses as a bird or fish. Now, however, with the specialization and division of labor, more complex patterns of human relations, with their broader possibilities and responsibilities, confronted the human mind.

To take account of the diversity of life and one's distinctive identity therein it was no longer sufficient to think in terms of simple identity with the one foundation of all of life stated in terms only of one thing immediately available to the senses. Higher capabilities described by Piaget would be needed in order to take account of diversity as well as unity; relations of the many to and in the one would now be central. This made it necessary for the intellect to engage the distinctive capabilities of the imagination as an internal sense whereby the mind could variously combine what it received through the senses to construct images with which the intellect could work out complex models of human relations and meaning.

A very general, yet suggestive, analogy is the move from dancing to figure skating. In skating one is freed from the short strides and relatively slow speeds of the person on foot: one's body is endowed with the long graceful strokes along with the velocity which make possible moves quite out of the question even for the gymnast or ballerina. In literature the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, written in terms of the gods, illustrate the extent of the creativity with which the imagination can enable the human spirit. The mind is not thereby reduced to the pictures the imagination creates, but through these pictures of gods and battles it is enabled to think deep truths about the human condition.

This can be seen in the progression of Kant's *Critiques* which provides a more properly philosophical insight into the possibilities opened to thinking by working in terms available not to the external senses, but to the imagination. Often imagination is considered ephemeral, unreal and distractive, but in his first *Critique* Kant points out the role played by the imagination in the development of the necessary and universal structures of the sciences. In his third *Critique* Kant notes its role in working out the alternatives essential for creative choice and hence the deeper roots of freedom. It may be helpful then briefly to step out of a merely chronological sequence from totem to myth in order to turn to Kant for help in appreciating the work of the imagination. This, in turn, will enable us to understand more adequately the nature of the development of human self-awareness from totemic to mythic thought.

For Kant in his first *Critique* it is the task of the reproductive imagination to bring together the multiple elements of sense intuition and to do so in an order capable of being informed by a concept or category of the intellect and with a view to making a judgement. On the part of the subject, the imagination here is active, authentically one's own and creative. Ultimately, however, its work is not free, but bound to the categories or concepts of the sciences which are characterized by necessity and universality. What is of special interest to us here is how in his third *Critique* of aesthetic judgement Kant described a greatly

enhanced role for the imagination actively reviewing all possible combinations and sequences making it possible to identify which best express the possibilities of humanity and beauty. This explains how the mind working in terms of the imagination can be so creative. In turn, it makes it possible to grasp the huge advance in human thought when this working of the imagination was developed and became able to create myths as instruments of thought.

UNITY THROUGH DIFFERENCE: THE TRANSITION FROM TOTEM TO MYTH

In the last chapter we saw the classical distinction of the three levels of knowledge and the identification by Piaget of the levels of psychological development of the child. His general theory of development sheds light on the cultural transitions which enable deep human self-understanding and reflect its source, foundation and goal. It provides three principles important for our work at this point of transition from totem to myth, namely, that the process of the human mind is:

(1) from unity to diversity – a decentering process – which decentering enables a recentering process in a deeper understanding of the original unity grasped in totemic thought and remaining as substratum in all that follows;

(2) always fundamentally intellectual, but works in terms first proper to the external sense, then to the internal senses, and ultimately to the intellect itself; and

(3) via a disequilibrium which however can come from any cause from the psycho-somatic in adolescence to the wonder which Aristotle notes leads to philosophy.

The transition from totem to myth is a first such step beyond the universal and foundational primitive experience of totemic unity. Many of the elements of this transition were sketched by the philosopher-anthropologist, Lucien Levy-Bruhl, in the last chapter of his *How Natives Think*.[1] Piaget described the dynamism of this development as a process moving from an equilibrium in which the multiple internal and external factors of one's life are integrated, through a disequilibrium caused by the introduction of new factors, to a higher equilibrium through the development of new capabilities.

The Chapter went on to describe the character of human awareness in its primitive, basic or totemic stage. Each group focused on

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[1] (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966).

a single principle, namely, the totem, through identification with which all members of the group by their very identity are related to all others in the group. Social relatedness was not an arbitrary addition to one's humanity, but the essential task to which all are destined. Its social implications for the brotherhood of man are so central and obvious that one who says he loves God, but hates his brother, can be considered not just confused, but a liar.[2]

This primitive insight is the most fundamental, and the heart of all that subsequently will be developed in the various cultures and civilizations. From this follows the importance of Piaget's observation that any transition must not discard, but retain the essence of this prior state, and add thereto new capabilities and insights to form a new mode of thinking, feeling and acting. One begins from the equilibrium of the prior state of harmony in the primitively (i.e., originally and foundationally) appreciated unity and moves through disequilibria to reestablish the equilibrium at a higher level of awareness.

This chapter and those that follow then are not about the addition of a new mode of life alongside or substituting for that which was described in totemic terms. Rather they are an evolution of that mode. In the present case the move is from the equilibrium of the totemic state in which unity was stressed, through the disequilibrium introduced with the differentiation and specialization of roles, to a new equilibrium. Unity is continued, but by employing the work of imagination it engages the developing diversity in such wise as to form a human self-understanding that is higher and more complex, yet more integrated and more stable.

Transcendence. With this ability to be both united and differentiated came an appreciation as well of the special distinctiveness of the sacred center with regard to the many individuals of which it was the principle. The one which in totemic thought had been stated previously simply by identity (I am lion) could now be appreciated as greater than and transcending the members of the tribe. This is reflected in the development of priesthood, rituals and symbols to reflect what was seen, no longer simply as one's deepest identity, but as the principle thereof.[3]

Such a transcendent reality could no longer be stated in terms of such physical realities as parrot or lion corresponding to the external senses, but rather was figured by the imagination. The terms drawn originally from the senses now were reconfigured in forms that expressed life which was above the human and served as the principle of

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[2] I John: IV, 20.
[3] *How Natives Think*, ch. XII.

human life. Such higher principles, as knowing and will, were personal; and as transcending persons they were called 'gods'.

It would be incorrect to consider this, as did Freud, to be simply a projection of human characteristics. On the contrary, the development of the ability to think in terms shaped by the imagination released human appreciation of the principle of life from the limitations of animals, birds and other natural entities available to the external senses. These had always been special: to eat or sell them was taboo. Now the imagination was engaged to allow the transcendence of the principle of unity to be expressed in a more effective manner. This did not create the sense of transcendence, but allowed the unique and essential foundation of human meaning of which Iqbal spoke to find new and improved expression through an evolution of human capabilities.

Hence, what previously had been grasped simply in direct symbiotic unity, now with more distinctive self-awareness came to be appreciated not only to be immanent to each and all, but to transcend them as well. Whereas the totem was considered to be simply one with the primitive, now symbol and ritual appear[4] in which the imagination is essentially involved. Thus the principle of the unity of many came to be pictured in the anthropomorphic forms of gods, and their interaction was the stuff of which myths were woven. If the totem had been proto-religious, the myth was religious for it opened the mind to the transcendent, if anthropomorphically pictured, principles of life and meaning.

In contrast to the taboos and the social unity based upon an unthinking totem, the unity founded in the gods could have elements of comprehension and command, of love and mercy; it could extend to all humans while being specific with regard to each person.

To ask of those in this stage of equilibrium how this could be would be to suppose a later philosophical reflexion on thinking. What is important for the present is that, having attained the mythic level of development, the peoples were able to articulate with vastly greater complexity the unity which by the totem had been expressed in terms of simple and direct identity. That unity could now be textured or woven, as it were, with the many rich threads of meaning available by the work of the imagination expressed in myths.

It should be noted that the evidence from this stage of development does not point to the use of mythical forms merely as literary devices. That would presuppose a prior understanding of things simply in their own, that is, in proper terms — a mode of understanding which had not yet evolved. Rather, myth at this point was the only mode

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[4] *Ibid.*

of understanding — what Tillich would call "unbroken myth."[5] The many realities of the world were understood directly in terms of the identities of the gods and the interrelations between them. Thus, the interpretation of the gods was the highest wisdom and the questions were asked, as noted the *Rg Veda*, "not jestingly. . . . Sages, I ask you this for information."[6]

Immanence. Myth added a new appreciation of transcendence to the unity stated so forcefully by the totem as that in terms of which all has its meaning. To this dimension of transcendence there corresponds an appreciation of the immanence of the divine, for these two characteristics -- transcendence and immanence -- are not opposed one to the other, but correlative. This is true throughout our experience: the more transcendent a reality the more present it is. Thus, organic material such as a stone simply rests upon the earth, whereas the plant sinks its roots into the immediate soil to draw nutrition and eventually enriches the soil, while the animal finds its water and nutrition over a broad territory. With persons and their cognitive and affective life this relation is vastly intensified, as can be seen in the pervasive mutual influence between teacher and student, or lover and beloved. Continuing in this same direction, it is possible to see as correlative both the infinite transcendence of the supreme principle of unity and meaning and its immanence.

This religious insight entails in turn the rich and sacred dignity of each person and of the social interaction of persons. Conversely, our self respect and the respect and love we extend to others constitute an immanent context for the discovery of the divine and for our response thereto.

This is not an alternative to what was lived in totemic terms, but enables that to emerge with much greater articulation both as regards the divine and as regards the principle of life and the human wayfarer. Henceforth, in mythic cultures all will be understood in terms of the gods. The classical literature of Greece would be written exclusively in these terms — indeed, they had no other — and Homer would produce the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as an irreplaceable, because unsurpassable, cornerstone of Western Culture, similar to the great *Mahabarata* epic of the East. We shall look into the *Theogony* in order to examine more concretely this new level of human self-understanding, but to do so we need to look more in detail into the nature of myth.

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[5] Paul Tillich, "Theology and Symbolism," in *Religious Symbolism*, ed. F. Ernest Johnson (New York: Harper and Row, 1955), p. 109.

[6] *Hymns of the Rg. Veda* , trans. By R. Griffith (Varanasi: Chowkhamba, 1963), X, 88.

THE NATURE OF MYTH

Myth might be described as "the operation of an imaginative consciousness which spontaneously conceives the world and man in the form of persons and events having a symbolic meaning."[7] Let us look at this in detail:

An imaginative Consciousness: As noted above this is not intellectual knowledge as such, nor is it simply sense knowledge, but the intellect working according to, or in the terms presented by, the internal senses of memory and imagination. The imagination draws from the external senses information which it variously combines to constitute newly integrated pictures. These, in turn, represent the external world not only as it already exists in itself, but also as it can be reordered and recombined by the human consciousness.

- *Spontaneous Conceptions*: Sensible realities are not first grasped directly in their own terms and then expressed through a god as their sign; instead, all is grasped in, and as, personal forms. E.g. the sea is not first known in its own right and then re-presented by Poseidon, rather the sea is Poseidon and Poseidon is sea: there is no other appreciation of sea separate from Poseidon.

- *Persons*: This enables the expression not only of some abstract empirical or physical data as would a thermometer or weather vane, but a joint cognitive, affective and behavioral involvement in reality. Myths express the meaning, value, purpose and creative contribution of the object. This can be appreciated by contrasting a weather report of a storm at sea with Homer's much richer if less technically exact description of the struggle between Poseidon and Zephyr or Vaughn Williams' "Sea Symphony".

- *Events*: What is important is not merely an individual, but the story line of the person's interaction with other persons and with all parts of nature. Thus, in the Bible what is important is less the individual figure or verse than the story line recounting the work of divine Providence.

- *Symbol*: This is not a sign which it joined arbitrarily to that which it signifies, as green and red indicate respectively "go" and "stop" in traffic lights, but could have been the converse. In contrast, a symbol

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[7] George F. McLean and Patrick Aspell, *Ancient Western Philosophy* (New York: Appleton, Century, Croft, 1972), p. 8. See also by the same authors *Readings in Ancient Western Philosophy* (New York: Appleton, Century, Croft, 1971) and Ernst Cassirer, *Mythical Thought*, vol. II of *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale, 1965), pp. 3-59.

participates in, or shares the reality it symbolizes, bespeaking a mode of immanence as, e.g., with the flag of a nation.

Myths constitute a rational, though not a critical inquiry. It is not critical because they do not state things by their proper names, but rather by the names of the gods: e.g. the sea by 'Poseidon'. Consequently, there can be no strict critical control over the conclusions to be drawn from the evidence.

Nevertheless, their thought content is rational and coordinated. The *Theogony* as we shall see is not just a random gathering of the names of the gods, but a systematic ordering so as to constitute an overall pattern conveying a deep sense of reality. Like the "days" of creation in the *Genesis* account, the sequence of the names and events may not be entirely consistent according to the laws of physics. But the *Theogony* and *Genesis* were not works of scientific cosmology; science had not yet developed and at the time was not even a human capability. Nevertheless, myths were meant to convey deep and perduring truths, and were intentionally and effectively ordered to do so. Thus, in his *Works and Days*, the first treatise on labor, Hesiod found it necessary to identify vicious competition, for which there was no symbol, in order to contrast it to productive emulation symbolized by Eris. To do so he developed a sister goddess to Eris, a bad Eris. The rational content of the myths can be seen also in the Greeks articulation in terms of myth of a worldview integrating the cosmos and humans. This was rich in expressing meaning and values and enabled people to live a human life in their physical and social unities. Indeed, it remains so indispensable a part of the world's cultural heritage that in the East such epics as the *Mahabarata* written in terms of myths are the stories first recited and then assimilated through music and dance. In the West the *Iliad* is often the first book assigned in secondary school literature courses; it is a good place to begin one's effort to be more richly human.

In sum, one might describe myth as a picturing understanding of reality in personal terms.

THE THEOGONY

In view of what has been said above, the *Theogony*, written by Hesiod (ca. 776 B. C.), is especially illustrative. Because the gods stated the reality of the various parts of nature, when Hesiod undertook to state the relationship which obtained between them he undertook in effect to articulate the understanding of all and particularly of the conscious forces. This provided not merely an understanding of man but an anthropomorphic or humanized understanding of all. Whereas modern thought so isolated the human from the rest of nature that it would leave

one a beleaguered wayfarer in an alien and threatening land, the myth spoke of the basic issues of origin and goal and did so in terms relating directly to the human mind and will. In this it is closer to the totem in reflecting a recognition of the sacredness of earth and of nature which is one of the deeper recent sensitivities to the environment which now emerge in this post ideological global period (e.g., Vaclav Havel's remarks on *Gaia*).

Hesiod's work has a number of important characteristics. First, it intends to state the highest possible type of knowledge. Thus, it begins with an invocation to the Muses to provide him with divine knowledge. "These things declare to me from the beginning, ye Muses who dwell in the house of Olympus."[8]

Secondly and correspondingly, it is concerned with the deepest issues, namely the origin and unity of all things. "Tell me which of them came first", he asks. Then he proceeds to a poetic treatment of issues ranging from the fact of evil to the justification of the reign of the gods (later named "theodicy" by Leibniz),[9] which includes the basic problems of meaning and purpose, good and evil with which human life is most basically concerned.[10]

Thirdly, because it was written as the period of purely mythic thought was drawing to a close — within two centuries of the initiation of philosophy in Greece — it manifests the extent to which mythic thought could understand basic issues. Hesiod was able to draw upon the full resources of the body of Greek mythology, weaving the entire panoply of the gods into the structure of his poem. He did not, however, simply collect and relate the gods externally in a topographical or chronological pattern. Rather, his organization of the material was ruled by an understanding of their inner meaning and real order of dependence. Thus, when in the *Theogony* he responds to the question of "How at the first gods and earth came to be,"[11] his ordering of the gods weds theogony and cosmogony. It constitutes a unique manifestation of the way to God laid out by the mythic mind in understanding all as emerging from and of the divine. In order to examine this in detail we shall cite here the sections of the text that are central to our purposes.

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[8] *Theogony*, n. 114, in *Readings in Ancient Western Philosophy*, p. 4.

[9] *Ibid.*, n. 115.

[10] Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 12-13.

[11] *Readings in Ancient Western Philosophy*, p. 4.

THE TEXT *(Theogony*, 11, 104-230, 455-505)[12]

a. *Exhortation to the Muses*:

> Hail, children of Zeus! Grant lovely song and celebrate the holy race of the deathless gods who are for ever, those that were born of Earth and starry Heaven and gloomy Night and them that briny Sea did rear. Tell how at the first gods and earth came to be, and rivers, and the boundless sea with its raging swell, and the gleaming stars, and the wide heaven above, and the gods who were born of them, givers of good things, and how they divided their wealth, and how they shared their honors amongst them, and also how at the first they took many-folded Olympus. These things declare to me from the beginning, ye Muses who dwell in the house of Olympus, and tell me which of them first came to be.

b. *The order of the appearances of the gods:*

> Verily at the first Chaos came to be, but next wide-bosomed Earth, the ever-sure foundation of all the deathless ones who hold the peaks of snowy Olympus, and dim Tartarus in the depth of the wide-pathed Earth, and Eros (Love), fairest among the deathless gods, who unnerves the limbs and overcomes the minds and wise counsels of all gods and all men within them. From Chaos came forth Erebus and black Night; but of Night were born Aether and Day, whom she conceived and bare from union in love with Erebus. And Earth first bare starry Heaven, equal to herself, to cover her on every side, and to be an ever-sure abiding-place for the blessed gods. And she brought forth long Hills, graceful haunts of the goddess-Nymphs who dwell amongst the glens of the hills. She bare also the fruitless deep with his raging swell, Pontus, without sweet union of love. But afterwards she lay with Heaven and bare deep-swirling Oceanus, Coeus and Crius and Hyperion and Iapetus, Theia and Rhea, Themis and Mnemosyne and

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[12] Hesiod, *The Theogony*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White (Loeb Classical Library; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 85-99, 107-151.

gold-crowned Pheobe and lovely Tethys. After them was born Cronus the wily, youngest and most terrible of her children, and he hated his lusty sire.

Diversity in Unity

The order which Hesiod states in the *Theogony* is the following. The first to appear was Chaos: "Verily at the first Chaos came to be." Then came earth: "but next wide-bosomed Earth the ever sure foundation of all," and starry Heaven: "Earth first bare starry Heaven, equal to herself." From Earth, generally in unison with Heaven, were born Oceanus and the various races of Cyclopes and gods, from whom, in turn, were born still other gods such as Zeus and the races of men. In this manner, Hesiod articulates the sequence of the origin of all parts of the universe. Eros and the various modalities, such as Night and Day, Fate and Doom, also are pictured as arising from Chaos.

If, then, we ask what is the understanding of reality expressed by this poem, it will be noted that Hesiod expresses the very opposite of a random gathering of totally disparate and equally original units. On the contrary, the relation between the gods and between the parts of nature they bespeak is expressed in terms of procreation. As a result, every reality is related positively to all the others in a genetic sequence.

This relatedness does not depend upon a later and arbitrary decision; it is equally original with their very reality: they originate genetically from, and in, this unity. Neither does it involve only certain aspects of the components of the universe, but extends to their total actuality, including their actions. Rhea, for example, appeals to her parents for protection from the acts of her husband, Cronus, against their children. The understanding which the poem conveys, therefore, is that of a unity or relation which originates with their very being and on which the distinctive beings and their actions depend.

Indeed, unity is understood to be by nature prior to diversity. This is indicated by the genetic character of the structure in which each god proceeds from the union of an earlier pair of gods, while all such pairs are descendants of the one original pair, Earth and Heaven. Further, the procreation of the gods proceeds from each of these pairs precisely as united in love. Finally, this is done under the unitive power of Eros, who is equally original with heaven and earth.

Note that there is a sequence: the text says that the gods "came to be" or "first came to be". Further, this is not a merely temporal, external or atomic sequence, but a genetic one. They "came forth from", bare or were born from. This extends through all the gods, who stand for all the parts of nature. Thus, the parts of nature have a meaning and

cohesiveness among themselves and with humans who also were born in these genetic lines.

From what has been said we can conclude that unity pervades gods and men: all is traced back to Earth and Heaven as the original pair from whose union, under the impetus of Eros, all is generated.

Unity as Absolute

But what is the relation between Heaven and Earth? As the genetic lines derive from these two original gods, if these gods are related between themselves then each thing in the universe is related to everything else. But if heaven and earth are not related then each thing is related only to its own line, but is alien to the other half of reality, which then would be indifferent or even antipathetic.

A crucial question is being dealt with here: is the world a battlefield between two alien forces in which one's basic attitude in life must be defence and manipulation, or is it in principle a unity in relation to which the proper attitude is love and generous cooperation? This requires working out the proper attitude in a situation in which diversity must be recognized and promoted. (In moral education it corresponds to Erikson's notion of trust and hope.[13] The infant who is well cared for can develop an attitude of trust and on this basis evolve a moral character that is open to all, trustful, cooperative and creative. If not, lacking trust, the focus is on self-protection and the manipulation of everyone else toward that goal.)

The Greek mythic answer, which was foundational for the sense of unity in Western civilization lies in the mythical relation of Heaven and Earth. This can take us to a still deeper understanding in which the unity of all reality constitutes a path to Unity provided we return to the text and use the proper etymological tools.

The text states the following order: Chaos, Earth, Heaven. Unfortunately, since the Stoics, Chaos has since come to be taken to mean disorder and mindless conflict or collision, thus obscuring its original meaning in the earlier text of the *Theogony*. Etymologically, the term can be traced through the root of the Greek term '*casko*' to the common Indo-European stem, '*gap*'. Using this stem, as it were, as a sonar signal to sound out mythic thought across the broad range of the Indo-European languages, we find that the term is used to express a gaping abyss at the beginning of time as, e.g., with the derivative '*ginungagap*' in Nordic mythology. [14] Kirk and Raven confirm this

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[13] E.H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1963), p. 247; and *Identity, Youth and Crisis* (New York: Noton, 1968).

[14] Jaeger, p. 13.

analysis and conclude that for Hesiod 'chaos' meant, not a state of confusion or conflict, but an open and perhaps windy space which essentially is between boundaries.[15] Aristotle in his *Physics* referred to chaos as empty space (*topos*).[16]

Returning to the text in this light, it will be noted that it does not speak directly of a state prior to Chaos, but begins with the emergence of Chaos: "At first Chaos came to be". There is no suggestion that Chaos was the original reality; on the contrary, the text is explicit that chaos came to be: "*He toi men prótista Cháos genet.*"[17]

Further, Chaos is a space to which boundaries are essential. These boundaries, it would seem, are the gods which the text states just after Chaos, namely, Earth and its equal, Heaven. These are not said to have existed prior to chaos and to have been brought into position in order to constitute the boundaries of the '*gap*'; rather, they are said somehow to be arranged as contraries on the basis of chaos.

Thus, Kirk and Raven understand actively the opening verses of the body of the text: "Verily at the first Chaos came to be, but next wide-bosomed Earth . . . and Earth first bare starry Heaven equal to herself." They take this to express the opening of a gap or space, which *thereby* gives rise to Heaven and Earth as its two boundaries.[18]

For its intelligibility, this implies: (a) that an undifferentiated unity precedes the gap, and (b) that by opening or division of this unity the first contrasting realities, namely, Heaven and Earth, were constituted. That is, on the basis of the gap one boundary, Heaven, is differentiated from the other boundary, Earth. Hence, by the gap the boundaries are identically both constituted and differentiated as contraries. As all else are derivatives of Chaos, Earth and Heaven in the manner noted above, it can be concluded that the entire differentiated universe is derivative of an original undifferentiated unity which preceded Chaos.

It would be premature, however, to ask of the mythic mind whether this derivation took place by material, formal or efficient causality; that question must await the development of philosophy. But clearly the original reality itself is not differentiated; it is an undivided unity. As such it is without name, for the names we give reflect our sense perceptions which concern not what is constant and homogenous, but the differentiated bases of the various sense stimuli. What is

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[15] G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The PreSocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960), pp. 26-32.

[16] *Physics* IV, 1, 208b31.

[17] Hesiod*, the Homeric Hymns and Homerica*, trans. by H.G. Evelyn-White (London: Heinemann, 1920), p. 86.

[18] *Readings in Ancient Western Philosophy*, p. 5.

undifferentiated is not only unspoken in fact, but unspeakable in principle by the language of myth which depends essentially upon the imagination.

Nonetheless, though it is unspeakable by the mythic mind itself, reflection can uncover or reveal something of that undifferentiated reality which the *Theogony* implies. We have, for instance, noted its reality and unity. Its lack of differentiation is not a deficiency, but a fullness of reality and meaning from which all particulars and contraries are derived. It is unspeakable because not bounded, limited and related after the fashion of one imaged contrary to another. This is the transcendent fullness that is at the heart of the Hindu *advaita* or nondual philosophy and which Buddhism is careful to protect by using the term "non-self"; it is also the total infinite to which Iqbal referred as that which makes finite thinking possible.

It is the source of the many things which can be properly seen and spoken of in our languages, and which Eastern thought refers to as the world of names and forms. Further, it is the source, not only from which the differentiated realities are derived, but of the coming forth itself of these realities. This is reflected in two significant manners. Positively, Eros, which itself is said to come from chaos, is the power which joins together in procreative union the pairs of gods, thereby reflecting the dynamic manifestive and sharing character of the undifferentiated reality. Negatively, this is indicated also by the acts which the *Theogony* describes as evil. For example, it says that "Heaven rejoiced in his evil doing", namely, hiding away his children in a secret place of Earth as soon as each was born, and not allowing them to come into the light. Cronus is termed "a wretch" for swallowing his children. In each case evil is described as impeding the process by which new realities are brought into existence. This implies that its opposite, the good, involves essentially bringing forth the real. The undifferentiated unity is the origin of the multiple and differentiated; in terms we shall encounter below, it is participative.

Unity as Sharing

It can now be seen that all the progeny, that is, all parts of the universe and all humans, are born into the unity of a family. They trace their origin, not to a pair of ultimately alien realities and certainly not to chaos as conflict, but to undifferentiated Unity. Just as there is no autogenesis, there is no unrelated reality or aspect of reality. It would seem, then, that verses 118-128 of the hymn imply a reality which is one, undifferentiated and therefore unspeakable, but nonetheless essentially generous, sharing and productive of the multiple. Like the

totem, for the mythic mind of the Greeks, beings are more one than many, more related than divided, more complementary than contrasting.

Thus far we have focused on unity. We begin, perhaps too egocentrically, in our separate realities and look for our relation to the One. But the path that leads us there is in reality not one way but two. We have found that it is more basically a genetic pathway coming from the One; this is its deeper truth. Hence, concern with the multiple realities and thus with individuality is integral to the concern of the *Theogony* which indicates much that is important thereto. But the key is its picturing of the multiple, both persons and parts of nature, as generated from the One. This has a number of implications.

First, it shows the One which is the source of all reality and hence reality itself to be expansive and generative, i.e., good. Second, it bespeaks participation, i.e., that it is of the nature of reality to share itself with others, to bear other identities as offspring which, in turn, share and bear still others.

From this it follows that the key to a good life is not holding off or refusing to share. Indeed, this is precisely the way evil is depicted, namely, not as strife, but rather as hiding the children had by heaven and earth, and as Cronus swallowing his children as they came forth from Rhea so that they would not assume his office of king. Strife is not the source of evil, but follows from evil deeds. Thus, even negatively, the character of being is manifest to be good and sharing.

From this appears the proper basis of individuality. It is not opposition or selfish hording; rather individuals are significant to the degree that they participate, share and show forth the goodness of their deeper origin.

In addition this affirmation of the distinctiveness of individuals is not absolute, but derivative. Their generation is via separation in, and of, the originally undifferentiated unity, and it is carried out under the impulse of Eros as a unifying factor bringing together the gods in procreative union. Hence, contrary to Hobbes and his sense of man as wolf to man in a war of all against all, or to pragmatic cooperation only for some external, e.g. economic, benefit, individuals are not isolated, much less opposed to one another. Rather, they are in principle positively related and unitive. Marriage is the living expression of this unity.

In sum, the overall picture of the Theogony, which sums up the whole Greek mythic tradition, is that of an original unity. As with the parts of nature they bespeak, the many gods come from the One via generative unions. This constitutes an open unity, parallel to that of all in the totem, but capable of taking explicit account of the differences in reality and integrating them. Finally, the identity of each is had not by holding to what it is, but in proclaiming, through sharing, what it has

from the One. There is a strong sense of this in African cultures as well as in the image of the Cross as dying in order to live.

As a transformation of the earlier totemic structure, mythic understanding continues the basic totemic insight regarding the related character of all things predicated upon one center for the meaning of all. By thinking in terms of the gods, however, myth is able to integrate a number of important factors. First, quantitatively, the myth can integrate, not only a certain tribe or number of tribes, but the entire universe. Second, qualitatively, it can take account of such intentional realities as purpose, fidelity, love and care. Third, while still affirming the unitive principle which had been expressed in totemic thought with shocking directness ("I am lion"), it expresses or connotes rather its transcendent, unspeakable, undifferentiated and generous character.

This is the greatness of the human achievement at the level of mythic or imaginative thinking. It enables the various peoples to explore the many avenues of life with its aims and passions and to order these in special ways in which the meaning of life can be appreciated and pursued. These are the cultures and in broader terms the civilization in terms of which we are, and which we are challenged to reconcile in this global age.

CRITIQUE OF THE ADEQUACY OF MYTH

The expression of all this in terms of the mythic forms available to the internal sense of imagination had its temptations. These were pointed out by Xenophanes.[19] One set of fragments from his writing gives classical and somewhat biting expression to its imaginative character.

> But mortals believe the gods to be created by birth, and
> to have their own (mortals') raiment, voice and body
> (Fr. 14, Clement, *Stromateis*, V, 109, 2).

> Aethiopians have gods with snub noses and black hair,
> Thracians have gods with grey eyes and red hair (Fr. 16,
> *ibid.*, VII, 22, 1).

> But if oxen (and horses) and lions had hands or could
> draw with hands and create works of art like those made
> by men, horses would draw pictures of gods like horses,
> and oxen of gods like oxen, and they would make the

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[19] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

> bodies (of their gods) in accordance with the form that each species itself possesses (Fr. 15, *ibid.*, V, 109, 3).

This, however, is not the real problem. Xenophanes noted that by the time of Homer and Hesiod a perfervid imagination had gone from expressing the transcendence of the gods to attributing to them as well the many forms of evil found among men.[20]

> Both Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind: theft, adultery, and mutual deception (Fr. 11, Sextus, *Adv. Math.*, IX, 193).

In effect, the very principles of meaning and value had come to point as well to their opposites.

The problem reminds one of the dilemma of Augustine regarding the mystery of evil. As long as his intellect not only began with material and hence quantitative data received through the senses, but was limited in its work to the material characteristics of the external senses or the internal senses of imagination it simply could not treat the issue of reality as such.

Thus, while Augustine's thinking remained Manichean and was imaginative in nature the good extending through the universe was always overlapping and intermingling with evil. In these circumstances, being unable to resolve the great human dilemma of evil, he was forced to transcend the picture thinking of the imagination and its essentially extended mode in order to be able to think through this basic issue of evil. In Piaget's terms he had to move to another level of knowledge. Similarly in the situation described by Xenophanes we find the key to the human mind's transcending imaginative and mythic thinking and thereby entering into the realm of philosophy.

If it was no longer sufficient to think in terms of the imagination, then the intellect needed to proceed in its own terms, beyond sense and imagination. This was necessary in order to state formally the absolute unity which was the deeper sense of what totemic thought had stated so directly in saying, "I am lion" and especially to defend what had been stated in the more complex manner of myth in terms of the gods of nature through anthropomorphic ventures of the imagination. As the mind began to operate in properly intellectual terms, rather than through the images of mythic thinking, it was able to overcome the anthropomorphisms of the myth. This enabled

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[20] *Ibid.*

Xenophanes to make explicit that the supreme principle of unity and meaning was transcendent, one, all wise and provident.[21]

> There is one god, among gods and men the greatest, not at all like mortals in body or in mind (Fr. 23, Clement, *Strom.*, V, 109, 1).
>
> He sees as a whole, thinks as a whole, and hears as a whole (Fr. 24, Sextus, *Adv. Math*., IX, 144).
>
> And he always remains in the same place, not moving at all, nor is it fitting for him to change his position at different times (Fr. 26, Simplicius, *Phys.*, 23, 11, 20).
>
> But without toil he sets everything in motion, by the thought of his mind (Fr. 25, *ibid.*, 23, 23, 20).

Philosophy as a distinct discipline had begun. Proceeding in terms proper to the intellect, in time philosophy would supplant, but never eliminate, myth as the faculty of human understanding.

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[21] *Ibid*.

PART II

PERSONAL UNIQUENESS AND SOCIAL UNITY
IN THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL WEST

THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE GREEK POLIS

UNITY IN THE PRESOCRATIC INITIATION OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

To review the path thus far, we sought to understand how philosophical understanding did not emerge suddenly, but grew out of the totemic and mythic traditions. We saw how a process of development takes place when a need arises that cannot be resolved by competencies already possessed. When, however, a new competency must be evoked and developed a dramatic shift in human cultures occurs. This would appear to be the case as the intellect steps beyond the mythic pictures drawn by the imagination to the properly intellectual terms that state the proper nature of the realities involved. Not incidentally, this was identically the point of initiation of philosophy as such.

Following the suggestion of Heidegger that, in confronting major issues, real progress can be made only by a "step back," we found that totemic or "primitive" thought was aware that all things formed a unity on the basis of a unique plenitude of being and meaning which was the basis of their reality. Myth was seen to enable totemic consciousness to both transcend and be the origin of a differentiated universe. Hence, the authors of the myths came to be termed "*protoi theologisantes*".[1]

In the East most do not consider philosophy in the proper sense of the word to have been initiated until the *Upanishads* around the 6th-8th century BC when the issues were separated from the proximate context of ritual and treated by, if not for, themselves. Aristotle described the wise man, the lover of wisdom or the philosopher, as one capable of universal and difficult knowledge, with greater than ordinary certitude, and able to identify causes and seek knowledge for its own sake.[2] This set of characteristics need not be definitive for every culture, and Aristotle suggested it only as an inductive model.

It is time now to turn directly to the development of philosophic thought in order to determine the distinctive sense of unity and diversity which it made possible for its corresponding cultures. It is not that no attention had been given to these issues in earlier times. Indeed, they concern the most essential requirements for human life, and as seen

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[1] Jaeger, p. 10.
[2] *Metaphysics*, 1, 1, 981-982.

above their understanding had been the central human concern of totemic and mythic ages.

But the essential and, at the time, yet unclarified role played by the imagination in the mytho-poetic mind, despite its major and still indispensable contributions, did not enable the development of a set of proper and precise intellectual terms. Once this problem was overcome it became possible to proceed by well coordinated processes of knowledge such as analysis and logical inquiry, synthesis and theory building,[3] to immediate and self-certifying awareness.[4] These processes would construct systems because, in the order of thought as in that of reality, unity is the touchstone of reality. In time each system would generate its own school, and in this manner the main body of philosophic work would be carried out. This chapter will concern the development of the capacity for systemtatic work in philosophy in the West and the contribution it can make to an improved objective understanding of the human person.

If development follows upon need, the words of Xenophanes provide insight into the evolution of the Greek mind from myth to philosophy. As recounted above, he showed how the imaginative element in myth had enticed men to envisage the gods in an inauthentic manner. Rather than principles of unity, truth and goodness, some gods had come to be exemplars of strife, deceit and all manner of evil. "Both Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind: theft, adultery, and mutual deception."[5]

(Something quite analogous is to be found in the history of Indian philosophy. After a long period of Hinduism the imagination had so corrupted the original purity and sacred character if its rites that a reform was needed; this was provided by Buddha. In turn, the Lord Buddha himself predicted that his Sangha would last for only 1000 years, and indeed some 1000 years later it was ripe for the reform realized by Shankara.)

Xenophanes removed the imaginative factors and stated the meaning of the gods in more proper and specifically intellectual terms. Thus, he proceeded to affirm that

> There is one god, among gods and men the greatest, not
> at all like mortals in body and mind. . . . He sees as a

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[3] Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1971), pp. 4-5.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 6-13; "St. Thomas's Thought on *Gratia Operans*," *Theological Studies*, III (1942), 573-74.

[5] McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, p. 31.

whole, thinks as a whole, hears as a whole. . . . He always remains in the same place. But without toil he sets everything in motion by the thought of his mind.[6]

In these terms he demonstrated that a way had been found, namely, philosophy, to state these crucial realities in terms which were susceptible to clear and controlled reasoning. Philosophy had been born.

Once begun, it made spectacular and rapid progress. Within but a few generations, the human intellect had worked out a structure of the physical world using the basic categories of hot and cold, wet and dry, made available by the external senses, along with mechanisms of vortex motion.[7] Mathematical reason then worked with the internal senses to lay down the basic theorems of geometry.[8] In brief, by developing properly intellectual terms, the Greeks elaborated with new and hitherto unknown precision insights regarding physical reality.

But that had never been the root human issue. Totemic and mythic thought were not ways of understanding and working merely with nature, although they did that as well. Fundamentally, they concerned the metaphysical and religious issues of what it means to be, the divine unity as the basis of life, the religious terms in which this needs to be lived, and the implications for the unity of a diversified world.

Characteristically, the Greek philosophical mind carried out this search in abstract, rather than concrete, terms. By focusing upon a certain aspect of reality and omitting all else it developed clear and cohesive understanding. Even in employing such basic terms as air, fire, and water it considered them as principles which, when combined in various ratios of hot and cold, humid and dry, constitute whatever concretely exists. Where a single element, such as fire or water, was singled out this was due to its ability to explain the many states of things. Thus, for example, water, because it can exist in solid, liquid and gaseous states, was able to provide some unified and universal understanding for the entire diversified realm of physical reality. Dasgupta would claim, against Shankara, that the *Upanishads* viewed the development of real beings in the world as a similar process of combining elements.[9]

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[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Anaximander, fragments, see McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, pp. 14-17; McLean and Aspell, *Ancient Western Philosophy*, pp. 22-28.

[8] McLean and Aspell, *Ancient Western Philosophy*, ch. III.

[9] Dasgupta, I, 53, See Paul Deussen, *The Philosophy of the Upanishads* (New York: Dover, 1 966) , pp. 182-95, 237-39.

This abstract approach to understanding the unity of all was carried to an initial summit in the reasoning of Anaximander (611-547 BC). He proceeded beyond the four basic elements and their combinations, noting that what is most basic in reality must perdure through all physical states, unite them all, and enable them to be significant for one another. The principle must, therefore, be neither hot nor cold, neither wet nor dry; it must be without any of the boundaries or limits expressed by names and forms which delimit or define things as contraries. This unlimited was stated negatively as the *apeiron* or "unbounded," that is, the non-specified or undifferentiated.[10]

The search, for a positive statement of this unity continued. Pythagoras (c580-500) thought it consisted in numbers. Even Heraclitus, the classical proponent of diversity, was engaged in the same search for unity, for through all diversity he sought the unity of the *logos*. Thus, he considered fire to be the basic principle because, though darting up and dying down, it manifests throughout a certain unified form or shape. Both Pythagoras and Heraclitus recognized a certain unity and difference in what was numbered or changing, but on their level of abstraction the issue of the reality of that unity and diversity which had been the fundamental insight of totem and myth could not be directly confronted.

To do so would require a new level of insight regarding the fundamental unity indicated by totem and myth. This would require that the intellect work not only in terms of the external senses as with the totem nor with the internal senses as with myth, but in its own proper terms. That would be the proper work of Parmenides who would bring to explicit consciousness the foundation of beings on which the totemists had built the earliest known mode of social life.

Parmenides: Being as One, the Foundation of Human Life and Action

Parmenides is the father of metaphysics in the West precisely because he deepened the level of thought of his early predecessors in philosophy in order to be able to speak, not merely of this or that kind of thing, but of being or reality as such. It is important to note that for Parmenides this knowledge (*noeton*) is not simply a product of human reasoning. Like the *Theogony* and the *Vedas*; it is the divine knowledge found in the response of the goddess, Justice. Euripides held that the *nous* in each person is divine; Plato identified this as the fourth level of knowledge in the allegory of the cave when one encountered directly the fire or sun, i.e., the light itself by which all is made intelligible and

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[10] Jaeger, pp. 24-36.

known; and for Aristotle it is by the *nous* that we immediately recognize the first principles and premises upon which deduction is based.

In the *proemium* of his famous poem Parmenides moves seamlessly, but dramatically from myth to philosophy. Speaking still in the language of myth, Parmenides described a scene in which he was awakened by goddesses and sent in a chariot drawn by faithful mares along the arching highway that spans all things. In this process he moved from obscurity to light, from opinion to truth. There, the gates were opened by the goddess, Justice, as guardian of true judgement, and he was directed by her to examine all things in order to discern the truth.

Such an examination must be a search for *noeton* or the intelligible in contrast to the *aistheton* the perceptible, physical or bodily. The latter knowledge is deceptive and dependent upon the physical organs of the body; in contrast *noein* is true knowledge of reality itself. It is of *noein* that he says, "It is the same thing to think and to be."[11] Neither *aistheton* nor, *a fortiori*, Locke's exclusively sensible perception or verification, but intellection is the norm of being and hence of meaning: *noein is* meaning, notes Guthrie.[12] This has been the crucial and decisive foundation for Western thought up to the present — and hence the measure of the crisis at this entrance into the 3rd millenium A.D. For Western thought since its beginnings the path of intelligibility has been that of being; conversely what is not intelligible and hence without meaning is not real. Because the requirements of intelligibility are those of being and vice versa, a science of being is possible which will concern all reality without remainder. No valid question of being is in principle without an answer for "It is the same thing to think and to be."[13] Inasmuch as that science depends upon *noeton* (intelligence) rather than *aistheton* (sensibility), it must be a meta-physics.

Note that here, as with totemic thought, thinking and being are one. Marx's great discontent with most of modern thought was that thinking had separated itself from being and in its many ramifications had been exploring the pathway not of reality but of the mind, which he referred to as idealism. Hence it will be important for an understanding of the life of the person to watch for the ways in which ideas became separated from life and especially more positively how thinking can be a real road into, rather than away from, reality.

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[11] McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, p. 40, fr. 3.

[12] W.K.C. Guthrie, *The Earlier PreSocratics and the Pythagoreans*, Vol. I of *A History of Greek Philosophy* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1962), p. 41.

[13] McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, p. 40, fr. 3.

With intelligibility as the criterion of being, Parmenides proceeded on the basis of that which is immediately intellected, namely, "that Being is; . . . nothingness is not possible."[14] He concluded that being itself and as such does not include negation or hence differentiation. That is, "to be" cannot be the same as "not to be". This notion of nonbeing and the principle of non-contradiction was a construct of the mind. Like *pi* in geometry it was good to think with. It enabled the mind to reflect upon the requirements of both being and mind, and to avoid anything that would undermine their reality. He thereby was able to reason as follows: any coming into or going out of being, any divisions or motion, indeed any differentiation would need to be predicated upon either what is or what is not. This could not be based upon being for, as being already is, no differentiation is possible thereby. But neither could difference be based upon what is not; precisely because that is not, it cannot generate, differentiate, do or be anything.[15] Hence, being itself and as such cannot begin, change or be multiple.

Parmenides then imagines himself proceeding further along the highway of being[16] until he comes to a fork with a signpost pointing toward "beginning" or to a supposed way of being which would include in its essence that it begins. Parmenides reasons regarding the implications of such a route that because "to begin" means to move from nonbeing or nothingness to being, were "to be" to include "to begin" that would mean that being included within its very essence nonbeing or nothingness. There would then be no difference between being and nothing: being would be without meaning; the real would be nothing at all. If conversely, from this notion of beginning such nonbeing is removed, then it would not begin, but would be eternal. The possibility of taking the fork which would have being as essentially beginning is excluded; being cannot be essentially beginning, but must be eternal. This is the first requirement of being. Hence, all that begins must be derived from Being.

The chariot then moves along the highway of being and the procedure is analogous at the two subsequent forks in the road where the signposts tempt one to consider being as changing and as multiple, respectively. Each of these, Parmenides reasons, would place nonbeing within being itself, which would destroy its very character as being. Nonbeing is contained in the notion of change, inasmuch as a changing

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 40, fr. 3 and 6.

[15] *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43, fr. 8. See Guthrie, pp. 28-29.

[16] Fragment 8; see Alexander P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides: A Study of Word, Images, and Argument in the Fragment* (New Haven: Yale, 1970).

being is *no* longer what it had been and *not* yet what it will become. But for nonbeing to pertain to the essence of being would destroy being. When, however, nonbeing is removed being emerges as unchanging. Similarly, nonbeing is essential to the notion of multiplicity, inasmuch as this requires that one being *not* be the other. When, however, nonbeing is removed what emerges is one. These then are the characteristics of being: it is infinite and eternal, unchanging and one.

Being as such transcends the multiple and changing world in which we live: it exists in a manner more perfect than could possibly be appreciated in the graphic, figurative and hence extended terms of the internal sense of imagination which characterized the mind in its mythic mode or stage of development.

In this way Parmenides discerned the necessity of one, eternal and unchanging Being — whatever be said of anything else. Neither being nor thought make sense if being is in any way the same as nonbeing, for then to do, say or be anything would be the same as not doing, not saying or not being. If what is real is irreducible to nothing and being is irreducible to nonbeing — as it must be if there is any thing or any meaning whatsoever — then being must have about it the self-sufficiency expressed by Parmenides's notion of the absolute One.

One can refuse to look at this issue and focus upon particular aspects of limited realities. But if one confronts the issue of being it leads to the One Self-sufficient Being as the creative source of all else. Without this all limited beings would be radically compromised — not least, human beings themselves. It is not surprising, therefore, that the painstaking journey of Aristotle in his *Metaphysics* in search of the nature of being would conclude in divine life.[17]

The issue then is not how the notion of the One that is the source of the unity of all first entered human thought; it has always been there. This is true not only as fact, as seen in totemic and mythic thought, but in principle as shown by Greek philosophy. For without that which is One, humanity would be at odds with nature, and lack social cohesion. Without that which is Absolute, in the sense of infinite and self-sufficient, thinking would be the same as not thinking, and being would be the same as nonbeing.

It is unfortunate that attention has been directed almost solely to Parmenides's negation of differentiation, and that this has been taken as a negation of differentiation between beings and hence of multiple beings, rather than the separation of being from nonbeing. What is central is his direct and lucid clarification

    - that being is, is one, and is intelligible;

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[17] *Metaphysics*, XII, 7, 1072 b 26-29.

- that it is absolute or fullness of perfection, self-sufficient and standing in definitive contrast to nothingness;[18]

- that as such it is self-explanatory or able to justify itself before *nous;* and

- that it is the ground of all metaphysics or understanding of being.

In this Parmenides worked out with the clarity of direct intellection what the totemic peoples had discovered at the dawn of human life, indeed the basic truth for a life that is human, namely, that all realty is in some sense one with a reality that is itself One. In stating this Parmenides was able to confront directly and for the first time, not merely the fact of differentiation among beings, but the issue of the reality of such differentiation. It is neither surprising nor of great importance that he was not able to resolve this issue. What is important is that due to his contribution the Western mind was able to go to work on it. No longer limited to asking about particular differences between specific beings or groups of beings, it could now begin to enquire directly concerning the radical question of the reality and bases of differentiation which now merge in terms of life or death in our global times. In time Parmenides insight would lead to the discovery of one's own uniqueness and the nature of one's relation to others. Progress in the understanding of the person — as philosophers East and West observe — lies in understanding how this unity is lived, not destroyed, and that whatever meaning there be to the many is had in their relation to the one.

Simplicius and others concluded from the first half of his Poem that for Parmenides not only must there be one being which was absolute, but that there could be nothing else. This, however, does not at all fit with the second, longer half of the Parmenides' Poem, which treats at great length the many changing beings of the universe. Hence, it would appear to be a more correct reading of the first section of his text that being requires the one infinite unchanging and eternal Being, i.e., an Absolute which transcends the world of multiple and changing beings, and on which the universe of changing reality depends. But how the universe of multiple beings described in the second part of his Poem is related to the One, in particular how man is related to or founded in the One, is not worked out by Parmenides. It could be expected, however, that whoever would elaborate this relation of the many to the One would thereby be the father of the Greek — and hence of the Western — philosophical tradition.

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[18] McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, pp. 42-43, fr. 8.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF PLATO AND ARISTOTLE TO THE APPRECIATION OF UNITY

Plato: Man as Image of the One

It is no accident then that the great figures, Plato (429-348) and Aristotle (384-322), who marked out the major paths in Western philosophy should follow Parmenides in rapid succession. Once directly confronted with the unity of reality and by implication with the issue of the reality of differentiation and multiplicity, the Greek mind had either to accept the skeptical position of the sophists which excluded any basis for organized civil life, or to begin some steps toward the resolution of the issue. These steps proceeded along the route of Plato's notion of participation of the many in the One. Based on this Whitehead considered all subsequent Western philosophy to be essentially a series of footnotes to Plato's work.

On the one hand, the search was directed toward those factors by which an individual being is most properly him- or herself. This required revisiting Parmenides discussion of non-being. As the principle by which multiple beings are distinct one from another, Plato saw that non-being meant not only absolute nothingness as with Parmenides, but had also the sense of 'not-that-being'[19] by which one thing is not the other: i.e. Tom is *not* John. Along with being, this type of non-being is a component principle of each of the multiple things. Added to Parmenides sense of non-being, Plato saw this relative non-being as the key to difference and distinctiveness of beings.

On the other hand, that the community of things is similar or alike requires a source which itself is one. Because John, Agnes and Thomas are alike as humans, their forms share, partake, or participate in the one form of humanity. This form is not limited to the perfection of any one person, but is itself the fullness of the perfection of humankind. Like the totem, it is able to be participated in by an indefinite number of humans. To participate means to have one's being in derivation from, and hence as image of, absolute Being itself. Hence, I am by imaging or participating: imaging is not simply what I do; it is what I am.

For Plato moreover, the object of the mind is the idea or form as the exemplar which "completely is" the reality of all that can be realized in that manner. This form is "perfectly knowable"[20] and the many instances are related as images to that one, either as sensible objects or as more differentiated forms to less differentiated ones. What is essential, as is manifest in Plato's later solution of the problems raised

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[19] Plato, *Sophist*, 259 A.
[20] *Ibid.*, 248 E.

in his *Parmenides*, is that the relation of participation (*mimesis* or *methexis*) not be added to multiple being as already constituted, but be constitutive of them: their reality is precisely to image or participate in the One which envisaged the many as having their reality as expressing, and ultimately being directed toward the one. This breakthrough was foundational for all Western philosophy. This sense of participation was expressed in the long Platonic tradition through the imagery of light coming from a single exalted source, but shining down in ever expanding, if diminished, ranks. In his famous allegory of the cave in the *Republic*[21] Plato described the preparation of leaders as one of liberation from the darkness of the cave in order to ascend to the light and then returning to the cave to govern in an enlightened manner. This was not a role, but the center of one's reality. Hegel beautifully expressed this Platonic sense of the citizen as "living in and with and for one's people, leading a general life wholly devoted to the public interest."[22]

This implies that the original forms are ontological dimensions of reality which transcend the series of concrete individuals. They are spoken of as ideas or forms in contrast to concrete particulars. The highest of these ideas is the Good or the One in which all else share or participate precisely as images thereof.[23] This permits a more balanced and less imaginative interpretation of Plato's references in his *Republic* to the "remembering" of ideas. Rather than being taken literally to imply prior states of the soul, they express the personal development of one's awareness of the reality of a higher or deeper ontological realm and its significance for one's life. They have memory's directness and certitude, but like the source of light in Plato's allegory of the line/cave they are known by the Greek *nous*, and characterize the relation of the intellect to the source of all being and meaning.

By philosophizing in this mode of participation one escapes becoming trapped in the alternative of either constructing personal but arbitrary intellectual schemata, or elaborating an impersonal science. Philosophizing is rather a gradual process of discovery, of entering ever more deeply into the values which we have in order to comprehend them more clearly in themselves and in their source. Because progressive sharing or participating in this source is the very essence of human growth and development, the work of philosophizing and the religious sensibility implicit in this notion of participation is neither an addenda to life nor merely about life. Rather, as was seen regarding totem and myth, philosophy and religion are central to the life process of

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[21] Plato, *Republic*, VI 509-527.

[22] *Politics*, 263b.

[23] Plato, *Republic*, 509.

human growth itself and at the highest level; from this process humanity draws its primal discoveries.

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

Aristotle: Man as Individual Substance or Being in One's Own Right

Though Plato began the philosophical elaboration of the notion of participation, as his method was dialectical he did not construct a system. His terms remained fluid and his dialogues ended with further questions. It was left to his pupil, Aristotle, to develop the means for more rigorous or systematic work in philosophy. For this Aristotle elaborated a formal logic for the strict codification of forms or terms, their cognition in judgments, and the coordination of judgments into patterns of syllogistic reasoning. With this tool he was able to outline the pattern of the sciences which have played so dominant a role in the Western world to this day.

Moreover, Plato's philosophy of participation as imaging had been conducive to using "reflections" or shadows, e.g. of trees on the surface of a stream, as a simile of the physical world,[24] but in turn it suggested that the physical world of individual beings might not be truly real. To Aristotle this threatened the reality of the material and differentiated universe. Reducing reality to idea threatened to create the idealism which would indeed emerge in the later rationalist context of modern thought. Hence, he soon abandoned the use of the term "participation" and gave great attention to the changing character of physical things, which he saw to be the route to the discovery of the active character of individual beings.

With regard to civil society Aristotle took three preliminary steps. Speaking thematically rather than chronologically, he first developed the science of logic in order to make it possible to control the

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[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 509-511.

steps of the mind in extended and complex reasoning. The result was the first elaboration of the structure of scientific knowledge in both the theoretical and the practical orders. Second, he was the first actually to design the sciences. He developed *Physics* as an appreciation of the active character of physical reality and, by implication, of all being. In his *de Anima*, the science of living beings, he identified intelligence and freedom as the distinctive characteristics of human life. These founded the proper dignity of human beings and implied a civic unity based in human communication and cooperation.

Caution must be exercised here, however, lest the search for the unities that are individual persons appear to reinforce the excesses of self-centeredness and individualism. This has tended to be a special danger in the context of some Western cultures whose 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 intersect.

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, each other. (Similarly, modern physical theory identifies a uniform and all-inclusive pattern of relations such that, for example, 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.[25]

In order better to appreciate the members of a community, it is helpful to consider them as three progressively more specific unities: 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 later. Moreover, while

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

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 the individual have the unique singularity of one who is self-aware, free and hence responsible. Thus, 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.

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.[26] 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 human beings be responsible for their 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. Aristotle points instead to a world of persons developing virtues and 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 of the intelligibility of the 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,[27] relating in a distinctively human manner to other beings, each with their

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[26] Aristotle, *Posterior Analytics* I, 4 73 a 3_b 25.

[27] Réné 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.

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 which therefore is termed also a specific *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 person 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.[28]

By a careful coordination of the sciences of the physical world through a study of their general principles and causes in the *Physics*, and by relating the *Physics* to the *Metaphysics*, he clarified the relation of all changing things to a first principle. This principle is described in *Metaphysics XII* as subsistent knowledge and divine life.[29] To this all things are related as to their ultimate final cause which they imitate, each according to its own nature. Thus, the source, if not the system, of participation received important philosophical elaboration.

This notion of participation according to which the many derive their being from the One which they manifest and toward which they are oriented and directed, would subsequently provide the basic model for what the Chinese refer to as "outer" transcendence or the relation of creatures to God. In Plato's thought, however, the order of forms was relatively passive, rather than active. Hence, the supreme One or Good was the passive object of contemplation by the highest Soul, which was conscious and active. Most scholars consider, therefore, the highest One or Good upon which the soul contemplates, rather than the highest Soul or contemplator, to correspond to Plato's notion of the divine.

Aristotle's philosophy, in contrast, began with changing beings available to the senses and discovered that such being must be composed of the principles of form as act and of matter as potency. As a result, his sense of being had its axis on form as the principle of act in the process of active physical change — which literally was "trans-formation". Consequently, when in his *Metaphysics* he undertook the search for the nature of being or for what was meant by being, he

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[28] *Metaphysics*, VII 4_7.

[29] *Noesis noeseos*: "Thought thinks itself as object in virtue of its participation in what is thought," *Metaphysics* XII, 1072 b 19-29.

tracked this from accidents such as colors which can exist only in something else to substances which exist in themselves. Inevitably, this same process led him to the highest of such substances which is or exists in the most perfect manner, that is, as knowing and indeed as knowing on knowing itself (*noesis noeseos*). This he referred to as life divine.[30] It is the culmination of his philosophy because it brings him to the very heart of the order of being — the goal of becoming and acting — and, hence, of reality itself. Joseph Owens[31] would conclude from his investigation of being as the subject of Aristotle's metaphysics that for Aristotle being was primarily the one Absolute Being and was extended to all things by a *pros hen* analogy; that is, all things are beings precisely to the extent that they stand in relation to the Absolute and divine One, which transcends all else.

Aristotle's Practical Philosophy of Man in Society

The practical creative work of developing and directing these cooperative unions is the topic of ethics and politics as sciences of the practical order.

In the order of making and doing, the principles of scientific understanding lie not in the object but in the subject—the agent or artist. Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, begins with the observation that every action aims at an end, and that the end sought by all is happiness or the good life. *Politics* as a science consists in the study of the search for the good life as a goal not only of individuals, but of the whole integrated society. What must be understood here and expressed in language is the goal, meaning and modes of realization of life in community. Phenomenology has been developed precisely as a mode of access to this interior life of meaning.

This is aided by Aristotle who begins most of his works with a description of how the matter in question has appeared historically through time, thereby gradually delineating the field whose scientific principles and structure he will seek to determine in order to establish the science of that field. Aristotle begins his politics not historically, but by thematically delineating the elements in which political life consists.[32] Both however bring us to the same point, namely, that to be political means to govern and be governed as a member of a community.

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[30] *Ibid.*

[31] Joseph Owens, *The Doctrine of Being, The Aristotelian Metaphysics: A Study in the Greek Background of Mediaeval Thought* (Toronto: PIMS, 1951).

[32] *Politics*, I, 1, 1252a22.

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

There is a second dimension to the issue of governance in Aristotle. It is indicated in what many have seen as a correction of his evaluation of types of governance. His first classification of modes of government was drawn up in terms of the quantity of those who shared in ruling. When ruling is seen as a search of material possessions or property, the best government tends to be an *oligarchy* or rule by the few because generally only a few are rich and attend to the common good in a disinterested manner. Democracy, in contrast, is rule by the many who are poor.[33] Aristotle needed to improve on this basically quantitative division founded empirically on the changing distribution of property, for conceptually there could be a society in which the majority is rich. Hence, he turned instead to a normative criterion, namely, whether governance is exercised in terms of a search not for goods arbitrarily chosen by a few out of self-interest, but for the common good in which all can participate.[34] In this light governance has its meaning as a species of the broader reality of the community (*koinonia*) which comes together for its end, namely, happiness or the good life of the whole. Community supposes the free persons of which it is composed; formally it expresses their conscious and free union with a view to a common end, namely, the shared good they seek.

The *polis* is then a species of community. It is a group, which as human and hence free and self-responsible, comes together in governance to guide efforts toward the achievement of the good life. Community and governance are not the same or tautological, but they

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[33] *Politics*, III, 7.
[34] *Politics*, III, 8.

do go together, for persons are united as a community by their common orientation to the same end, and as free they rightly guide or govern themselves toward that end. In this way Aristotle identified the central nature of the socio-political order as being a *koinonía politika* or "civil society".

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

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

Aristotle develops this theme richly in chapter 6 "On Friendship" in Book IX of his *Nicomachean Ethics*. He stresses a theme which will reemerge later, namely, that the members of a civil society need to be of one mind and one heart; he elaborates the importance of this for the commonweal.[35]

Such solidarity of the members of society is one of its component essential characteristics. Plato would use the terms *methexis* and *mimesis* or participation for this. But Aristotle, fearing that if the individual were seen as but an image of the primary form it would lose reality, soon ceased to use this term. The term 'solidarity' which recognizes the distinctive reality of the parts seems better to reflect his thought.

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[35] *Nichomachean Ethics*, IX, 6, 1167b13.

In the human body, where there is but one substantial form, the many parts exist for the whole and the actions of the parts are actions of the whole (It is not one's legs and feet which walk; it is the person who walks by one's legs and feet). Society also has many parts, and their differentiation and mutuality pertain to the good of the whole. But in contrast to the body, the members of a community have their own proper form, finality and operation. Hence their unity is an accidental one of order, that is, the relation or order of their capabilities and actions to the perfection of the body politic or civil society and the realization of its common good.

Aristotle does not hesitate to state strongly the dependence of the individual on the community in order to live a truly human life, concluding that the state is a creation of nature prior to the individual.[36] Nevertheless, in as much as humans are realities in their own right, outside of any orientation to the common good of the whole, society ultimately is for its parts: the society is for its members, not the contrary.[37]

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

When, however, one adds the elements of governance (*arché*), that is, the free determination of what will be done and how the goal will be sought, then the dimension of subsidiarity comes into view. Were we talking about things rather then people it would be possible to envisage a technology of mass production in a factory automatically moving and directing all the components toward the final product. Where, however, we are concerned with a community and hence with the composite exercise of the freedom of the persons who constitute its membership, it is crucial that this not be substituted for by a command from outside or from above. Rather governance in the community initiating and

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[36] *Politics*, I, 2, 1253a20-37.
[37] John Mavone, "The Division of Parts of Society According to Plato and Aristotle", *Philosophical Studies*, 6 (1956), 113-122.

directing action toward the common end must be exercised in a cumulative manner beginning from the primary group, the family, in relation to its common good, and moving up to the broader concerns or goals of more inclusive groups considered both quantitatively (neighborhood, city, nation, etc.), and qualitatively (health, education, religion) according to the hierarchy of goods which are their concerns.

Aristotle recognizes the many communities as parts of the political order when he treats justice and friendship inasmuch as this seeks the advantage not of one but of the whole.[38] Justice here, as distributive, is not arithmetic but proportionate to those involved according to the respect and honor that each is due.[39] In the *Politics* in his concern for the stability of the state he stresses the need for a structured diversity. Groups such as the family and village differ qualitatively from the state; it is necessary to recognize this and promote them as such for the vitality of the whole.

The synergetic ordering of these groups, considered both quantitatively, and qualitatively and the realization of their varied needs and potentials is the stuff of the governance of civil society. The condition for success in this is that the freedom and hence responsible participation of all be actively present and promoted at each level. Thus, proper responsibility on the family level must not be taken away by the city, nor that of the city by the state. Rather the higher units, either in the sense of larger numbers or more important order of goods, must exercise their governance in a way that promotes the full and self-responsible action of the lower units and in the process enable them to achieve goals which acting alone they could not realize. Throughout, the concern is to maximize the participation in governance or the exercise of freedom of the members of the community, thereby enabling them to live more fully as persons and groups so that the entire society flourishes. This is termed subsidiarity.

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

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

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[38] *Nichomachean Ethics*, VII, 9, 1159b25-1160a30.
[39] *Ibid.*, V, 3.

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

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

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

Following progress along these axes should be the key to efforts to develop civil society and provide guidance for promoting a proper functioning of social life.

In Aristotle's philosophy being was primarily substance; what changed was the composite or *synolon* of form and matter; substance was not the composite, but the form only.[40] As a result, his detailed scientific or systematic process coordinating various types of being and identifying their principles was predicated upon forms which lent themselves to abstraction and universalization. The physical universe could be understood only as an endless cycle of formation and dissolution, of which the individual was but a function. Therefore, the freedom and significance of the individual were not adequately accounted for.

Further, while the individual's actions were stimulated and patterned — each in its own way — upon the one objectless Knower (*noesis noeseos*) as final cause, the many individuals were not caused thereby, derived therefrom or known by that principle of all meaning. Thus, though intense human concern is expressed in Hellenic dramas which reflect the heritage of human meaning as lived in the family and in society, Greek philosophic understanding was much more specialized and restricted, particularly as regards the significance of the person.

More could not be expected while being was understood in terms of form alone. If, however, the meaning of the human person in this world of names and forms is of key importance today in both East and West; if the protection and promotion of the person becomes increasingly problematic as our world becomes more industrialized and technological; and if the search for freedom and human rights is central to our contemporary search to realize a decent society — then it will be necessary to look to further developments of the notion of being. Moreover, in these global times interaction is not merely in terms of

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[40] A. Mansion, "Positions Maîtresses de la philosophie d'Aristote," in *Aristote et Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Louvain: Université de Louvain, 1955), pp. 58-67.

individuals or even of nations, but of peoples who identify themselves in terms of their cultures and civilizations. And these, as notes S. Huntington, are grounded in their religions. Hence, it will be necessary to look again at the roots of unity in divine life, which we have been tracing from totemic times, in order to appreciate further the role of religion in both founding and interrelating human life. Philosophy will proceed to create higher levels of equilibria by retrieving and making explicit more of what was meant by Parmenides's One than had been articulated in the Greek philosophies of Plato and Aristotle. Indeed, the fact that the thought of Plato and Aristotle was not brought into a synthesis by Aristotle himself suggests that it simply was not possible to do so in terms merely of form which was the manner of understanding in those times. Thus, in order to draw upon the full contribution of both Plato's notion of participation and Aristotle's systematic structures it is necessary to look to a significantly deepened understanding of being, namely, being not as form, but as existing.

CHAPTER IV

THE SYNTHESIS OF PERSONAL UNIQUENESS AND SOCIAL UNITY: CHRISTIAN AND ISLAMIC THOUGHT

THE CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EXISTENCE AS LIFE IN GOD

Liu Fangtong has suggested that Marx has been misinterpreted when read in the rationalist terms of modern thought, whereas what was important to him was social change. In standing Hegel on his head Marx saw the reality to be treated as matter rather than idea, while the structure or laws of the dialectic remained the same. Indeed no other principles were effectively available to him in the context of the closed rationalist modern mind. The "contribution" then of Engels was to systematize Marx's turn to matter. In fact this meant that it would be the formal factor which would prevail as Marxists, despite Marx, would take their place among the idealists.

However, what Marx was really concerned about, states Liu Fangtong, was not matter, but the action and interaction of people and ways in which they could be liberated. In other words his insight really concerned not formal – and thus ideal – structures or essences, but activity or actions. To follow out this inspiration one needs to turn not from form to matter, for that leaves one within the same field of essence, dealing with notions and kinds. The real inversion which Marx rightly sought was to break beyond the field of essence and its rationalist clarification and to turn to the order of act and action, that is, to the order of existence.

This was made clear in recent times by Sartre and others who came to be termed existentialists. Unfortunately, still suffering the limitations of modern rationalism they construed existence alone into an internally consistent system, thereby excluding essence. The result was not just a restoration of existence, but a new idealism or ideology of existentialism.

What is needed instead is an open field in which both essence and existence can be recognized and understood in a mutually complementary relationship. These cannot be two beings juxtaposed as would need to be the case in terms of sense knowledge of material, and hence extended, realities. Such knowledge would need to go beyond not only the external sense of sight and touch, but also the internal senses of imagination which pictures or configures reality.

Thus we come to a decisive point in the development of philosophy. In the 20th century physicists broke into the atom, deciphered its inner structure, and thereby were able to make great advances in comprehending the entire physical universe. We must ask if philosophers have ever been able to break into the composition of beings to decipher the inner composition by which they are of particular kinds (species and genera) and are also in act and acting according to their kind or nature.

The discovery of existence was the task accomplished by the Christian thinkers during the first millennium; the discovery of its inner relation to essence in the constitution of beings was the achievement of Islamic and Christian philosophers in the first half of the second millennium (1000-1500). We shall begin then by looking to Christian philosophy for the emergence of being as act, indeed as existence or the act of all acts. This was the special contribution of Christian philosophy and the key to its many innovations; it characterized the thought of Thomas whence it gained new prestige in recent Christian circles

Although Greek philosophy grew out of an intensive mythic sense of life in which all was a reflection of the will of the gods, nonetheless, it presupposed matter to have always existed. As a result, its attention and concern was focused upon the forms by which matter was determined to be of one type rather than another. For Aristotle, physical or material things in the process of change from one form to another were the most manifest realities and his philosophizing began therefrom. This approach to philosophy, beginning from sense encounters with physical beings, corresponded well to our human nature as spirit and body, and could be extended to the recognition of divine life. But Iqbal wants more; for him, as had been intuited spontaneously and foundationally by the early totemic thinkers, "It is in fact the presence of the total infinite in the movement of knowledge that makes finite thinking possible."[1] The Greek philosophical awareness of what it meant to be real would need considerable enrichment in order to be able to appreciate the foundational significance for human thought of its grounding in a fully transcendent and infinite Being.

Being as Existing: To Live

Greek Dependence on Matter. Above we referred to Aristotle's speculative philosophy, and then especially to his ethics and politics, in order to uncover (or "unveil" in Heidegger's terms) the basic and perennial components of social life and to come thereby to the meaning of civil society (*koinonia politika*). To appreciate the development of

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[1] Iqbal, p. 4.

this meaning in the medieval Graeco-Christian synthesis it is helpful to begin with the shift in metaphysics, that is, the development in appreciation of the character and content of reality which took place with the advent of Christianity. In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle noted that the most fundamental issue "which was raised of old and is raised now and always . . . is just the question what is substance," that is, what is reality in its strongest, foundational and primary sense.[2] If humankind's appreciation of this were to shift, then the whole vision of reality in all its ordering, relations and striving would evolve. This indeed is what occurred in, or better constituted the step from, Greek to Christian philosophy. The former had been concerned with forms, the essences or natures of things; the latter would be enlivened by the coming to consciousness of the existence, actuality or affirmation of things. It is the difference between knowing what a car is and driving one; some have described it as the difference between a dream about life and the actual process of making decisions, bearing responsibilities and building a life. In biblical terms S. Kierkegaard and Paul Tillich would see it as the difference between the dreaming innocence of the Garden of Eden and the difficult ambiguities of the exercise of freedom.

This development in the understanding of being required transcending the Greek notion which 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* or 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 to darkness.[3] This 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 Fathers had this awareness. They explicitly opposed the Greeks' simple

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[2] *Metaphysics*, VII, I, 1028a29-b4.
[3] Plotinus, *Enneads*, II 5(25), ch. v.

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.[4] In doing this they extended to matter the general principle of *Genesis*, that all was dependent upon the One who created heaven and earth. In doing this two insights appear to have been significant.

Beyond Form and Matter. 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 the 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. It pointed to the meaning of existence, which for humans means human life, and which for society is the issue of how life in community can be lived in a truly human manner.

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 an issue of 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 matter 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. It constituted an evolution in the human awareness of being, of what it means to be real. This was no longer simply the compossibility of two forms, which Aristotle had taken as a sufficient response to the first 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 — the common but superficial contemporary meaning of what Adler terms a circumstantial freedom of self-realization — nor even to 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.[5]

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

[5] Mortimer Alder, The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conception of Freedom (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1958), I, 609.

Paul Tillich would suggest a phenomenological progression of 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, 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 ultimately to its source and goal.

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

This deepened metaphysical sense of being in the early Christian ages not only opened the possibility for a deeper sense of freedom, but was itself catalyzed by the new sense of freedom proclaimed in the religious message. I say "catalyzed", not "deduced from," which would be the way of science rather than of culture. Where the former 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.[6]

But this was more than light to the mind. Christ's resurrection was also a freeing of the soul from sin and death. It opened a new awareness of being as that existence by which beings stand outside of nothing ("ex-sto") — and this not merely to some minimum extent, but to the full extent of their actuality, which Fabro calls an intensive notion of being.

This power of being bursting into time:

- directs the mind beyond the ideological poles of species and individual interests, and beyond issues of place or time as limited series or categories;

- centers, instead, upon the unique reality of the person as a participation 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 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 became gradually clearer, 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

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[6] John I:1-5, 8.

'existence' *(esse)*.[7] The relation between the two was under intensive, genial discussion by the Islamic philosophers when their focus on the Greek tradition in philosophy was abrogated at the time of al-Ghazali.

This question was resolved a century later in the work of Thomas Aquinas through a "real distinction" between existence and essence, not as two beings, but as two principles of being, each totally dependent upon the other in its own way. This rendered most intimate the relation of the two principles related as act and potency respectively, and opened a new and uniquely active sense of being. This is not to say that al-Ghazali was wrong in opposing Averroes or that Islam was wrong in choosing the side of al-Ghazali in that dispute; Aquinas too had to overcome the Latin Averroists in the course of his intellectual battles in Paris.[8]

Person as Subsistent Individual

Something of the greatest importance for the understanding of man – especially in relation to Marx's concern for human action – was bound to take place when the mind expanded its range of awareness beyond the nature or form of things to existence or 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. This is termed then not merely a substance or an individual of a specific kind, but subsistent, that is, a substance as constituted by its own proportional existence.

At a deeper level than Marx, this reflects concern for human action and approaches the human person in terms not of sensitive action or economic classes, but of that existence (*esse*) by which the individual of the human species is put in act and made active.

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 (existing). This

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

[8] M. Iqbal wrote his dissertation on Mulla Sadra who most vigorously and insistently attacked formalist categorical thinking in terms of essence. Instead Mulla Sadra was concerned to shift attention to existence. It is in this sense that Iqbal calls for a turn to the active character of reality.

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 action and to new actualization. Yet, existing or subsisting individuals include not only persons but rocks, trees and animals. These characteristics become properly personal only when realized by beings of rational nature, self-consciousness and self determinative, free and responsible.

Complete and Autonomous. 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 central as seen in the attention to the issue of torture with regard to human rights. The same is true of the mind or spirit in view of the tendency, described by William James,[9] 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 fulfillment. 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.

Independent. 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

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

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 persons as free and properly self determinative 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 fulfill 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 constituted in its own right and 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, a 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 their unity.

Moving thus from instruments such as desks, to alimentation, to lineage, to society suggests that, as one moves upward through the levels of being, 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 and freedom need not be compromised, but may indeed be the basis for a community of persons bound together in mutual love and respect.

Interrelated. Of special interest to this project is the outstanding paradox forgotten in modern times, namely, that the relation of uniqueness and interdependence are not a zero sum game in which one can be developed only at the cost of the other. Instead the two are mutually reinforcing. Hence, the third characteristic of the subsistent individual to be considered is *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; it is by running that Mary herself is constituted precisely as a runner, and thereby as of good health. This will be central to the persons as moral agent.

This 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 actions which makes us agents shape the world around us and, for good or ill, our communication with 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.[10] 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,[11] 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. Indeed, we should go further to note the seeming paradox that it is precisely to the degree that the person is unique that it can relate intensively to others. Hence the person is not only an individual of a common nature, but an utterly singular entity in full self-possession -- thus the utter travesty of selling

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[10] See also Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1958), pp. 181, ff.

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

oneself or being enslaved or imprisoned. Conversely, the person is able to relate to others in true bonds of freedom and love.

To summarize: thus far, we have seen that for the notion of the human person to evolve and become the contemporary notion of person a strong awareness both of the nature and of the existence of independent individuals needed to be developed. This was first achieved by the Greeks who identified within the one physical process basically different types of things. Primary substances are the individual instances of these specific types or natures.

There were limitations to such a project, for in its terms the person ultimately would be but one instance of a specific 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 a reductivist sociobiology, but it did not allow for adequate attention to the person's unique and independent reality. This view required the subsequent development of an awareness of existence as distinct from nature or essence. Existence is that by which one enters into the world and is constituted as an existing being in its own right, that is, not only as substance, but as subsistent. 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. This provides also the basis for the person as self-consciousness of one's own nature and for relating to others in properly human terms within the overall pattern of nature. This character of self-consciousness has been the focus especially of recent phenomenological philosophy.

The Unity of Persons

The actual possession of existence and its real distinction from essence have special moment for the human person whose unity have always been a special challenge to the human mind. As physical beings living in a material world our powers of knowledge are structured to appreciate quantitatively differentiated things interacting in extension or space. Thus when we think of the human person as body and spirit we naturally image them as separate in space. When Descartes proceeded to structure knowledge exclusively in notions so clear as to be distinct he had no way to understand how the two could constitute the one human being. This set up the entire list of rationalist dichotomies of body and spirit which modern thought felt obliged to resolve essentially by choosing one against the other. The result was a human person bifurcated between body and spirit, a philosophy bifurcated between materialism and idealism, and a world bifurcated into a cold war

succeeded now by an individualist economic system suppressive of community or spiritual culture.

In classical philosophy one observes a similar process whereby Plato's sense of the human spirit directed the mind to ideas separated from the world. In contrast, Aristotle pointed to the material universe as the place from which philosophy begins. But he realized that if the soul is the form of the body then it will be held to the physical or the quantitatively defined figures of the imagination. Hence, he affirms the need to relate to an intellect separated from the world for conceptual thinking and human freedom. Christian and Islamic thinkers could see that this spiritual principle must pertain uniquely to each person in order to explain personal dignity and responsibility. Yet even as late as Bonaventure this was understood to imply two souls in man, one the physical form of the body and the other the spiritual form which survived the death of the body.

Here Thomas' distinctive appreciation of existence as the actuation of the individual human essence or substance provided distinctive insight. Existence as really distinct from essence must be simple and unique. Because, as the form specified the essence and an essence with its proportioned existence constituted one being, to have two forms would mean two beings. Hence, the material/spiritual reality of the human synolon could have but one essence – a human essence. And by a simple and proportioned *esse* this was constituted as a unique being. The person was not two, but one. His or her body had the dignity of the spirit with its freedom; similarly his or her spirit was essentially incarnate. It was the spirit of a being whose body had the dignity, rights and obligations of a free and responsible person.

This is of singular importance to the present challenge of finding unity across borders and even civilizations in a global world. It would be easy and too common to focus simply on the individual and his or her rights. The result, although benignly described as competition, is in reality Hobbes' war of all against all in which the most powerful exercises a brutal hegemony in the name of establishing freedom and peace. What is needed is to found the uniqueness of the individual in the unity of one source and goal of all.

This is what was accomplished by the classical discovery of the special nature of existence. For the infinite character of the One as described by Parmenides, existence or *esse* is unlimited by any essence beyond itself; it is existence (*esse*) to the full extent. Hence it is disputed only whether it is more proper to say that the infinite *esse* has no essence if essence be taken as limiting *esse*, or to say that *esse* is its own essence if essence be taken as affirming the full extent of *esse*. In any case, as the one is without needs the fact of having created or shared its *esse* must be a totally free act of love.

On the part of creatures constituted as participations in this *esse* or love, they are thereby constituted as totally unique beings. They may share in a specific or generic likeness according to their essences as composed of form and matter, but their existence constitutes them as totally unique instances of being with their proper unity, truth and goodness.

It is here that their nature as participants in the divine existence is especially significant for the challenge of our day, namely, to understand how persons can be individual and have personal rights without being individualist, selfish and antipathetic toward others. As created out of love they are unique to the degree of the divine love and freedom with which they were created. While constituted as many, all are derivative of, and participations in, the One. Hence rather than being self-seeking the very act by which they are created is fully generous and sharing. Their search for their own self-fulfillment is then precisely a search to mirror more fully the one infinite love and goodness by which they were created.

On this basis Thomas was able to draw much from Aristotle with regard to civil society and in turn to elaborate this much more richly. This can be seen in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*.

> Because man is naturally a social animal, since he needs many things for his life which he cannot provide for himself alone, the consequence is that man is naturally a part of some group, through which assistance toward the good life is furnished him. This assistance he needs for two purposes. First, for those things that are necessary to life, without which the present life cannot be maintained. In this respect the domestic group of which he is a part may be an aid to man, for each man receives life, nourishment and training from his parents, and the individuals who are members of a domestic family assist one another to the necessaries of life.
>
> In another way man is assisted towards the perfect sufficiency of life by the civil group of which he is a part: namely, that he may not only live, but live well, having all the things which suffice for life. The civil group of which he is a part may be an aid to man in this respect, not only in regard to corporal goods, since there are many crafts in the state to which a single household is not adequate, but also in regard to morals, inasmuch as insolent youths, whom paternal admonition

cannot correct, may be coerced through public power by the fear of punishment.

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

Now there is a kind of whole which has unity not only by order but by composition or connection, or even by continuity, according to which unity it is, in the strict sense of the term, one thing; and in this kind of whole there is no operation of the part which is not that of the whole, for in continuous things, the movement of the whole and of the part is the same. Likewise in things composed or connected the operation of the part is, in principle, that of the whole. Therefore, it is fitting that consideration of such wholes and consideration of their parts should belong to the same science.[12]

In a sense this is an insightful synthesis of Aristotle, but in the light of Thomas' existential emphasis it signifies considerably more. We saw above in Aristotle the principles of human freedom, solidarity and subsidiarity. We saw also how in terms of reality as primarily act, existence and freedom came to be much more than the choice between different forms or contrasting natures; it became the creative affirmation by which things were made actual or brought into reality.

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

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[12] *In Decem Libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nichomacum Expositio*, I, II (*Opera*, XXI, part 2).

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

For human solidarity this had great import for in this light community is not only as for the Greeks a matter of a shared specific form and of harvesting all human power in a quantitatively cumulative manner, as might an army. It was moreover the enablement of each person to express this freely and hence in a thoroughly unique action, and to do this actively by contributing effectively as a cause to their life and its actuation. This takes us far beyond the notion of a unity merely of order, evolving this into a dynamic unity of action and graded interaction in patterns of subsidiarity.

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

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

between persons and communities is the more necessary in our task of binding together increasingly different groups.

For subsidiarity too the deepening of the notion of reality opened a major new opportunity. For to the degree that reality could be seen in terms not of closed forms but of the act of existence, the forms and structures could become, as it were, translucent one to the other. Each was constituted not in terms of its opposition to others, as are material blocks or contrasting forms such as red and brown, but rather in terms of the degree to which the original source of existence was reflected in their actuality, and through their efficient causality was communicated to others. The paradigm of an original gift of being in which all were created meant that the significance of life lies in sharing or giving in turn. In social terms this means that the significance of social leadership lies not in holding all exercise of governance to itself but in enlivening other groups and subgroups in the exercise of their own freedom.

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

Finally, without reducing the importance of material possessions, this kept the nature of social life from being understood as most basically a matter of possessing materials goods or products. It directed attention rather to the meaning of life and to the development of a social order in which all could contribute and share. This meant exercising their proper freedom in cooperation with others and with an eye to the common good of all. [13] The implications of this for community and for the exercise of authority are developed by Yves Simon in his *Community of the Free*[14] and *General Theory of Authority, and Democratic Government.*[15]

Nicholas of Cusa carried this further by suggesting that whereas with Aristotle our bodily structures suggest that we begin all knowledge from the senses, it would be more insightful to work from the intellect and in terms of the One infinite source and goal of life. In this light the basis and context of knowledge would not be single physical things, but rather the whole of reality as founded in the One from which all is derived and to which all returns. Thus the unity of the whole would be

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[13] *Ibid.*

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

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

the formal mode in terms of which any being including oneself would have its being and meaning. Other individuals, as contractions of the same whole, reflect it in ways that, due to my relation to the whole I would if I could, but which, in fact, due to my limited nature I fail to do. In terms of the whole then they are not alien, but pertain to my very essence. As in a family my goal is to promote their good and in their good, as in the whole, I participate.

PART III

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL UNITY

CHAPTER V

ALIENATION OF INDIVIDUALS AND SOCIETY: THE MODERN CHALLENGE TO UNITY

UNITY IN THE ANGLO-SAXON ENLIGHTENMENT AND CONTEMPORARY LIBERAL THEORY

In order to take up the present challenge to unity we need to look with special attention at the preceding four centuries of modernity with regard to civil society. As that concerns the way of governing and directing or, more basically, of humanly initiating our search for the good life as a community or society, our attention must be directed basically to the nature of freedom and its exercise. When, some decades ago, Mortimer Adler[1] and his team at the Institute for Philosophical Research undertook a most comprehensive review of philosophical literature to determine what humankind had discovered about freedom, they found this highly differentiated field to be constituted of three clusters of meanings.

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

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

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

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

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[1] Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom*: A dialectical examination of the conceptions of freedom (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 187.

The opening of modern times was marked by, and largely consisted in, a characteristic shift in governance. This had not been shared by all or at least by the notable number of free men as in the ideal of the Athenian *polis*, but had been concentrated in emperors, kings, and nobles. Later, while great empires emerged in the East, governance in the West was highly divided in small kingdoms led by local princes, as reflected today in the abundance of castles in Italy, Austria, and other places. They had broad responsibility and were held to moral standards, if not legal norms, with regard to the concerns, if not the rights, of the people they ruled.

The story of the emergence of the citizenry—from the Magna Carta to the American "Declaration of Independence," to the French "Rights of Man," and to the Chinese Revolution of 1949 and the toppling of the Berlin Wall in 1989—is, of course, the defining context of the evolution of civil society in modern times. This can be followed in many terms such as population, health or sovereignty. But it is significant that in philosophy and political theory the modern age has been characterized above all as the Enlightenment or *Age of Reason*. This suggests that underneath, or at least in close and controlling tension with the development of the notion of freedom there stands a development in the understanding of knowledge. We are faced then, as it were, with a series of boxes. To understand and prescribe philosophically the notion of civil society we need a sense of the modern notion of freedom; but in order to grasp this notion of freedom we need to be aware in turn of developments in the meaning of understanding. Hence, in order to explore the development of the notion of civil society in modern times and to understand its present problematic we shall take three steps. The first is to investigate the sense of knowledge which enables (and delimits) the awareness of meaning and of the interests of a people; the second is to investigate their corresponding notion of freedom; thirdly we shall see how together these define the mode of governance which constitutes what is referred to as civil society.

Knowledge as Empirical: the Lockean Tradition

Turning to the epistemological dimension it is important to note the difference between the more rationalist continental, and the more empirical British, traditions.[2] To follow this it is necessary to reach further back to John Locke and indeed to the Reformation.

On the one hand, as an ex-Augustinian friar, Martin Luther had been educated in a loosely Platonic, rather than the Aristotelian,

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[2] Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York: Free Press, 1992) pp. 36-41.

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

The questions of the time, however, were not shrinking, but expanding and becoming more pervasive. They included not only what one could know, but how one could redevelop the socio-economic order in view of the vastly expanded resources of far flung empire and the newly invented industrial capabilities. No less importantly was the question of how all this could be managed by the new parliamentarian manner of governance which soon would be institutionalized by the American and French revolutions. The issue of civil society (the *koinonia politika*) would have to be rethought on this new basis with its very narrow bands of knowledge and correspondingly narrow understandings of freedom.

Sense Knowledge. Early on John Locke was an assistant to the Earl of Shaftsbury who would soon become the Lord Chancellor of the British Empire—and literally lose his head in the complex political eddies of those changing times. In these circumstances, in a regular series of discussions with colleagues Locke came to see how progress on political and other issues required further clarification of what we could know. Thus, his thought moved from issues of governance to community, and hence to knowledge. He also tackled the issue of how if the *arché*, origin and sovereignty in political decision-making could reside not in the single person of the king, but in a group or parliament, communication gained central importance. How could the members of

such a group think together in order to come to agreement upon decisions on public policy and thereupon exercise their will in legislation? For Locke this meant that all needed to have equal access to the same knowledge.

To this end Locke designed for his colleagues his historical plain method. He proposed that we suppose the mind to be a blank paper void of ideas, and then follow the way in which it comes to be furnished by ideas. These he traced from external things through the senses and onto the mind. To keep knowledge public, he insisted that only those ideas be recognized which followed this route from experience, either as sensation or as reflection upon the mind's work upon the materials derived from the senses.[3] On this basis David Hume[4] reduced all knowledge to either matters of fact or formal analytic tautologies derived therefrom. They could concern neither the existence or actuality of things nor their essences, but could be simply the determination of one from a pair of sensible contraries, e.g., red rather than brown, sweet rather than sour.

The resulting ideas would be public in the sense that they could be traced back to their origin and thus could be replicated by anyone who would so situate himself in order to make the same observation. The mind could proceed to make all kinds of combinations with such ideas, and Locke[5] eventually worked out the intricate pattern of such possible associations and dissociations of ideas. But all ideas, no matter how complex, were always subject to a test of verification, namely, that in principle all content could be traced back to an origin in the simple ideas drawn directly from the senses. No distinctive order of intellectual knowledge was recognized; substance remained only an unknowable supposition soon to be dismissed by Hume. This 17th century epistemology was adopted broadly in the following century not only in England and America, but in France where it became the context for the Enlightenment proper. It provided this thought with its systematic codification and imposed great and exclusive burdens upon reason. Based on its passion to hold strictly to these results the times would come to be denominated as the age of reason.

Thus knowledge sedulously avoided any consideration of the nature of one's own reality or of other persons and things. Interpersonal bonds of civil society and human comity based on an intimate appreciation of the nature of the person, and on respect for the dignity of other human beings were replaced by external observations of persons

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[3] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, edited by A.C. Fraser (New York: Dover, 1959), pp. 121-24.

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

[5] Locke, Bk. II.

as single entities wrapped in self-interests. This lent itself to the construction only of external utilitarian relations based on each one's self-interest. Mutual recognition constituted a public order of merely instrumental relations assured by legal judgments rendered by the courts. In this way there came to be established a system of rights and of justice to protect each one's field of self-interested choices and action against incursion from without. This field was progressively defined through legal judgments and legislation and enforced by the coercive power of the state. Through the combination of industrial and colonial expansion, property or wealth was vastly expanded as was the public impact of the self-interested decision-making based thereupon. In turn the state, by legislating these private interests into public law and engaging its coercive power, created a legal pattern which defined the meaning of justice for its time.

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

Freedom as Choice

What then could be the meaning of freedom? Just as knowledge had been reduced to external matters of fact (red or brown), freedom was reduced to choices between external objects. In empirical terms, it is not possible to speak of appropriate or inappropriate goals or even to evaluate choices in relation to self-fulfillment. The only concern is which objects among the sets of contraries I will choose by brute, changeable, and even arbitrary will power and whether circumstances will allow me to carry out that choice. Such choices, of course, may not only differ from, but even contradict the immediate and long range objectives of other persons. This will require compromises and social contracts in the sense of Hobbes; John Rawls[6] will even work out a formal set of such compromises. Through it all, however, the basic concern remains the ability to do as one pleases.

This includes two factors. The first is execution by which my will is translated into action. Thus, John Locke[7] sees freedom as "being able to act or not act, according as we shall choose or will"; Bertrand

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[6] John Rawls, *A theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[7] Locke, v. I: 329.

Russell[8] sees it as "the absence of external obstacles to the realization of our desires." 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 oneself, with no necessary relation to real goods or to duties which one ought to perform.[9] "Liberty consists in doing what one desires,"[10] and the freedom of a society is measured by the latitude it provides for the cultivation of individual patterns of life.[11] If there is any ethical theory in this, it can only be utilitarian, hopefully with enough breadth to recognize other people and their good, as well as one's 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; this is the essence of consumerism.

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

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

Social Unity and Moral Sentiment

Where in this mechanism was civil society to be found? Due to the restriction of knowledge to the empirical reporting and managing of

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[8] Bertrand Russell, *Skeptical Essays* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 169.

[9] Adler, p. 187.

[10] John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 5: 15.

[11] Adler, p. 193.

facts, the moral realm was no longer an effort at rational ordering of all toward the common good of the overall society and its variously articulated sub-groups. The newly restricted reason could provide no basis for a public moral order of duty and obligation. Instead, all moral life was located in the private, interior sphere as a matter not of reason, but of feeling, affectivity, and emotions.

Further, when it came to issues of the basic motivation for decisions in private or public life these could not be the result of reason, for there reason of itself is entirely incapable. "The ultimate ends of human action can never be accounted for by reason, but recommend themselves entirely to the sentiment and affections of mankind".[12]

It would not be right to underestimate the power of this sentiment or its influence in humanizing the new social universe of Locke and Hume. The Cambridge Platonists had written eloquently of moral sentiment. In his *Second Treatise on Government* Locke[13] invoked prominently the subordination of human self-seeking to a unifying and uplifting order of divine providence. The Scottish Common Sense Realists propounded this eloquently both at home and in the major Ivy League colleges in North America in an effort to rescue a moral dimension for life. This articulation of the moral order in terms of affectivity is central to the work of Adam Smith[14] as is evidenced by his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and of Adam Ferguson in his landmark work: *An Essay on the History of Civil Society.*[15]

In this process two sources of motivations are noted. One is theological, namely, divine inspiration and its approbation of love, charity or benevolence as actions in accord with a divinely approved law of nature. This is a strong and pervasive influence in Locke and it continues in such Scottish moralists as Francis Hutcheson. Alaisdair MacIntyre documents this at length in *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*[16]

A second, more humanistic, source is the desire for social appro-bation developed in the work of Adam Ferguson. While recognizing the realm of self-interest, he defends the overriding reality of a moral

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[12] Alasdair MacIntyre, *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals. Hume's ethical writings* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), p. 131.

[13] John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960).

[14] Adam Smith, *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976).

[15] Adam Ferguson, *An Essay on the History of Civil Society* (Edinburgh: Kincaid and Bell, 1767).

[16] Alaisdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Whose Rationality?* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988).

sphere. "Mankind, we are told, are devoted to interest; and this, in all commercial nations, is undoubtedly true. But it does not follow that they are, by natural dispositions averse to society and natural affections." He expresses contempt for mere "fortune or interest" and looks rather to the benevolent heart which with "courage, freedom and resolute choice of conduct" directs one to act with a view to the good of society. This, in turn, is seen less as divinely mandated universal laws of action than as universal attributes of "moral sentiments and natural affections (discovered) through the study of particular human agents acting in society".[17]

In this manner the moral warrant for the civility of civil society is separated from reason, from the creator as source of society, and from the substance and end of society. Its warrant is left as self-justifying and self-motivating. While moral sentiment can generate a certain conception of a way of life and a conviction that this is a good way to live, these are hard pressed by the internalized motivation of self-interest based on the drive for material possessions. These even receive divine sanction in the complex convoluted puritan rationalization described by Max Weber.[18]

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

It could and should be argued further that in this understanding civil society is not merely a matter of protecting the victims of the eco-

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[17] Ferguson, Part I, Section VI, p. 53.

[18] Max Weber, *Economy and Society, an Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, edited by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Translators: Ephraim Fischoff [and others] (New York, Bedminster Press, 1968).

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

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

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

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

slips ever more toward the inadequate language of the economic balance sheet.

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

The "liberal" response to this follows Hume's separation of "is" from "ought" to develop a bifurcation between the public realm ruled by justice and the realm of private morality ruled by virtue. John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* [19] and its subsequent evolution in *Political Liberalism* [20] follows this penchant. The so-called integrating visions of the meaning and exercise of life he relegates to a position behind a "veil of ignorance" in order to constitute a "pluralistic" public domain charted by a minimum set of rules to which all would be expected to assent in order to be assured of a maximum range of action. The denizens of this domain, having deposited their basically identifying sense of meaning and commitment behind the veil of ignorance, remain denatured clones whose age, religion, race, and sex must not be considered in the public domain.

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

This exclusion of the ethical from the public arena and its relegation to the private realm is most important for the issue of civil society. For if the point of civil society is to constitute a realm for the full exercise of a richly textured social life, such exclusions constitute strong limitations. They create a notion of the private, but do so in a negative manner; that is, in terms not of full personal self-expression, but of that which is excluded from public expression and engagement.

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[19] John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[20] John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

Further, even when defined as the realm of the private, civil society is in a precarious situation. The requirements that one abstract from gender, age, race, religion, etc., which the liberal approach imposes upon the public order, are continually extended to the private realm. More and more it becomes difficult to express one's identity in a school or club, all of which come under the strictures of the public domain if they participate in any public funding or have importance for social or professional advancement. Recent fundamentalism is an aberrant sign of the sense of threat created by this invasive depersonalization not only of the public but of the private realm.

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

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

SOCIAL UNITY AND CONTINENTAL RATIONALISM: KANT, HEGEL AND MARX

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

In Western cultures since Plato clarity of reason has been endowed with a special, almost fetishistic, value. Time after time this has led to a dismissal of what did not possess that clarity, or to its

reduction to what could be presented with a high degree of rational clarity. This resulted in the marginalization of the famous insight of Pascal that the heart has reasons that reason does not understand in favor of the search for rigorous clear and distinct ideas following Descartes. The same was true of the insights of Kierkegaard in the aftermath of Kant. It is not surprising then to note that the proposals of a civil society based upon moral sentiment would not survive in the renewed rationalization of philosophy by Kant, Hegel, and Marx.

Kant provided the basis for another, much richer notion of freedom, which Adler's team called "acquired freedom of self-perfection." This acknowledges the ability of man to transcend the empirical order and to envisage moral laws and ideals. Here, "to be free is to be able, through acquired virtue or wisdom, to will or live as one ought in conformity to the moral law or an ideal befitting human nature." This is the direction which has been taken by such philosophers as Plotinus, Spinoza, and Bradley who thought in terms of ideal patterns of reason and of nature. For Kant[21] freedom consists not in acting merely as one pleases, but in willing as one ought, whether or not this can be enacted. Moral standards are absolute and objective, not relative to individual or group preferences.[22]

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

Knowledge: The Critique of Pure Reason

It is unfortunate that the range of Kant's work has been so little appreciated. Until recently, the rationalist impact of Descartes directed almost exclusive attention to the first of Kant's critiques, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which concerned the conditions of possibility of the

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[21] Adler, p. 253.
[22] *Ibid.*, p. 257.

physical sciences. Its rejection of metaphysics as a science was warmly greeted in empiricist, positivist and, hence, materialist circles, as a dispensation from any search beyond what was reductively sensible and, hence, phenomenal in the sense of the inherently spatial and/or temporal.

Kant himself, however, quite insisted upon going further. If the terms of the sciences were inherently phenomenal, then his justification of the sciences was precisely to identify and to justify, through metaphysical and transcendental deductions respectively, the sets of categories which enable the phenomenal world to have intelligibility and scientific meaning. Since sense experience is always limited and partial, the universality and necessity of the laws of science must come from the human mind. Such *a priori* categories belong properly to the subject in as much 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 person or subject as more than a wayfarer in a world encountered as a given and to which one can but react. Rather, he shows the subject to be an active force engaged in the creation even of the empirical world in which one lives. The meaning or intelligible order of things is due not only to their creation according to a divine intellect, but also to the work of the human intellect and its categories. If, however, man is to have such a central role in the constitution of his world, then certain elements will be required, and this requirement itself will be their justification.

First there must be an imagination which can bring together the flow of disparate sensations. This plays a reproductive role which consists in the empirical and psychological activity by which it reproduces within the mind the amorphous data received from without, according to the forms of space and time. This merely reproductive role is by no means sufficient, however, for, since the received data is amorphous, any mere reproduction would lack coherence and generate a chaotic world: "a blind play of representations less even than a dream".[23] 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".[24] 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 unity.

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[23] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, translated by N.K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A 122; *cf.* A 121.

[24] *Ibid.*, A 121.

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".[25] That is, though the unity is not in the disparate phenomena, nevertheless they can be brought together by the imagination to form a unity only in certain particular manners if they are to be informed by the categories of the intellect.

Kant illustrates this by comparing the examples of perceiving a house and a boat receding downstream.[26] 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 particular order. Similarly, the boat is intuited successively as moving downstream. However, though I must judge its actual motion in that order, I could imagine the contrary. Hence, the imagination, in bringing together the many intuitions goes beyond the simple order of appearances and unifies phenomenal objects in an order to which concepts can be applied. "Objectivity is a product of cognition, not of apprehension"[27] for, though we can observe appearances in any sequence, they can be unified and, hence, thought only in certain orders as ruled by the categories of the mind.

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

How realistic is talk about freedom? Do we really have the choice of which so much is said? On the one hand, we are structured in a set of circumstances which circumscribe, develop, and direct our actions. This is the actual experience of people which Marx and Hegel articulate

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[25] Donald W. Crawford, *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1974), pp. 87-90.
[26] Kant, A 192-93.
[27] Crawford, pp. 83-84.

when they note the importance of knowledge of the underlying pattern of economic and other laws and make freedom consist in conforming thereto.

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

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

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

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

Once one crosses this divide, however, life unfolds a new set of requirements for reality. The definitiveness of human commitments and the unlimitedness required for its free creativity reflect characteristics of being which soar far beyond the limited, fixed and hypothetical relations of the physical order. They reflect rather the characteristics of knowledge and love: infinity, absoluteness, and commitment. To understand the personal characteristics experienced in our own life, we need to understand ourselves not as functions of matter, but as loving expressions of unlimited wisdom and creative generosity.

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

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

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

This becomes the basic touchstone of his philosophy; everything he writes thence forward will be adapted thereto, and what had been written before will be recontextualized in this new light. The remainder of his *Foundations* and his *Critique of Practical Reason* will be composed in terms of freedom, and in the following two years he would write the *Critique of the Faculty of Judgment*[28] in order to provide a context enabling the previous two critiques to be read in a way that protects human freedom.

In the *Foundations*,[29] 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 univer-

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[28] (1965 and 1968)

[29] Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, translated by R.W. Beck (New York: Bobbs-Merril, 1959).

sal law for all persons.[30] On this basis, freedom emerges in a clearer light. It is not the self-centered whimsy of the circumstantial freedom of self-realization described above; but neither is it a despotic exercise of the power of the will; finally, it is not the clever, self-serving eye of Plato's rogue who can manipulate and cheat others.[31] This would degrade that which is the highest reality in all creation. Rather, freedom is a power that is wise and caring, open to all and bent upon the realization of "the glorious ideal of a universal realm of ends-in-themselves." It is, in sum, free men living together in righteous harmony.[32]

Social Unity: Kant, Hegel, and Marx

In one sense Kant would appear to agree with Hume by developing as two separate critiques his treatment of pure and practical reason. The first provided an epistemology for scientific reason which does not attain to the nature of things. According to this, one could not define a pattern of natural law nor determine a set of ends in relation to which one could construct a teleological ethics. In contrast, in the second critique he began afresh to develop a distinctive order of practical reason and to define the formal conditions of such reason. It is precisely on this that principles such as never treating a person as a means rather than an end are formulated and founded.

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

At first sight Kant seems to have translated civil society back into the public realm and strengthened it with rational clarity and rigor. But one does not find here the personal bonds of community which would move one to put into action the universal dicta of practical reason, nor does one find its formal preconditions such as assuring equality of participation in public debate, which more recently has been elaborated

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[30] Kant, *Foundations,* II: 38-58 [421-41].
[31] Plato, *Republic* 519.
[32] Kant, *Foundations*, III: 82 [463].

by J. Habermas.[33] Neither does one find the free determination of, and commitment to, ends. The public order is not a "kingdom of ends," nor is it concerned with inner motives. Rights, and the laws which articulate them, require only that actions which outwardly affect others be done with their consent, actual or supposed.[34] In this light the ethical, like the religious, remains separated from the public order and is guarded jealously in the privacy of the human heart.

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

Hegel attempted to reimbue with value civil society, understood as the sector between family and state. In the characteristically holistic and dialectical manner of his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*,[35] he followed the expansive unfolding of the idea. Just as the unity of the family would be based on love, so the unity of civil society would be related to the satisfaction of needs and wants and hence based on property for it is in the exchange of property that individuals attains both self consciousness and mutual recognition.

For Hegel this takes civil society beyond the realm of practical theory or of the "ought" and incarnates it as an "external" state and abstract universal. But there it is in grave difficulty, for when personal identity is tied to real property and possessions it comes to reflect not

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[33] Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Vols. I-II. Translated by Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon, 1981 and 1982); *cf.* Robert Badillo, *The Emancipative Theory of Jürgen Habermas and Metaphysics* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1991), ch. IV.

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

[35] Georg. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, translated by A.V. Miller and G.N. Findlay (Oxford: Oxford: University Press, 1977).

just greed, but the real needs of its members. [36] In time this comes to include the extravagances and wants of the people with the physical and ethical degeneration this implies. [37] The power of self-interest generates conflicts which remain insoluble in terms of particular persons or smaller groupings; hence the state is necessary, while the corporation mediates between the two. This state, however, is not an impersonal structure, but is the locus of the exercise of freedom and of the values and virtues needed to overcome private self-interests and the conflicts they engender. It is a concrete rather than an abstract universal, and is diversified internally by the multiple classes into which people have chosen to group themselves.

However, civil society, having now become the state, is not only public but is suffused with the power of coercion and provides there-from no protection or escape. "Individuals can attain their ends only insofar as they determine their knowing, willing and action in a universal way and make themselves links in a chain of social connections". [38]

For Marx the ideal of a civil society in which all participated fully in all pursuits, including governance, could be a matter only for the future, a soteriological myth. [39] For the present the private individual was dominated by his or her property and in turn treated others as means for its advancement. Only the state was concerned with the communal being. But as this takes all governance to itself it becomes increasingly distanced from the people and their concerns. Thus, Marx predicted the end of the socialist state through transformation to an ideal communist society. The end of the socialist state, however, has not been succeeded by the envisioned ideal communal state, but by a return to private property and less central control. The initial problematic of how to assure the solidarity and subsidiarity of civil society returns with a vengeance.

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[36] Georg. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, translated by T.M. Knox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 123, n. 183.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 123, n. 185.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 124, n. 187.

[39] L. Kolakowski, "The Myth of Human Self-identity," *The socialist idea: A Reappraisal*, edited by L. Kolakowski and S. Hampshire (New York: Basic, 1975).

UNITY AND SOCIAL HARMONY:
A CONTEMPORARY METAPHYSICS OF
FREEDOM AND SOCIAL UNITY

At the present juncture we find ourselves in search of ways to proceed. The modern understanding of civil society as described above has experienced a check, but this seems more a check of the rationalist context itself. The individualist ideologies reflected the British tradition of working in empiricist terms, from Locke, the Scots and Hume to Rawls, on the one hand, while the communalist ideologies reflect the continental traditions of Hegel and especially Marx, on the other. From different perspectives they took up the perennial quest for ways to fulfill the human dignity of persons as free, self-determining, and sharing in governance, not only in one mass society, but with respect to the varie-gated levels and models of human comity. Both appear to have advanced the logic of their own positions and can be proud of real achievements. But the destructive and paralyzing isometrics into which they fell could be the judgment of history confirming the above philosophical assessment: that neither line provided an adequate route for human progress; that the very premises of modernity which they reflect were time laden; and that the new circumstances require a new paradigm based, not on diversity and competition, but on unity and cooperation.

What strategy does this invoke for a response? Seligman's (1992: 199-206) assessment upon reviewing the modern field is that civil society is not sufficient for our times, and Ernest Gellner would seem to agree.[1] I believe Seligman to be correct in asserting that the modern notions of civil society he investigates are insufficient for the future and have even been checkmated, but his work begins from the Stoics and ignores the rich dimensions of classical thought: Plato and Aristotle are referred to but once and together.[2]

Others such as Cohen and Arato[3] see civil society as a perennial task which must be taken up ever again. They would restrict its ambit to

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[1] Ernest Gellner, *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* (London: Penguin, 1994), XII: 301-49.

[2] Adam B. Seligman, *The Idea of Civil Society* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 79.

[3] J. L. Cohen andAndrew Arato, *Civil Society and Political Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Massachussetts Institutre of Technology Press, 1992).

the realm between, but not including, the economy and the state. But should one simply strike a compromise by cutting off the dimensions of property/production, on the one hand, and of state, on the other, as areas to be guided by hidden hands or abstract laws of reason and their prerequisites? This would be to exclude there proper degree of humanness and to leave civil society as a besieged island of human comity. In that case the effort would be to suffuse this intermediate realm with ethical meaning and protect it against the supposedly non-ethical realms of productive property ruled by the hidden hand and the coercive powers of the state.

Or more manipulatively, is it desirable, right or feasible to set these two powers against each other as non-ethical counter balances in order to create the private sphere of civil society for a properly human life? This would seem neither feasible nor desirable, for to leave both these power centers devoid of ethical direction would be to leave two of the most pervasive dimensions of reality unrelated to human dignity as source or *arché* and as goal. This would mean:

> progress without purpose,
> method without metaphysics
> reason without life
> person without personality
> people without society, and
> man without God.[4]

Thus, Hegel and Marx were correct in stressing the importance of the economic order for human self-understanding and interaction in our times and to struggle to define a role of the state in this. We seem to have come to the end of the possibilities of the present order of things to achieve this and to be in need of considering life at a much deeper level and in a less abstract and reductive manner. What is needed is a new level which is more integrative and potentially fulfilling. What could this be?

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

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[4] For a detailed analysis of these propositions see *Persons, Peoples and Cultures: Living Together in a Global Age* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004), ch. I.

aesthetic order and the new hermeneutic of culture. Together they lay the foundation for a new paradigm.

Where can this be found. Above it was noted that Heidegger suggests a method which might guide our steps. He notes that at each crisis a people must make a decision and choose a path along which to proceed. For Plato in the Athens which had just killed its Socrates this was to take an objective turn and to seek guidance for life in the polis from separated and unchanging ideas much as a navigator guides his ship by reading the stars. This path was consistently followed and at the time of the Enlightenment radicalized, as noted above.

When however a new crisis is experienced, rather than continuing along this somewhat exhausted path, real progress is to be had rather by the step back to take up the path left aside by earlier choice. Thus if Plato took Western philosophy along the path of objectivity, the need now is probably in the direction of subjectivity as suggested by Pascal, Kierkegaard and phenomenology; if modernity sought clarity, necessity and abstract universality, the path ahead may lie rather in areas of freedom and love where clarity and necessity do not reach; and if the political order has been built upon the individualism and self-interest of the West global times may point to the need for a sense of unity and responsibility newly available from the East. Together these begin to define a new era of thought, a new paradigm to succeed that of modernity.

This corresponds to the progression of our synchronic study of civil society. For if there is agreement on the need for civil society in the broad terms cited above, but disagreement on its feasibility in the terms of modern rationalism, this suggests that we need to continue the effort to redevelop the notion of civil society, but to do so at a new level of freedom.

Here the contribution of Confucius joined with Kant's Third Critique can be decisive. Adler's third level, the natural freedom of self-determination, is: "to be able, by a power inherent in human nature, to change one's own character creatively by deciding for oneself what one shall do or shall become."

In global times it is significant that it is to this, rather than the proceeding two levels of freedom that Adler adjoins political liberty and collective freedom. Moreover, there are a number of indications that this new level of freedom will require and reflect a new level of knowing: the result of Adler's search of philosophical literature shows how closely the levels of freedom correspond to those of knowledge. Modern times have been defined by technical reason above all: the enlightenment, whether of the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries worked in terms of empirical knowledge and in the eighteenth century in terms of Kant's first two levels of reason. Now attention shifts to the third

critique of aesthetic reason. Following the pattern used to analyze the modern notions of civil society, we shall look at this third level of knowledge or critique and proceed from there to the new ambit of freedom which this entails, and thence to what this can mean for the development of civil society.

Above the progression followed that of the earlier British-French Enlightenment in which the limitations of knowledge implied a corresponding limitation on freedom. This meant, in turn, that civil society was a realm of moral sentiment separated from economic and political life. For the later continental Enlightenment, it was constituted of necessary prerequisites of reason, where the properly ethical was relegated to the private inner life of individuals. Here we shall look once again to Kant for indications of new dimensions of meaning for social life which will draw upon the resources of the culture of a people and find there moral authority for governance. This will be based upon the rich store of their cumulative experience and free commitments and will reflect the solidarity and subsidiarity of their society.

THE AESTHETIC IN KANT AND CONFUCIUS

The Critique of Aesthetic Judgment

In initiating the decade in which he wrote his three critiques Kant did not have the third one in view. He wrote the first critique in order to provide methodologically for the universality and necessity of the categories found in scientific knowledge. He developed the second critique to provide for the reality of human freedom. It was only when both of these had been written that he saw that in order to protect and promote freedom in the material world, it was necessary to have a third set of categories, namely, those of aesthetic judgment integrating the realms of matter and spirit. It was a harmonious integration which can be appreciated not in terms of a science of nature as in the first critique nor of society as can be worked out from the second, but of human creativity to create human life and meaning which can be lived as an expanding and enriching reality.

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

- Will the scientific interpretation of nature restrict freedom to the inner realm of each person's heart, where it is

reduced at best to good intentions or to feelings towards others?

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

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

Before these alternatives, Kant's answer is a resounding No! Taking as his basis the reality of freedom—which in our life time has been so passionately and often tragically affirmed 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 awareness that being itself is emergent in time through the human spirit and hence has the significance of culture.

To provide for this context, Kant found it necessary to distinguish two issues, reflected in the two parts of his third *Critique*. In the "Critique of Teleological Judgment,"[5] he acknowledges that nature and all reality must be teleological. This was a basic component of the classical view which enabled all to be integrated within the context of a society of free men working according to a developed order of reason. But it had been denied as anthropomorphic by the Enlightenment. For Kant, if there is to be room for human freedom in a cosmos in which man can make use of necessary laws, if science is to contribute to the exercise of

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[5] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*. Translated by J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner,
1968), pp. 205-339.

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 same might be said of the economic order and its "hidden hand." The structure of his first *Critique* will not allow Kant to affirm this teleological character as an absolute and self-sufficient metaphysical reality, but he recognizes that we must proceed "as if" all reality is teleological precisely because of the undeniable reality of human freedom in an ordered universe.

If, however, teleology, in principle, provides the needed space, there remains a second issue of how freedom is exercised, namely, what mediates it to the necessary and universal laws of science? This is the task of his "Critique of the aesthetic judgment,"[6] and it is here that the imagination reemerges to play its key integrating role in human life. From the point of view of the human person, the task is to explain how one can live in freedom with nature for which the first critique had discovered only laws of universality and necessity and especially with structures of society in a way that is neither necessitated nor necessitating?

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

In the first *Critique*, however, the productive work was done in relation to the abstract and universal categories of the intellect and carried out under a law which dictated that such phenomena, as the example of a house or a receding boat, must form a unity.

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 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 for all things and for all people.[7]

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[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 37-200.

[7] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*. Translated by N. K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1929), A112, 121, 192-193. Crawford, pp. 83-84, 87-90.

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 so that 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 culture itself.

This is the productive rather than merely reproductive work of the human person as living in his or her physical world. Here, I use the possessive form advisedly. Without this capacity man would exist in the physical universe as another object, not only subject to its laws but restricted and possessed by them. 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 his/her 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 appreciated, not purely intellectually in relation to a concept (for then we would be reduced to the universal and necessary as in the first critique), but aesthetically, by the pleasure or displeasure, the attraction or repulsion of the free response it generates. Our contemplation or reflection upon this shows whether a proper and authentic ordering has

or has not been achieved. This is not a concept,[8] but the pleasure or dis-pleasure, the elation at the beautiful and sublime or the disgust at the ugly and revolting, which flows from our contemplation or reflection.

The Aesthetic and Social Harmony

One could miss the integrating character of this pleasure or dis-pleasure and its related judgment of taste[9] 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*[10] which he conceived not as merely juxtaposed to the first two Critiques of pure and practical reason, but as integrating both in a richer whole.

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

When aesthetic experiences are passed on as part of a tradition, they gradually constitute a culture. Some thinkers, such as William James and Jürgen Habermas,[11] fearing that attending to these free cre-

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[8] Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, pp. 57-58, 182-192.

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

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

[11] William James, *Pragmatism* (New York: Washington Square, 1963), Ch. I, pp. 3-40. For notes on the critical hermeneutics of J. Habermas see G.

ations of a cultural tradition might distract from the concrete needs of the people, have urged a turn to the social sciences for analysis and critique as means of identifying pragmatic responses. But these point back to the necessary laws of the first *Critique;* in countries engaging in reforms, such "scientific" laws of history have come to be seen as having stifled creativity and paralyzed the populace.

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

Confucius and Social Harmony

Confucius probably would feel very comfortable with this if articulated according to the sense of peace generated by an appreciation or feeling of harmony. In this way, he could see the sensibility of which the Scots spoke as freedom at the height of its sensibility, not merely as an instrument of a moral life, but as serving through the imagination as a lens or means for presenting the richness of reality in varied and intensified ways. Freedom as social sensibility, understood not only morally but aesthetically, is both spectroscope and kaleidoscope of being. As

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McLean, "Cultural Heritage, Social Critique and Future Construction" in *Culture, Human Rights and Peace in Central America*, R. Molina, T. Ready and G. McLean, eds. (Washington: Council for Research in Values, 1981), Ch. II. 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.

spectroscope it unfolds the full range of the possibilities of social freedom, so that all can be examined, evaluated and admired. As kaleidoscope, it continually works out the endless combinations and patterns of reality so that the beauty of each can be examined, reflected upon, and chosen when desired. Freely, purposively and creatively, imagination weaves through reality focusing now upon certain dimensions, now reversing its flow, now making new connections and interrelations. In the process reality manifests not only scientific forms and their potential interrelations, but its power to evoke hate and disgust or our free and socially varied responses 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 social life as rational and free, united and peaceful in this world;

-*creative source*, for with the imagination it unfolds the endless possibilities for social expression;

-*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;

-*criterion*, because its response manifests a possible mode of action to be variously desirable or not in terms of a total social response of pleasure or displeasure, enjoyment or revulsion; and

-*arbiter,* because it provides the basis upon which our freedom chooses to affirm or reject, realize or avoid this way of self-realization.

In this way, freedom emerges as the dynamic center of the creation of civil society.

There is much in this which evokes the deep Confucian sense of the harmony and the role of the gentleman in society in unfolding its implications for daily life. This uncovers new significance in the thought of Confucius for the work of implementing in a mutually fruitful manner both science and democracy in our times. Looking to the aesthetic sense of harmony as a context for uniting both ancient capabilities in agriculture with new powers of industrialization and for applying these to the work of building society is a task not only for an isolated individual, but for an entire people. Over time, a people develops its own specific sensibilities and through the ages forms a tradition and a culture, which is the humane capital for such a project. In this sense, one can look to the Confucian cultural heritage for its aesthetic sense of harmony as a way to carry forward civil society in our day.

The Confucian sense of harmony is not a rationalist law whose unfolding would suggest an attempt to read all in an *a priori* and

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

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

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

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

object. This is essential for the contemporary humanization of our technical capabilities for the physical and social mobilization of a richly textured and harmonious civil society.

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

Ernest Gellner (1994) stumbles upon this, without recognizing it in his *Conditions of Liberty: Civil Society and Its Rivals* when he speaks of the deep commitments of a people which generate strong emotive responses when touched, such as patriotism which unites and mobilizes countries for a revolution as in 1777 and 1949, or outrage at a patently unjust judicial decision as in the first case of a Rodney King.

R.T. Allen sensed this[12] when he pointed out that human nature when lived in society is itself an object of aesthetic appreciation for this must constitute a harmony which proclaims an order or form. In this light he cites from Burke's *Reflections* his critique of the insufficiency of enlightenment reason to understand or adequately promote civil society:

> But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the super-added ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns, and the understanding ratifies, as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.[13]

In the same context Burke developed the conditions of reform:

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[12] "The State and Civil society as Objects of Aesthetic Appreciation", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 16 (1976), 237-242.
[13] Edmund Burke, *Reflections* in *Works* (London: Bohn, 1954-57), II, 349.

Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world . . . wherein . . . the whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation and progression. Thus, by preserving the method of nature in the conduct of the state, in what we improve, we are never wholly new; in what we retain, we are never wholly obsolete.[14]

Nothing is more beautiful in the theory of parliaments, than that principle of renovation, and union of permanence and change, that are happily mixed in their constitution: That in all our changes we are never either wholly old or wholly new.[15]

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

CULTURAL TRADITION AND CIVIL SOCIETY AS HUMAN COMMUNITIES

In the West the pervasive work of reason became an exclusivist rationalism in modern times. Confucius, in contrast, suggests that, appreciated from an aesthetic point of view, the long experience of peoples cannot be not only a valid, but a richer and more amply humane resource for constructing a social life, and particularly civil society.

In this light the Islamic tradition, characteristic of Central Asia and so much of the world, stands out. By intent it is not only a way of personal salvation, but a total way of organizing the life of the community. The intensive work of legal interpretation of the *Qur'an* and the *hadith* constitute an extended systematic process of articulating the meaning of the tradition for social life.

Other cultures have done this in a less systematic but nonetheless real manner. It is time to look to this process to see if its roots and formation, and above all if the cultural tradition of a people with its values and virtues can provide sufficient authoritative direction for a people to orient their exercise of freedom in society.

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[14] *Ibid.*, II, 307.

[15] *Correspondence (1844)*, *Works* IV, 465.

Civil society is not self sufficient, but a dialogical partner with the economic and political sectors. The latter is needed in order to direct and even exercise coercive power in regulating the exercise of freedom, yet it is the essence of a democratic political order to reflect the will, and hence the values and virtues of a people.

We shall then look to how these form a culture and a tradition and assess its role in enabling the people to exercise their freedom creatively in the manner of a civil society. If this requires governance then how can the patterns of values be endowed with the authority needed in order that governance not be arbitrary and willful? And if times change, how can this pattern of meaning which constitutes a culture adapt to new times and be articulated with an appropriate order of sociability and subsidiarity?

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

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

I have developed this at some length in a set of lectures delivered at Fudan University in Shanghai and published under the title: *Tradition, Harmony and Transcendence*, [16] especially Lectures I, "Cultural heritage and contemporary creativity" and III, "Harmony as a contemporary metaphysics of freedom: Kant and Confucius." Here, I would recall the following with regard to values and virtues, culture and application.

Value

For the drama of self-determination and the development of persons and of civil society one must look to their 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; once achieved, it is no longer desired or sought,

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[16] (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994).

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, but 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 the animal's realization or perfection, is for the animal an auxiliary good or means.

In this manner, things as good, that is, as actually realizing some degree of perfection and able to contribute to the wellbeing 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 directed, the good is perfection both as attracting when it has not yet been attained and as constituting one's fulfillment upon its achievement. Goods, then, are not arbitrary or simply a matter of wishful thinking; they are rather the full development of things and all that contributes thereto. In this ontological or objective sense, all beings are good to the extent that they exist and can contribute to the perfection of others.

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

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 good 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 persons, actions, and things involved. In addition, one must consider the action in relation to the subject, namely, to the person who, in the context of his/her society and culture, appreciates and values the good of this action, chooses it over its alternatives, and eventually wills its actualization.

The term "value" here is of special note. It was derived from the economic sphere where it meant the amount of a commodity sufficient

to attain a certain worth. This is reflected also in the term "axiology" whose root means "weighing as much" or "worth as much." It requires an objective content—the good must "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 respond to it as desirable.[17] 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, 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 which in a more stable fashion mirrors their corporate free choices.

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 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 a lens formed, as it were, by their family and culture and configured according to the pattern of choices made by their community throughout its history—often in its most trying circumstances. Like a pair of glasses this does not create the object; but it focuses attention upon certain goods involved rather than upon others. This becomes the basic orienting factor for the affective and emotional life described by the Scots 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 its moral concern in terms of which it struggles to advance or at least perdure, mourns its failures, and celebrates its successes. This is our world of hopes and fears, in terms of which, as Plato wrote in the *Laches*,[18] our lives have moral meaning. It is varied according to the many concerns and groups which coalesce around them. As these are interlocking and interdependent, a pattern of social ends and concerns develops which guides action. In turn corresponding capacities for action or virtue are developed.

Virtues

Martin Heidegger describes a process by which the self emerges

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[17] Karol Wojtyła, *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 Philo-sophical Association*, 53 (1979b), 3-4.

[18] *Laches*, 198-201.

as a person in the field of moral action. It consists in transcending one-self 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.[19] Freedom then becomes more than mere spontaneity, more than choice, and more even than self-determination in the sense of causing oneself to act as described above. It shapes —the phenomenologist would say even that it constitutes—one's world as the ambit of human decisions and dynamic action. This is the making of the complex social ordering of social groups which constitute civil society.

This process of deliberate choice and decision transcends the so-matic and psychic dynamisms. Whereas the somatic dimension is exten-sively reactive, the psychic dynamisms of affection or appetite are fun-damentally oriented to the good and positively attracted by a set of val-ues which 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 oth-ers. This is moral truth: the judgment regarding whether the act makes the person and society good in the sense of bringing authentic individual and social fulfillment, or the contrary.

In this, deliberation and voluntary choice are required in order to exercise proper self-awareness and self-governance. By determining to follow this judgment one is able to overcome determination by stimuli and even by culturally ingrained values and to turn these, instead, into openings for free action in concert with others 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. When this is exercised or lived, patterns of action develop which are habitual in the sense of being repeated. These are the modes of activity with which we are familiar; in their exercise, along with the coordinate natural dynamisms they require, we are practiced and, with

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[19] J.L. Mehta, *Martin Heidegger: The Way and the Vision* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1976), pp. 90-91.

practice, comes facility and spontaneity. Such patterns constitute the basic, continuing and pervasive shaping influence of our life. For this reason, they have been considered classically to be the basic indicators of what our life as a whole will add up to, or, as is often said, "amount to." Since Socrates, the technical term used for these especially developed capabilities is "virtues."

Cultural Tradition and Community

Together these values and virtues of a people set the pattern of social life through which freedom is developed and exercised. This is called a "culture." On the one hand, the term is derived from the Latin word for tilling or cultivating the land. Cicero and other Latin authors used it for the cultivation of the soul or mind (*cultura animi*), for just as even good land, when left without cultivation, will produce only disordered vegetation of little value, so the human spirit will not achieve its proper results unless trained.[20] 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*).[21]

Here, the focus is upon the creative capacity of the spirit of a people and their ability to work as artist, not only in the restricted sense of producing purely aesthetic objects, but in the more involved sense of shaping all dimensions of life, material and spiritual, economic and political. The result is a whole life, characterized by unity and truth, goodness and beauty, and, thereby, sharing deeply in meaning and value. The capacity to do so 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.[22] 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 terms *civis* (citizen, civil society and civilization).[23] These reflect the need for a person to belong to a social group or community in order for the human spirit to produce its proper results. By bringing to the person the resources of the

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[20] 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).

[21] Tonnelat, "Kultur" in *Civilisation, le mot et l'idée* (Paris: Centre International de Synthese), II.

[22] V. Mathieu, "Culture".

[23] V. Mathieu, "Civilta," *ibid*., I: 1437-1439.

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. [24] Tylor 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." [25]

In contrast, Geertz came to focus on the meaning of all this for a people and on how a people's intentional action went about shaping its world. Thus he contrasts the analysis of culture to an experimental science in search of law, seeing it rather as an interpretative science in search of meaning. [26] 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." [27] For this there is need to be aware "of the imaginative universe within which their acts are signs." [28] 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." [29]

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

This sense of tradition is very vivid in premodern and village communities. It would appear to be much less so in modern urban centers, undoubtedly in part due to the difficulty in forming active community life in large urban centers. However, the cumulative process of transmitting, adjusting, and applying the values of a culture through time is not only heritage or what is received, but new creation as we pass this on in new ways. Thus, in the present information age public

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[24] G.F. Klemm, *Allgemein Culturgeschicht der Menschheit* (Leipzig, 1843-52), x.

[25] E.B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (London, 1871), VII, p. 7.

[26] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (London: Hutchinson, 1973), p. 5.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 10.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 85.

opinion is rapidly formed and perhaps too rapidly shifted, generating deep instability in social life. In response, 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.

The recognition of the value of tradition would appear to constitute a special problem for all heirs of the enlightenment and it may be helpful to reflect briefly on why this is so. Enlightenment rationalism idealizes clarity and distinctness of ideas both in themselves and in their interconnection; as such, it divorces them—often intentionally—from their existential and temporal significance. Such an ideal of human knowledge, it is proposed, could be achieved either, as with Descartes, - through an intellect working by itself from an intellectually perceived Archimedean principle or, as with Locke and Carnap (1966: 485), through the senses drawing their ideas exclusively from experience and combining them in myriad tautological transformations.[30] In either case, the result is a-temporal and consequently non-historical knowledge.

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

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

This raises a number of problems for civil society which we have seen above in some detail in the analyses of enlightenment theories. First, absolute knowledge of oneself or of others, simply and without condition, is not possible, for the knower is always conditioned ac-

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

cording to his or her position in time and space and in relation to others. But neither would such knowledge be of ultimate interest, for human knowledge, like human beings, develops in time and with others.[31] This does not exclude projects of scientific knowledge, but it does identify these precisely as limited and specialized views: they make important but specific, rather than all-controlling, contributions.

Secondly, according to Descartes,[32] reason is had by all and completely; authority, therefore, could be only an entitlement of some to decide issues by an application of their will rather than according to an authentic understanding of the truth or justice of an issue. This would be the over-hastiness of Descartes' fourth *Meditation*. Further, the limited number of people in authority means that the vision of which they dispose would be limited by restricted or even individual interests. Finally, as one decision constitutes a precedent for those to follow, authority must become fundamentally bankrupt and hence corruptive.[33] As a result there has been a tendency to exclude public authority from the realm of civil society and its shared moral sense of the community. But then the moral quality of government is compromised.

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

The reference to the god, Hermes, in the term "hermeneutics" suggests something of the depth of the meaning which is sought throughout human life and its implication for the world of values. For the message borne by Hermes is not merely an abstract mathematical formula or a methodological prescription devoid of human meaning and value. Rather, it is the limitless wisdom regarding the source and, hence, the reality, and regarding the priorities and, hence, the value of all. It does not evaluate all in terms of reductivist clarity or consider things in a

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

[32] R. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, I.

[33] Gadamer, pp. 305-310. *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, tr. E. Haldare nd G.R.T. Ross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), I.

horizontal perspective that is only temporal or totally changing—with an implied relativization of all. Hermeneutics or interpretation opens also to a vertical dimension of what is most real in itself and most lasting through time, that is, to the perennial in the realm of being and values. It does this with a view to mobilizing life accordingly.

CULTURAL TRADITION AND GOVERNANCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY

If, however, one can look to tradition in order to find general inspiration for life, will this be sufficient for civil society which must have not only a certain tenor or quality of life, but exercise some governance or directive influence as well? In the past the solution has been to centralize authority which then became autocratic and voluntaristic, and under the cover of efficiency and/or equality ruled by general decrees. This subverted the rich differentiation of solidarity and subsidiarity essential to civil society. Is it possible for tradition to bear sufficient authority to provide coordinated governance?

In *Truth and method*, Hans Georg Gadamer undertook, on the basis of the work of Martin Heidegger, to reconstruct the notion of a cultural heritage or tradition as: (a) based in community, (b) consisting of knowledge developed from experience lived through time, and (c) possessed of authority. In order to analyze the genesis of a cultural tradition we shall look at each of these in turn. Further, because tradition, sometimes is interpreted as a threat to the personal and social freedom essential to a democracy, attention will be given here to the way a cultural heritage is generated by the free and responsible life of the members of a concerned community and enables succeeding generations to realize their life with freedom and creativity.

The Genesis of Community and Tradition

Autogenesis is no more characteristic of the birth of knowledge than it is of persons. One's consciousness emerges, not with self, but in one's 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. Just as a person is born into a family on which he or she depends absolutely for life and sustenance, protection, and promotion, so one's understanding develops in community. 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 learns care and concern for others independently of what the other often does for us and acquires the language

and symbol system in terms of which to conceptualize, communicate and understand.[34]

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 source for new wisdom. Hence, rather than turning away from daily life in order to contemplate abstract and disembodied ideas, the place to discover meaning is in life as lived in the family and in the progressively wider social circles into which one enters. As persons we emerge from birth in a family and neighborhood from which we learn and in harmony with which we thrive.

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

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

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

mitment constitutes our awareness of the bases for the decisions of which history is constituted.

This points us beyond the horizontal plane of the various ages of history and directs our attention vertically to its ground and, hence, to the bases of the values which humankind in its varied circumstances seeks to realize.[35]

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

Hence, it is not because of personal inertia on our part or arbitrary will on the part of our forbears that our culture provides a model and exemplar. On the contrary, the importance of tradition derives from both the cooperative character of the learning by which wisdom is drawn from experience and the cumulative free acts of commitment and sacrifice which have defined, defended, and passed on through time the corporate life of the community.[36]

Moral Authority and Governance in Civil Society

Perhaps the greatest point of tension between a sense of one's heritage and the enlightenment spirit relates to authority. Is it possible to recognize authority on the part of a tradition which perdures, while still asserting human freedom through time? Could it be that a cultural tradition, rather than being the negation of freedom and, hence, antithetic to democracy, is its cumulative expression, the reflection of our corporate

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[35] Gadamer, pp. 245-53.

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

access to the bases of all meaning, and even the positive condition for the discovery and realization of needed new developments?

One of the most important characteristics of the human person 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 keen insight and balanced 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 uniform 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 which is varied according to the components and their interrelation.

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

The fact that humans, no matter how different in culture, do not remain indifferent before the flow of events, but dispute—even bitterly—the direction of change appropriate for their community reflects that

every humanism is committed actively to the realization of some common—if general—sense of perfection. Without this, even conflict would be impossible for there would be no intersection of the divergent positions and, hence, no difference or debate.

Through history, communities discover vision which both transcends time and directs their 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 the life of a person or people.[37] 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 and present an appropriate way of preserving life through time. What begins to emerge is Heidegger's insight regarding Being and its characteristics of unity, truth and justice, goodness and love, not simply as empty ideals, but as the ground of things. Hidden or veiled, as it were, it erupts into time through the conscious personal and social life of free human beings in history. Seen in this light, the process of human search, discussion and decision—in government called democracy and in community called civil society—becomes more than a method for managing human affairs; more substantively, it is the mode of the emergence of being in time.

One's cultural heritage or tradition constitutes a specification of the general sense of being or perfection, but not as if this were chronologically distant in the past and, therefore, in need of being drawn forward by some artificial contrivance. Rather, being and its values live and act in the lives of all whom they inspire and judge. In its synchronic form, through time, tradition is the timeless dimension of history. Rather than reconstructing it, we belong to it—just as it belongs to us. Traditions then are, in effect, the ultimate communities of human striving, for human life and understanding are implemented, not by isolated individual acts of subjectivity—which Gadamer describes as flickerings in the closed circuits of personal consciousness,[38]—but by our situatedness in a tradition. By fusing both past and present, tradition enables the component groupings of civil society to determine the specific direction of their lives and to mobilize the consensus and mutual commitments of which true and progressive community is built.[39]

Conversely, it is this sense of the good or of value which emerges through the concrete, lived experience of a people throughout its history and constitutes its cultural heritage, which enables society in turn to

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[37] *Ibid.*, p. 254.
[38] *Ibid.*, p. 245.
[39] *Ibid.*, p. 258.

assess and 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. Eliminating all expressions of creative freedom, this 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[40]), "paradigmatic individuals" (Cua[41]) or characters who meld role and personality in providing a cultural or moral ideal (MacIntyre[42]), 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.

THE CONFUCIAN TRADITION AND CIVIL RENEWAL

The Confucian and Marxian Heritage and Civil Society

Anton T. Cua[43] traces to Vico[44] attention to the unreflective cognitive consensus on common needs and to Shaftesbury[45] the affective sense of common partnership with others that all this entails. The result is the constitution of a community of memory whose members revere and commemorate the same saints and heroes who have sacrificed to build or exemplify the community's self image. This results in a community of vision or self-understanding, as well as of hope and expectation. A cultural tradition, in this sense, is the context of the conscious life and striving of a person and of the communities of which

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

[41] *Dimensions of Moral Creativity: Paradigms, Prin-ciples and Ideals* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978).

[42] *After Virtue*, 29-30.

[43] "The Idea of Confucian Tradition," *The Review of Metaphysics,* XLV (1992), 803-840.

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

[45] *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times,* ed. Robertson (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1964), vol. I, p. 72.

one is a member; it is life in its fullest meaning, as past and future, ground and aspiration.

In this light, Cua notes that, in the *Great learning,* Chu Hsi stresses the importance of investigating the principles at great length, until one achieves "a wide and far-reaching penetration (*kuan-t'ung*)." Read as *Kuan-chuan*, this suggests an aesthetic grasp of the unique interconnection of the various components of the *tao* as the unique unifying perspective of the culture. This is not only a contemplative understanding, however; it implies active engagement in the conduct of life. If this be varied by subgroups structured in a pattern of subsidiarity then the accumulated learning of cooperate life experience lived according to *li* or ritual propriety and *i* or sense of rightness emerges from the life of a people as a whole. For Confucian adherents, "the tradition is an object of affection and reverence, largely because the tradition is perceived as an embodiment of wisdom (*chih*), which for Chu Hsi is a repository of insights available to personal and interpersonal appropriation, for coping with present problems and changing circumstances."[46]

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

Tradition and Renewal in Civil Society

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[46] "Hsun Tsu and the Unity of Virtues," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy*, 14 (1978), 92-94.

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

In contrast to all of these, the notion of application[47] is based upon an awareness that "reality is temporal and unfolding." This means that tradition, with its inherent authority or normative force, achieves its perfection in the temporal unfolding of reality. Secondly, it shows human persons and social groups, not as detached intellects, but as incarnate. Hence, they are enabled by, and formative of, their changing social universe. Thirdly, in the area of socio-political values and action, it expresses directly the striving of persons and groups to realize their lives and the development of this striving into attitudes (*hexis*) and institutions. Hence, as distinct from the physical order, human action is a situation neither of law nor of lawlessness, but of human and, therefore, developing institutions and attitudes which do not determine and, hence, destroy human freedom, but regulate and promote its exercise.[48] This is the heart of civil society for it shows how community and governance come together.

Certain broad guidelines for the area of ethics and politics serve in the application of tradition as a guide for historical practice and vice-versa. The concrete exercise of human freedom as unique personal decisions made with others in the process of their social life through time constitutes a distinctive and on-going process. Historicity means that responses to the good are made always in concrete and ever-changing circumstances. Hence, the general principles of ethics and politics as a philosophic science of action can be neither purely theoretical knowledge nor a simple accounting from the past. Instead, they must help people consciously exercise their freedom in concrete historical circumstances and groups which change and are renewed.

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[47] *Ibid.*, pp. 281-286.
[48] *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

Here, an important distinction must be made from *techné* where action is governed by an idea as an exemplary cause that is fully determined and known by objective theoretical knowledge (*epistéme*). As in the case of an architect's blueprints, skill, such as that of the engineer, consists in knowing how to act according to that idea or plan; when it cannot be carried out perfectly, some parts of it are simply omitted in the execution. In contrast, civil society and its ethics and politics, though similar in the possession of a practical guide and its application to a particular task, differ in important ways. First, in moral action subjects and especially societies which are constituted by shared action toward a common end constitute themselves, as much as they produce an object: agents are differentiated by their action, societies are formed or destroyed by their inner interaction. Hence, moral knowledge, as an understanding of the appropriateness of human action, cannot be fully determined independently of the societies in their situation and in action.

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

The law then is not diminished by distinctive and discrete application by the varied parts of a complex civil society, but corrected and enriched. *Epoché* and equity do not diminish, but perfect the law; without them the law would be simply a mechanical replication doing the work not of justice, but of injustice. Ethics or politics is then not only knowledge of what is right in general but the search for what is right for this group or sub-group with its goals and in its situation. Adaptation of the means to the social group, whether occupational, religious or ethnic, is not a matter of mere expediency; it is the essence of the search for a more perfect application of the law in the given situation; it is the fulfillment of moral knowledge.[49] This takes us beyond the rigid rationalism of the civil society of the later Enlightenment and the too fluid moral sentiment of the earlier enlightenment. It enables us to

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[49] *Ibid.*, pp. 281-286.

respond to the emerging sense of the identity of persons and peoples and to protect and promote this in a civil society marked by solidarity and subsidiarity.

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

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

CHAPTER VII

THE EMERGING PARADIGM:
THE DIVERSIFIED UNITY OF
THE GLOBAL WHOLE

Part I above reviewed the history of unity as the central reality from the earliest human thought, namely, that of the prehistoric totemic peoples, and then as integrating diversity through the intellect's use of the imagination to generate myths. Part II followed the subsequent systematization of this diversity in unity in ancient Greek and medieval philosophy.

Part III saw the modern emergence of civil society as an attempt to modify the profound modern alienation of individual and community described in Chapter V. By the end of the 20th century it had become obvious that the modern paradigm having become counterproductive new resources needed to be found. Chapter VI began this search by detailing how the combination of the thought of Confucius and Kant pointed to a quite new dimension, namely, the aesthetic and that this in turn enabled the emerging awareness of culture. Could this provide a strong enough basis to assure the cohesive force and orientations needed for the social unity of a successful civil society? The answer was left in doubt, but that is not the end of the story.

If there remained further concerns, there now opens the great new horizon of the global age. Whereas in the homogeneous context of national life it had long been possible to ignore issues of culture, in the pressing context of global inter-communication in terms of economics, politics and information we live now in real time with all the civilizations of the world. Indeed, massive migration means that we live in the same local space with representatives of all cultures and civilizations. Moreover the new awareness of cultures raises the sensitivities of people to these differences and heightens their challenge to find therein the cohesion required for any successful social.

We shall then follow the method of returning to the Rennaisance origins of the paradigm of modern thought to see if along with the Ockham's nominalism and the empiricism that followed there is an alternate path which was available but was not pursued. This might provide rich insight for generating a paradigm for global times. What stands out immediately in relation to our present global context is the approach of Nicholas of Cusa to thought and reality based on a recognition of the whole. Today this is so much further articulated by commerce, politics and communications as to shift the focal point of the

contemporary consciousness and thereby carry further the constitution of the new paradigm initiated in the turn of Chapter VI to the aesthetic order and thereby to culture as a new base for civil society. This will be studied in a number of steps: first the appropriate epistemology or way of thinking, second the ontological global structure of unity and diversity, third the ethical dynamism of the global order and finally the religious underpinnings for a global paradigm.

GLOBAL THINKING

History

Any understanding of the work of the mind in the thought of Nicholas of Cusa must be situated in the context of the Platonic notion of participation (*mimesis* or image) whereby the many forms are fundamentally images of the one idea. For Plato, whose sense of reality was relatively passive, this meant that the many mirrored or were like (assimilated to) the one archetype or idea. Correspondingly, in knowing multiple things the mind, as it were, remembers having encountered and been impressed by or assimilated to the one archetypic idea which they image as all progressively converge toward a supreme One. Conversely, the image of light was used extensively in the neo-Platonic and Augustinian traditions. This originated from one source and radiated outward and downward where for Plotinus it ultimately turned into darkness and matter. Augustine would follow this with an upward return to the source, now as supreme end or goal. For Cusa, with Plato, this appreciation of the One remains foundational for the knowledge of any particular.

Aristotle, whose thought began from the active processes of physical change, added to this a more active role for mind. This not only mirrors, but actively shapes the character, if not the content, of its knowledge. As an Aristotelian Aquinas too considered the mind to be active, but in the end the objectivity of its knowledge depended upon a passive relation to its object: beings "can by their very nature bring about a true apprehension of themselves in the human intellects which, as is said in the *Metaphysics*, is measured by things."[1]

Cusa's sense of "mind" unites both emphases: the original measures the image, which in turn becomes like, or is assimilated to, the original. Sense knowledge is measured by the object; this is even part of its process of assimilation to the divine mind.[2] But as E. Cassirer[3] notes,

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[1] *Idiota de Mente / The Layman: about Mind*, tran. and ed. Clyde Lee Miller (New York: Abaris, 1979).

[2] Trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuinnes (New York: Humanities, 1961).

Cusa shifts the initiative to the mind operating through the senses, imagination, reason and intellect. Rather than being simply formed by sense data, the mind actively informs the senses and conforms and configures their data in order that the mind might be assimilated to the object. Thus both "extramental objects and the human mind are measures of cognitive assimilation, that is to say, we become like the non-mental things we know, and we fashion the conceptual and judgmental tools whereby we take them into ourselves as known."[4]

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

Discursive Reasoning

In his study on mind [5] Cusa distinguishes three levels of knowledge: the first two are both discursive reasoning, the third is intellection. The first begins from sense knowledge of particular material objects. This is incremental as our experiences occur one by one and we begin to construct a map of the region -- to use a simile from L. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.[6]

But for Cusa the knowledge of the multiple physical things by the lower powers of sensation and imagination raises the question of the unity of things which must be treated in terms of the concepts of reason and intellect.[7] The forms in things are not the true forms, because they are clouded by the changeableness of matter.[8] The exact nature of anything, then, is unattainable by us except in analogies and figures grounded essentially in the global sense grasped by our higher powers.[9]

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[3] *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1963).

[4] Clyde Miller, *Idiota de Mente*, introduction. See also Aquinas, *De Veritate*, q.I,8.

[5] *De Mente*, 4, p. 53 and 55.

[6] Miller in *De Mente*, intro., p. 24; Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 6.

[7] *De Mente*, 7, p. 63.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 65.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 59.

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

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

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

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

Cusa recognizes a second type of discursive reasoning, namely, that of mathematics, which does not share the limitations noted above. But here the objects are not living beings, but mental objects of the same nature as mind. Hence the mind can pivot on itself, using its own resources to construct and process concepts and to make judgments which are exact because they are concerned with what is not changing or material.[10] This is Hume's world of relations between ideas.[11] But as it deals only with the formal, rather than the existential, it cannot resolve the above-mentioned human problems, but serves to exacerbate them to the degree that its mode of discursive reasoning becomes exclusive.

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 65.
[11] An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding (Chicago: Regnery, 1960), pp. 14-21.

Intellection

Hence Nicholas of Cusa turns to a third mode of mental assimilation, which is beyond the work of discursive reason, namely, intellection. Eugene Rice contrasts the two approaches to knowledge by likening discursive reasoning to a wayfarer walking through a valley and encountering things one by one, whereas intellection is like being on a hill whence one surveys the entire valley all at once.[12] The latter view is global and the particulars are understood as component parts; each thing has its proper reality but is also an integral constituent of the whole. It is important to note that the unity of the scene as known by intellection is constituted not by a mere assemblage of single entities juxtaposed in space or time, but by multiple participations in a unity. (Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the multiple things in the physical order also are limited images of the whole.)

Were we to express this in terms of modern thought, the distinction of analytic and synthetic modes of thought would help, but not at all suffice. With Descartes the moderns undertook a search for knowledge that was clear in the sense of identifying the simple nature composing each thing and it is distinct in the sense that such knowledge should be sufficient at least to be able to distinguish one type of thing from all others. [13] This gave primacy to the analytic process of distinguishing all into its component set of simple natures. The supposition was that these were finite in number, that they could all be identified clearly and distinctly by the mind, and that they could then be reassembled by equally clear and distinct links in a process of synthesis.

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

For Cusa in contrast, intellection is knowledge in terms not of the parts, but of the whole in which all participate. Here the intellect grasps the meaning and value of the whole. It works with the imagination and reason to work out the full range of possibilities and to grasp how the many fit together: it "depends not upon the number of things which are known, but upon the imaginative thrust of the mind" to be able to know

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

[13] Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 2.

"all the multifarious possibilities which are open to being."[14] Finally it is guided by the senses to know which of these possibilities are actual. The significance of the actual beings is not merely what we can garner by the senses, but what is known primarily in terms of the whole by the intellect.

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

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

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

Knowledge of the Absolute, in contrast, cannot be improved upon. Moreover, it is basically unreliable, for there is nothing to which the Absolute can be compared.[15] Hence, the negative way of saying what God is not and the recognition of our ignorance in that regard constitute the relevant real knowledge. For this reason Cusa entitled a major work: *On Learned Ignorance.*[16]

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

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[14] D. De Leonardis, p. 60.

[15] Henry Bett, *Nicholas of Cusa* (London: Meuthin, 1932), p. 180.

[16] Trans. G. Heron (London: Routledge, Kegan, Paul, 1954).

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

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

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

A GLOBAL STRUCTURE OF UNITY AND DIVERSITY

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

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

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

As such knowledge is directed toward an ordered reality -- ours and that of the entire globe -- the central questions are not merely

epistemological, but ontological and ethical, namely, what is the global whole in which we exist, and how can we act in relation to other peoples and cultures in ways that promote a collaborative realization of global community in our times?

Unity

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

1. Individual unity -- the identity by which each exists as itself in contrast to others.
2. The unity of each individual being as within the whole of being. This is important in grappling with contemporary issues.
3. The unity of the universe by which the individuals together form not merely a conglomeration of single entities, as with a pile of rocks, but a unified whole. This may be the central contribution of Cusa's thought for a study of globalization.
4. Absolute unity -- the One which, being without distinction, plurality or potentiality, is the fullness of being, and hence not subject to greater or lesser degree.[17]

The fourth is the metaphysical and religious foundation for the issue of globalization. Here, however, we shall focus first on the ontology and its ethical implication. This directs our attention to the second and especially the third of Cusa's senses of unity to which the recent development of a global awareness also corresponds, namely, to the whole or total universe in which we have our being, live and intersect with nature and with other persons and societies, cultures and civilizations.

This has been appreciated in various ways in the past: in the totem which was the unifier for the life and universe of primitive peoples, in the myths which united gods and nature in a genetic whole, in the One of Parmenides as the first discovery of metaphysics, and in the eschatologies and the classical hierarchies of being, to cite but a few. [18] Now, however, after a long period of analytic and atomic thinking, under the impact of technologies which make conflict too costly and inundate us with global communications, there is special need to take up once again this sense of unity.

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[17] G. McLean, *Plenitude and Participation: The Unity of Man in God* (Madras: University of Madras, 1978).

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Contraction

The situation is delicate however, for in so doing it is imperative to avoid the kind of abstractive thinking described above in which personal uniqueness is dismissed and only the universal remains as formed ideological structures.[19]

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

The import of this can be seen through comparison with other attempts to state this participation of the part in the whole. For Plato this was a repetition or imaging by each one of the one ideal form. Aristotle soon ceased to employ the term participation as image (*mimesis*) because of the danger it entailed of reducing the individual to but a shadow of what was truly real. Cusa too rejected the separately existing ideas or ideal forms. Instead the Christian cultures developed a positive notion of existence as act[20] whereby each participant in being was made to be in itself. This is retained by Nicholas of Cusa and is found also in the Islamic thinker, Mulla Sadra.

But he would emphasize that the being in which this person or thing participates is the whole of being.[21] This does not mean that in a being there is anything alien to its own identity, but that the reality of each being has precisely the meaning of the whole as contracted to this unique instance. To be, then, is not simply to fall in some minimal way on this side of nothingness, but rather to partake of the totality of being and the meaning of the whole of being and indeed to be a realization of the whole in this unique contraction or instance. It retains its identity, but does so in and of the whole.

De Leonardis formulates this in two principles:

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

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[19] *Of Learned Ignorance.*

[20] G. McLean, *Tradition, Harmony and Transcendence* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994), pp. 95-102.

[21] *Of Learned Ignorance*, pp. 84-88.

- The principle of community: Contraction of being makes each thing to be everything in a contracted sense. This creates a community of beings relating all entities on an ontological level.[22]

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

Hierarchy

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

Lovejoy wrote classically of *The Great Chain of Being*[23] in which each being was situated between, and in relation to, the next lower and the next higher in the hierarchy. We had, in other words, our neighbors with whom we shared, but there was always the danger that we were correspondingly distanced from other beings. Thus the sense of the human as "lord of nature" could and did turn into exploitation and depredation. Cusa's sense of beings as contractions of the whole unites each one intimately to all other realities in one's being or realization, and

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[22] De Leonardis, p. 228.

[23] Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper, 1960).

hence one's concerns. This converts the sense of master into that of steward for the welfare of the parts of nature which do not possess consciousness or freedom. These become the ecological concerns of humankind.

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

However, both these metaphors of a chain of being and of a mosaic are static. They leave the particular or individual beings as juxtaposed externally one to the other. Neither takes account of the way in which beings interact with the others or, more deeply, are even constituted internally by these relations to others. What Cusa sees for the realm of being is relationships which are not external juxtapositions, but internal to the very make-up of the individuals.

As the hierarchy of being is a rich theme in both classical and contemporary thought which adds substantively to the understanding of the global unity upon which we now enter we should note that some avenues of investigation are now reopened. The metaphysical and religious insights enable one to appreciate the unity of the many realities in their origin and goal, but what of the disposition of their diversity in their temporal existence? The modern affirmation of personal freedom: *liberté, egalité, fraternité* turned the concerns, not only of he mind but of the heart as well, away from the obvious differences of levels of being producing in the end what has been described as a "flat world" of multiple but indifferent things. Hierarchy, in contrast, adds a unity of order.

This has been approached from two directions. Classically this has been from the highest, the unlimited one of Parmenides and Plato to the lower by some process of ordered emanation or participation.[24] In Aristotelian terms this is a progressive expansion of potency and hence a corresponding limitation of act, from spirits (angels) each of which constitute an entire species, to humans who retained the spiritual powers of knowledge and appetite, to animals who lacked these capacities of

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[24] Fabro, Cornelio, *La nozione metafisica di partecipazione secondo S. Tommaso d'Aquino* (Torino, Società editrice internazionale [1950]); *Participation et causalité selon S. Thomas d'Aquin*. Préface de L. De Raeymaeker (Louvain, Publications universitaires de Louvain, 1961).

understanding and freedom, thence to organic life without consciousness, and finally to the inorganic order without life at all.

More recently Pierre Teilhard de Chardin[25] suggested a reverse order. Here the unity of a hierarchy remains central but it is approached in the opposite direction, i.e., beginning from the least of realities. From this lower end of the hierarchy unity increases in proportion to the introduction of difference. Progressively life moves upward by ever more complex organisms till one reaches the human, the highest of the material order who also disposes of non material or spiritual powers of intellection and free will. This is unification by 'complexification'. Above the animal level unity continues to intensify but it does so rather in terms of simplification in the order of spirit till it arrives at the absolute One – the most obvious, indeed the only obvious, reality for Parmenides the very first metaphysician.

Today life in global times directs our attention not only to this vertical hierarchy, but to integration horizontally. For this the work of Jean Piaget[26] is suggestive, for he developed a pattern of personal development predicated upon the psychological ability to integrate differences. Together these processes of vertical and horizontal integration suggest the paths along which we are able to advance for these global times.

Internal Relations

This internal relationship is made possible precisely by a global sense of the whole.[27] For this Cusa may have drawn more directly from the Christian teaching of the one God as a trinity of divine persons. But this in turn is conceived through analogy to the family of which individuals are contractions, especially as this is lived as the interpersonal relations of a culture grounded in such a theology. The philosopher looks into that social life as a point of manifestation of being. Indeed, hermeneutics[28] would suggest that this constitutes not only a *locus philosophicus* whence insight can be drawn but also the prejudgments of philosophers basic to the constitution of philosophical insights. The critical scientific interchange of philosophy is a process of controlled adjustment and perfection of these insights.

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[25] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, with an introduction by Sir Julian Huxley (New York : Harper & Row, 1965).

[26] Jean Piaget, "The Mental Development of the Child," *Six Psychological Studies*, trans. A. Tenzer (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), ch. I.

[27] Of Learned Ignorance, I, 9-10.

[28] H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroads, 1975).

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

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

To highlight this internal and active sense of contraction and hierarchy Cusa uses also the analogy of a seed.[29] This is able to develop and grow only by the heat of the sun, water from the clouds and nourishment from the earth. Hence each of these elements of the whole are interrelated in mutual dependence. Thereby the seed brings new being into existence -- which in turn will be creative, etc. Finally, by this action of the sun and clouds, of the seed and the earth, as contractions of the whole, the universe itself is made fruitful and unfolds. But this is identically to perfect and fulfill the universe. Hence, the plurality of beings, far from being detrimental to the unity and perfection of the universe, is the key thereto.

Complicatio (Folding Back Together)

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

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

as spiritual they were not physical or material. This left the material or physical dimension of being out of the point of integration.

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

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

A DYNAMIC GLOBAL ORDER: THE ETHICAL CONTEXT

Thus far we have been speaking especially in terms of existence and formal causality by which the various beings within the global reality are specific degrees of contractions of the whole. To this, however, should be added efficient and final causality by which the ordered universe of reality takes on a dynamic and even developmental character. This has a number of implications: directedness and dynamism, as well as cohesion, complementarity and harmony.[30] Cusa's global vision is of a uniquely active universe of being marked by the following.

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

This cannot be simply random or chaotic, oriented equally to being and its destruction, for then nothing would survive. Rather there is in being a directedness to its realization and perfection, rather than to its

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[30] De Leonardis, pp. 233-236.

contrary. A rock resists annihilation; a plant will grow if given water and nutrition; an animal will seek these out and defend itself vigorously when necessary. All this when brought into cooperative causal interaction has a direction, namely, to the perfection of the whole.

Dynamic Unfolding of the Global Whole: As an unfolding (*explicatio*) of the whole, the diverse beings (the second type of unity) are opposed neither to the whole (the third type of unity) nor to the absolute One (the fourth type of unity). Rather, as with the Platonic insight, all unfolds from the One and returns thereto.

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

Cohesion and Complementarity in a Global Unity: Every being is then related to every other in this grand community almost as parts of one body. Each depends upon the other in order to survive and by each the whole realizes its goal. But a global vision takes a step further; for if each part is a contraction of the whole, then, as with the DNA for the individual cell, "in order for anything to be what it is it must also be in a certain sense everything which exists."[31] The other is not alien, but part of my own definition.

From this it follows that the realization of each is required for the realization of the whole, just as each team member must perform well for the success of the whole. But here the reverse is also true, namely, it is by acting with others and indeed in the service of others or for their good that one reaches one's full realization. This again is not far from the experience of the family, but it tends to be overlooked in other human and commercial relations. It is by interacting with and for others that one activates one's creative possibilities and most approximates the full realization of being. Thus, "the goal of each is to become harmoniously integrated into the whole of being and thereby to achieve the fullest development of its own unique nature."[32]

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[31] *Ibid.*, p. 235.
[32] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

THE RELIGIOUS BASES AND ECOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DIALOGICAL UNITY IN GLOBAL TIMES

Here a deeper sense of retrieve is required. For as modernity was marked by the search for knowledge that was not only clear, but clear enough to be able to distinguish each from the other, its focus has been on the essences of things as clearly differing in kind. To appreciate their unity one with another, from the individual to the global level, it is necessary now to redevelop attention to the existence by which each is and its very exercise is a process of close cooperative interaction with all others. In this light beings appear as analogous or somewhat similar and related one to another. But this can reveal more about global unity in diversity if one asks for the creative source of these existences and traces this back to Being which, as Parmenides pointed out, must ultimately be one and unchanging, infinite and eternal.[33] The monotheist would recognize this as the one God, source and goal of all.

There is much to be learned here for life in a global age. The Hindu would point out that this one, named Brahma, must be of the character of *sat* or existence or actuality, of *cit* or consciousness which is the living self-awareness of truth, and of *ananda* or bliss which is the actual enjoyment of goodness or love.[34] Moreover, as perfect in itself, its act of sharing its being in the form of creating the universe can be only an act of generous love. In this the great civilizations concur.

On the part of humankind this provides a matrix for how to live the exercise of one's being, namely, in a unity with others constituted by living in truth which is justice, and in goodness which is love. It "ties us back" to our divine origin -- the etymology of the term "religion".

This points to another basis for human rights which had been eroded by Enlightenment rationalism. By reducing knowledge to issues of space and time the empiricists and Kant removed access of the intellect to the meaning of human life; by removing teleology as anthropomorphic the Enlightenment lost touch also with the purpose of life. But life with neither meaning nor purpose is a poor candidate for human rights. The response to this must lie in the basis of the meaning and purpose of human beings who are free and responsible, that is in the One, the relation to which is religion.

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[33] Parmenides, *Poem*, Fragments 1-8, K. Freeman, *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 41-44; see also G. McLean and P. Aspell, *Reading in Western Philosophy* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970), pp. 40-43.

[34] *The Bhagavad Gita*, trans. by Juan Mascaro (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1972), II, 16-19, 24, 30 (*sat*); 31-36, 39 (*cit*); 37, 55 (*ananda*).

   Yet in all this we have still understated the meaning of religion for human rights. For religion is more than an intellectual and ontological understanding of reality. Mohammad Iqbal states this well.

   The aspiration of religion soars higher than that of philosophy. Philosophy is an intellectual view of things; and as such, does not care to go beyond a concept which can reduce all the rich variety of experience to a system. It sees reality from a distance as it were. Religion seeks a closer contact with Reality. The one is theory; the other is living experience, association, intimacy. In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfillment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer – one of the last words on the lips of the Prophet of Islam.[35]

   Metaphysics is displaced by psychology, and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the ultimate reality. It is here that religion becomes a matter of personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness.[36]

   This has dramatic implications for human rights. A right that is merely acknowledged, but not acted upon, remains a hollow entitlement. For the actuation of rights it is necessary to move the heart as well as the mind, and not only to recognize but to act upon that recognition. By moving one to action in terms of the new global paradigm of unity with all persons -- and with physical nature as well -- religion provides the basis for human rights.
   It is not incidental then that in these global times we find a renewal of deep religious vision in the appreciation of how all are interrelated as fellow creatures in the one divine source. This entails that at the existential center of our reality we are most deeply interrelated not only with our own countrymen or ethnicity, but with peoples of all civilizations. Cooperation with one another is not only possible, but is indeed the only way forward. In this way the great civilizations and their

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   [35] M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religions*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy and Institute of Islamic Culture, 1984), p. 143.
   [36] *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

religious foundations provide the needed basis, not only formally to declare, but truly to live peace in global times.

Finally this sense of unity and diversity of the global whole has important ecological implications for life in our times.

1. The role of the imagination as analyzed comparatively above in Kant's first and third critique should be exploited to understand the nature and role of cultures. If a global outlook be evolved in which unity is promoted by diversity, then the progress of world unification could be, not at the cost of the multiple cultures, but through their deployment and interaction. Strategy could move beyond the dichotomy of business and begging to the true mega project for the new millennium, namely to develop a global community in which all are looked upon with appreciation, and progress is evoked by mutual respect.

2. For this Cusa's global view has pervasive implications. To overcome past human tendencies to subdue and exploit nature, some would want to eliminate the unique role of humans in the hierarchy of being. Cusa would recognize the equality of all as irreducible individuals within the whole. Yet he would also recognize the unique position of humankind in that hierarchy as integrating all possible levels of the being, inorganic, living, conscious and spiritual, within the One existing being. To express that humankind realizes all the types of possibilities of life, Cusa uses the term "possest".

3. This, however, is not a license to plunder and exploit the rest; it is rather a commission and destiny to assist in bringing out of others and of the whole the realizations not otherwise possible for them. It is then the view of Teilhard de Chardin[37] that it is precisely in man that we must look for further global evolution. The relation of person to person also is shaped notably by such a vision. Generally it has been seen that order rather than conflict is the condition for the exercise of freedom. This is to appreciate the whole globally, rather than merely as a set of contrasting individuals. It is this context which truly enables and promotes the exercise of human freedom.

4. To see each as a contraction of the whole provides them not only with equality, but with definitive status as endowed by the significance of the whole. They cannot be instrumentalized, much less reduced either abstractively or concretely to a least common denominator. Thus equality can be promoted without the reductionism entailed by egalitarianism. At the same time, by thinking in global terms it becomes possible to see that diversity is the key to enriching the whole and thereby drawing it closer to the fullness of perfection.

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[37] *Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper, 1959).

De Leonardis says this well when he concludes that:

human endeavors can be successful only to the extent that they achieve this integration whereby the isolation of the lone individual is overcome by social participation and the emptiness of alienation is transformed by unifying love into an active and liberating communal existence.[38]

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[38] De Leonardis, p. 241.

EPILOGUE

TIAN XIA: ALL UNDER HEAVEN (天下)

Today, as the population of countries explode from within and all must reach out to join others in a global world, issues of unity emerge as a central challenge. Are the Enlightenment ideals of freedom, equality and brotherhood still adequate or are they outmoded? Have the struggles of previous generations for a classless society been in vain? Are we able to understand the nature and significance of unity sufficiently to be able creatively to guide society toward ever more humane progress? These are central challenges for China, no less than for the world. Or could it be even that China, in her great store of wisdom regarding "all under heaven" (*Tian Xia*), holds resources of unity much needed by all of humanity at its present juncture to uplift the poor and achieve peace.

This work has traced the development of the many modes of human awareness of unity: from totem and myth, through classical and modern philosophy, to the challenges of our global times. Throughout these have progressively dealt with philosophy's basic and hence perennial issue of the one and the many, namely, how all can be related not by suppressing differences, but by bringing together the unique and hence diverse gifts and efforts of each person and thing?

Here, the challenge is, by the same stroke, to reinforce, relate and reconcile: (a) the unity of the whole which gives meaning and purpose to the many instances of reality; (b) the intense unity, indeed uniqueness, of its many components; and (c) the absolute One, of which all beings are analogous and hence interrelated participants. Whether in terms of logic or of epistemology, of philosophical anthropology or of ethics, this pervades and indeed undergirds philosophy – as it does all reality and at every turn.

It is notable then that the many studies on the meaning of Being as the subject of Aristotle's work, *Metaphysics*, conclude differently about which of these three Aristotle had in mind. Yet all are in a way correct, for the real significance of his search – renewed in its own way by every age – has been less to establish one position over the others as mutually exclusive than to understand how all three entail, enrich and reinforce one another. If so then the utter uniqueness of each does not militate against the unity of all, but bespeaks the totality of the efforts by which every being in all that it is, i.e., by its very existence, strains toward unity with all else. In this all reflect the unambiguous unity of the One whence they derive their being and toward which they strive. This is the fullness of human life in time, and hence in eternity as well.

We have seen how modern thought, built on a nominalist paradigm of competing single beings, has led to a disastrous last century and calls for a new paradigm in terms of the "whole". We should not conclude then without pointing to the classical notion in Chinese thought of "*Tian Xia*" or "all under heaven". Even if "heaven" be understood merely as sky[1] it still would suggest a whole inasmuch as the sky reaches out to en-globe the entire earth, and hence the unity of all humanity. But could it bespeak the ethical as well, both the inviolability of earth toward which the environmental movement is reaching, and the sacredness of humankind that undergirds the sense of human dignity at the root of human rights? These two great movements which characterize present times call for further philosophical reflection in order internally to better understand the deep nature of reality as one, true and good and to guide human striving accordingly.

In fact, *Tian Xia*" has had a number of meanings through time of which two stand out: One as horizontal, immanent and associative in character includes all things; the other as vertical has a normative and metaphysical sense. Both are important and mutually entail one another.

Minimally, *Tian Xia* has the physical or geographical connotation of sky precisely as extending over everything and every one on earth.[2] But even this takes the mind beyond a mere *de facto* or empirical accumulation of multiple single things to set a certain priority of the whole. That is, from the beginning whatever can be or be done is such only as part of the whole of all as "under heaven". "To be" is to take part in, to be part of, this whole, just as to be born is to be born into and as a member of a family.

The basic perspective is then not from somewhere or in terms one's own or one's people's self-interest; rather it is from everywhere, that is, in terms of the whole and its welfare. If in the 20th century all was understood in terms of the self-interests of conflicting individual nations and their coalitions, and hence as inter-national, present and future thinking must be global or in terms of the whole. Indeed such thinking must be not only about the world as ob-ject standing over against persons as subjects, but from the point of view of the world as a whole that physically includes all as related.

Moreover, as Francesco Sisci points out in "Under the Same Sky, a New World-view from China,"[3] historically this was not simply

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[1] Zhao Tingyang, "Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept 'All-Under-Heaven' (*Tian-xia*)," *Social Identities*, vol. 12, no. 1, January 2006, pp. 29-41.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Francesco Sisci, "Under the Same Sky, a New World-view from China (天下)," *Diogenes*, 221 Jan. 2008.

an actual group of individuals, but had political meaning expressing the dominion of an emperor. What is of special interest here is the way in which this meaning expanded of itself with the reach of the emperor to new and previously unknown lands. It was not an empirical term which needed to be added to from without; rather from within it expressed the whole as including all that was or could be. Hence, it unfolded automatically whenever it came to be known that there were lands hitherto unknown to the emperors. This sense of the whole which was always there included as well whatever would be found in the future until the cartologists of the 16th century AD.

Second or in a psychological sense the whole reflects the Asian priority of the intersubjective over individual subjectivity. As noted in a earlier chapter one does not begin life by being self-conscious of oneself; rather consciousness is first of all awareness of another, even of the heartbeat of one's mother while still in the womb. Intersubjectivity does not follow, but precedes and gives birth to subjectivity and self-awareness, which as a result is then social of its very essence.

The weakness of the paradigm built of individualist egos lies particularly in its difficulty in establishing such social relations. On the one hand, if these be external and based on utility they must be unstable, for then they must change with material circumstances which themselves are characterized by change. On the other hand, if permanence be attained by abstracting from what is unique about persons and their actions, and hence from their freedom, then what is most proper and distinctive of persons living in time is ignored. Such universal concepts devoid of the unique and diverse freedom of real persons become manipulative and oppressive.

Thirdly, the sense of "all under heaven" has crucial ethical implications as well, for the view from everywhere and in terms of the whole entails a responsibility not only for self, but for the welfare of all. This would be burdensome and even impossible to fulfill if it were to mean dealing with a disparate and anarchic universe. On the contrary, if understood as a whole constituted of essentially complementary realities the search is for the natural harmonies in which all consist. In this light the burden of world affairs becomes not that of achieving the greatest power and exercising the greatest force to suppress, manipulate and control others, but of uncovering and promoting natural harmonies and complementarities.

Here again the "unity of all under heaven" becomes crucial. If it were to be no more than sky as a way of collecting all earthly beings then it would mean only everything and everybody. Over time this would gather together acts both good and evil or all that ever happened, ignoring history and especially cultures as the achievements of the great human endeavors to responsibly cultivate life.

Instead the whole or "all under heaven" has an element of the ideal about it. To think in its terms calls one to obligations and responsibilities that go beyond what any one person or nation can make or determine. Indeed, it undergirds the very obligation to respond to others-in-need for one is part of this unity on the basis not simply of what one chooses, but of one's very being or existence. There is then an element of transcendence here in terms of the well-being of the whole as an ideal/real responsibility. Zhao Tingyang [4] refers to this as a transcendent because beyond any individual's self-interest, but as an immanent transcendent because rooted in the ontological condition of the whole. For this there are no "others" or outsiders; in terms of the whole all coexist and are essentially related.

Precisely because for so long the Western mode of understanding has been individualistic it may now be difficult to think in terms of the whole. The "liberal world" is physically constructed and intellectually, socially and legally organized in terms of competing and conflicting egos and self-interests. As such it too easily and disastrously slips into the extremes of exploiting laborers at home, colonialism abroad and the wars of the 20th and 21st centuries.

Yet, to think in rationalist terms of a whole has its own dangers. To gauge this difficulty more precisely it may help to look briefly with Eric Voegelin and Robert Piercey at the thought of Kant and Hegel.[5] Neither Kant nor Hegel rejected a sense of the whole; rather both considered it essential for thought itself. Yet the difficulties they encountered in adequately articulating it help to show why the "all" of "all under heaven" needs to be understood as an ontological unity, and why "heaven" needs to be a metaphysical reality.

For Kant, just as the idea of 'self' is the condition for unifying our states of consciousness, the idea of 'world' is the condition for the synthesis as a whole of all appearances,[6] both spatial and temporal. Yet, as we can never encounter the entire sum of appearances, 'world' can never be an object of experience; it remains a "principle of totality" without content.[7] This serves as a necessary regulative idea, for objects must be conceived as if in a whole in order to have significance. Yet, as the meaning of persons and other realities become subject to these integrating ideas, Kant's key sense of the person as end-in-itself is on

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[4] Zhao Tingyang.

[5] Robert Piercey, "How Paul Ricoeur Changed the World," *The American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* (*ACPA*) 82 (2008); Eric Voegelin, "World Empire and the Unity of Mankind," *International Affairs*, (1962), vol. 38, 170-188.

[6] *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N.K. Smith (London: Macmillan, 1927).

[7] Piercey, p. 467.

slippery ground. Not only will the sense of the particulars vary along with the sense of the whole, they are in danger of being supplanted by the whole and losing their integrity -- as Hegel would soon demonstrate.

Hegel too saw this idea of 'world' as whole to be necessary, but noted how in Kant it remained too abstract and empty. Instead, for Hegel it must be a "concrete whole" limitless in content, an "undetermined manifoldness (each) inwardly complete and independent." [8] Moreover, with dialectical logic the objective spirit explains just how particular forms evolve in a necessary order, such that "the true is the whole". [9] By thus 'hypostatizing" the objective spirit, however, Hegel overachieved in the opposite direction by rendering such wholes as the state more real than the manifold of individual humans that comprise it.

In basic contrast to Kant's overly abstract whole, then, Hegel in making the whole to be thus concrete rendered individual humans abstract. In this case, as noted Paul Ricoeur, Hegel's "cunning of reason"[10] puts the individual to work for itself, such that we begin to "hypostatize social and political entities, to raise power to the heavens and to tremble before the state."[11]

In sum, at the summit of Cartesian rationalism as the basic project of the Enlightenment, both Kant and Hegel recognized a sense of the "whole" to be indispensable, but both missed the mark by making it either overly abstract (Kant) or overly totalizing (Hegel). Both steps were inevitable in their system and both were at the expense of the concrete freedom of individuals, whether as persons or as physical nature. It is by no means accidental that today our major concerns have come to be the protection of the dignity of the person and the integrity of the natural environment.

The whole as of value and for which we are responsible must then be more than a regulative idea, empty of actual content. It is rather the fullness or perfection of being in which in some sense all share and are united among themselves, and according to which life achieves its normative orientation. It would be well then to investigate what it is about heaven by which it transcends the mere accumulation of ever conflicting realities, and in terms of which all strive and can be judged

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[8] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. T.F. Geraets (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991), 70, 268-269, n2.

[9] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of The Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 11.

[10] G.W.F. Hegel, *Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 33.

[11] Paul Ricoeur, "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," in *From Text to Action* (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1991), p. 245.

even when they fail to achieve – that is, both being and non-being alike. In this pursuit the archeology of unity, pursued above in the first chapters of this work, can be helpful.

As noted by Martin Heidegger it is wrong to think of the earliest ideas as the most crude and dubious. Rather they have proven to be the most basic and powerful, for change and development is not a matter of substitution, but of unfolding the rich potentialities of what came earlier. For this it is important to look not merely at "all" that is under or below "heaven". For the unity of this and for its norms of behavior it is especially important to look to the transcendent which, in contrast, is above or beyond, namely, to the meaning of "heaven" whereby all are united and evaluated. This calls for an archeology of the term which digs back into the past to find its original and pregnant meaning which is never totally lost in the historical process of being unfolded and transformed.

a. Returning to Mencius (372-289 BC), a contemporary of Aristotle, we find that heaven (*Tian*) is not merely the physical reality of sky, but has rather the metaphysical/ethical meaning of the ultimate principle of morality. Till now this is reflected in the ideal sense of "*Tian Xia*".

b. But this itself is a relatively later unfolding or connotation. Earlier still, in the Zhou Dynasty (1,045BC-256BC), "heaven" meant God taking care of the universe in a providential manner such that "all under heaven" had the sense not only of what humans could or would do, but of the universe as under the loving care of a highest (polytheistic) principle in the pantheon of the ancestral cult.

c. In turn, this reflects the much earlier sense of "shangdi" or "God on High" of the Shang Dynasty (1,766BC-1,122BC).

This raises in our modern mind still further questions about heaven as the highest principle: what was its nature, what meaning did it entail? But such questioning requires modes of analysis developed only later. Yet the full answer to these later questions will always entail a sense of the earlier more wholistic vision which the later more specific insights are able to reflect only in part. This requires going back in time for insight that is more full and rich, if less specific, while also coming forward toward the Cartesian ideals of clarity and distinctness for which much is left aside or reduced to mere pragmatic status. The former is vertical and metaphysical; the latter is scientific and pragmatic: both are necessary.

In this reversal of direction to come forward from the earliest meanings one finds this sense of the ultimate gradually opening from heaven to include earth. This was expressed, for example, in the ritual sacrifice performed by the Emperors in the Temple of Heaven to a high transcendent and providential reality for the success of the harvest and

other elements of temporal well being. This is expressed architecturally in symbols entailing a sense of the whole and of divine providence. To live responsibly is then to take up the ethical direction of our daily actions in time and space. Far from being a matter of mere mechanical or thoughtless repetition, as ritual action might seem to a later rationalism bereft of classical sensibilities, the aesthetic ordering of all our action in ways that are truly beautiful, uniting the true and the good, protects nature and people from exploitation whether ecological, economic or political.

The modern history of the West has shifted from an age of faith focused on the unique and absolute fullness of being to a secular age focused upon diverse beings in "this world" of "secular" space and time.[12] What the Chinese sense of "all under heaven" would seem to have better retained is the sense of the whole and hence of proportion, complementarity and harmony.[13] This is ever more needed as human capacities grow and are tempted ever anew and more destructively to oppressive forms of empire and hegemony.

Indeed it is impressive to find Professor Yu Xintian often speaking of the classical sense of harmony as one of the major potential gifts of China to international relations, and then citing economic power in terms of its instrumental ability to assure that this message of harmony is taken seriously into account in world councils. This in effect is to announce not only a special gift of China today to this time of transition from individual self-interest to global unity and cooperation, but a strategy for its delivery.[14]

There is another lesson here as well and one that is full of hope for humankind. As has long been understood, the actions of a person are not external appendices, but rather ways in which one exists, develops and realizes oneself and one's world. This is true of a people especially in terms of their cultural heritage which they critique and enrich in each generation as in ever changing circumstances they pass on what is life giving to the next generation. In this light it can be hoped that in this new age of global interaction the Chinese sense of the unity of "all under heaven" and its entailed abilities to think and act in inclusive,

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[12] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

[13] George F. McLean, *Plenitude and Participation: The Life of God in Man* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004).

[14] *Cultural Impact on International Relations, Chinese Philosophical Studies, XX*, Yu Xintian, ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2002); *Cultural Factors in International relations, Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXI*, Yu Xintian, ed. (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004).

responsible and harmonious terms can be shared and adapted. This would enable more individualist cultural traditions to harness their proper dynamism and creativity in terms sensitive to the good of the global whole as the common good. This combination of creative initiative, guided by a broader human concern, gives promise of a more inclusive and humane future. Appreciated as providentially under heaven, it can be guided by principles of unity that are realized as harmony, modes of truth that give birth to justice, and a search for the good of all that is inspired by love.

INDEX

THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH
IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life.* Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Colombia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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