Re-storying the 'Polis': Civil Society as Narrative Reconstruction

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INTRODUCTION

THE ISSUE

With the demise of the Marxist critique and the rise of economic rationalism, there is danger that the question of how to create a more compassionate and just society will all but disappear from the political and economic agenda. Many of the New Deal reforms of the 30's and 40's have been wound back, the 60's civil rights agenda of affirmative action in employment and education is being overturned, and the story that capitalist democracy is the only way for the world's future is taken broadly to be beyond question. Yet there is a rising interest in civil society as part of a new agenda built around cultures, minorities and environment.

What is lacking is not simply reformist zeal, but a means of analysis that allows cultural distance from the ruling political and economic orthodoxies which have dominated public life and still impede creative responses to present problems.

The fields of linguistics and critical theory offer a mode of analysis, usually termed deconstruction, on the use of power in the construction of personal and cultural identities. The method confronts serious questions of gender and race with which the contemporary world still struggles. However, deconstruction by name has led to deconstructtion in practice, leaving reformers with all the tools to disarm a problem by exposing the irony of its deceits, but bereft of ways to answer the more urgent question that always follows an awareness of what is wrong, namely, how do we make it right?

The developing body of theory and practice in narrative studies offers a critical method that inherits all the linguistic tools of postmodern thinking, but which at the same time provides ways for reconstruction. Not only can it provide the means to discover what stories construct an unjust world and its culture of power and privilege, but also what stories might create a more compassionate polis, one that takes seriously the cry for justice and solidarity, for human rights and creative freedom.

THE CHALLENGE

Since Enlightenment rationalism, philosophy has been conceived as a solitary practice of deductive reasoning, removed from the world. This reached its logical denouement in the Cold War polarization of an extreme monolithic individualism versus an equally monolithic communalism. The inner collapse of one of these has opened a radically different agenda for the turn of the millennia. This looks within human con-

sciousness for the creative resources of cultures, women and minorities; in aesthetic terms it searches for harmony between peoples and with the environment.

Narrative thinking has been a corresponding trend in philosophy and epistemology over the past 20 years. It emerged into a consistent body of practice with the adoption for family therapy of the story metaphor (see Michael White and David Epston, *Literate Means to Therapeutic Ends*, Norton, 1990). This practice produced a sustained, consistent and devastating critique of mainstream psychological theory and praxis, and indeed of the whole therapeutic culture by which the human person's self-understanding has been constructed. In contrast there emerges a new participatory model in which persons become aware of what core narratives construct their identity and their destiny. In that awareness they can choose more intentionally what stories they stand in or act out of, and what stories most respect their experience and intentions for justice and solidarity. If one realizes that the story of power bespeaks as well the power of story, one can identify and deconstruct the culture's categorizing stories of race, gender and class which conspire to make one dependent on power and knowledge structures that cultivate subservience and feed blind consumerism.

The stories a culture enacts may not serve that society's deepest intentions. For example, lawmakers can demand harsher criminal laws, build more prisons and increase capital punishment if they accept a story of moral righteousness. But does that story serve the human polis?

In politics some consider it a truism that government's role in the economy is to be a *laissé faire* regulator and that markets of labor or media or technology are best regulated by themselves. But does this story of what it means to govern or to participate as a citizen serve the human needs of the polis? As Alasdair MacIntyre wrote in *After Virtue*, unless we have the critical tools to understand in which story we stand our praxis runs the risk of prolonging not only the problems, but the problem story. Often a problem will be solved only by dissolving the story.

We live in an ironic democracy where political freedoms are prized, but where narrative tyranny is daily exercised through the media telling people what they are to know, and how they are to story it. A truly civil society is one that remains open to all the stories and voices. It especially prizes the dissenting voice, not because it is right but because it is the litmus test of the freedom to think and believe. Akin to religious freedom, this is freedom that not only enhances the human project, but is essential to it, namely, to be able to embrace critically and creatively the wisdom of our traditions.

Every major culture hearkens back to core sacred stories in its own tradition, be it the Koran, the Jewish Scriptures, the Christian Bible

or the Upanishads. A narrative exploration will not only identify the constructing stories of a culture, but also look to the sacred stories as sources for reconstruction. Sacred stories are preserved by a culture for their vision of how humans are related to the gods, to the world, and to the community. The study will investigate such sacred stories of the participants where wisdom is preserved, and the beauty which such stories evoke and inspire.

To bring "beauty" into the conversation about civil society opens a new seam of knowledge heretofore neglected. With the dominance of scientific method in the human sciences, literature and the arts have been largely ignored in the conversation of what constitutes the human person, and where human freedom resides. A narrative understanding honors the aesthetic response of the human person, particularly that evoked by the classical arts and great poetry, drama and literature. In the realm of story, as of life, what is true is what is most deeply felt, what calls forth the most compassionate response. Such narrative aesthetic offers another door into ethics.

Part I, "Classical and Alternative Narratives," establishes the expansive parameters characterizing this volume by offering three papers, one representing a classical Asian canon of identity and social structure, one representing social planning from a more Euro-American perspective, and one representing a social reconstruction based on a broader global and heterogeneous 'script'.

Chapter I, by R. Balasubramanian, "The Timeless and the Temporal through Stories of Dialogues in the *Upanishads*," describes in detail Upanishadic stories exemplifying Brahman, Atman, and Sat, which refer to Ultimate Reality as "source," "support," and "end" respecttively. Balasubramanian treats the Upanishads' dialogues as a mode of radical critique deconstructing the merely "bodily, sensory, and mental" levels. He argues that only realization of the true Self can infallibly lead to the Light of Lights, and universal love among all peoples.

Chapter II, by Charles R. Dechert, "Utopia and Social Planning," interprets various historical 'utopias' as attempts at social planning pitched towards future-placed *real* objectives. Dechert recounts the work of Thomas More, Amitai Etzioni, Ayn Rand, the Club of Rome, Buckminster Fuller, and many others; and then moves on to the contemporary, the emergent need for "transparency" and "participation," and – in his opinion – a global structure inspired by the "checks and balances" system of the American Constitution.

Chapter III, by Gervase Tusabe, "The Challenge of Building a Civil Society in a Heterogeneous Society: The Need for Narrative Reconstruction," addresses the problem of how to create a more com-

passionate and just society even though the 'market economy' now dominates the world. Tusabe argues that the various communitarianisms are not in themselves a solution, since they pose a threat to those perceived as 'outsiders'; rather, he proposes a global structure accommodating a "plurality of narratives," so there is mutual respect even when members differ on "matters of substance." Humanity must "re-story" so our "shared humanity" permits us to live in parity with those who are 'other'.

Part II, "The Postmodern Narrative, *Contra* and *Pro*," comprises a paper defending 'absolute truth' against postmodern and other forms of relativism, a paper adjudicating postmodern and other interpretations of identity, and a paper proposing a 'third way' which is neither modernist nor postmodernist.

Chapter IV, by Josef Debowski, "K. Twardowski's and W. Tatarkiewicz's Argumentation on the Truth Absolute," revisits the arguments of these two Polish philosophers against relativism, concurring in the main with their respective rationales but introducing either revisions or points of clarification. Debowski devotes the latter part of his presentation to his own theory of absolute truth.

Chapter V, by Anna Krasteva, "The Concept of Identities," critiques the narratives of identity in the European tradition, examining Descartes and Husserl and a string of post-structuralists: Lacan, Althusser, Foucault, and Derrida. Krasteva turns to George Herbert Mead's "symbolic interactionism" and Ricoeur's treatment of "*ipse*-identity and *idem*-identity" in order to stave off a radical dissolution of identity and conserve civil society. She ends with proposals which adopt a mix of existential and postmodern readings of "authentic identity."

Chapter VI, by Stuart Fowler, "Reality, Knowledge and African Education: In the Context of a Postmodern World," critiques postmodern sociology, agreeing that "non-foundational pragmatic humanism" and "anti-representationalism" seem to be two of its defining scripts. Fowler takes Rorty to task for ethnocentric privileging, and postmodern educators in general for their authoritarianism. While appropriating several features of modernism and postmodernism, Fowler shows how these two Eurocentric narratives do not in the long run serve African education. He concludes with his own programs for African education, and for a truly global education.

Part III, "Storying and Re-Storying," offers papers which demonstrate the storying of Romanian 'philosophy of life' and 'moral ideals'; the multiple re-storying of the Buddha's biography; and the requisite re-storying of Western narratives about Islam.

Chapter VII, by Stefan A. D. Popenici, "Building and Rebuilding of the Individual as a Teleological Function of the Educational Imaginary: A Study of Romanian Fairy-Tales," explains the social and economic impasse of post-Communist Romania, which is undergoing a crisis both of morality and morale. Seeing the educational system in particular as failing its moral responsibility, Popenici demonstrates in detail how instruction in the traditional folk literature of Romania can return Romanians to their authentic spiritual roots.

Chapter VIII, by Kirti Bunchua, "Re-storying of the Re-storying of the Story of Buddha's Enlightenment," first exposits the 'popular' age-old narratives of Sakyamuni Buddha's Enlightenment, and then describes Buddhadasa's 'intuitive' deconstruction of these narratives (Buddhadasa, a much venerated contemporary Thai monk, wrote in the second half of the 20th century and only recently passed away). Bunchua then combines a historico-critical 'scholarly' approach and Buddhadasa's deconstruction in order to fashion an educative reading of Buddhism which can perform great service to civic responsibility, both globally and in Thailand itself.

Chapter IX, by Yuriy Pochta, "Clash of Civilizations or Re-storying Mankind?" deconstructs the long history of prejudicial Western narratives about Islam, from the Middle Ages through the Enlightenment to the present. Pochta addresses in particular the overt and hidden assumptions of the Romantics (Schlegel, Chateaubriand, Carlisle), the Positivists (Renan and Lebon), the Marxists, and the Russian "religious" philosophers. He shows how two contemporary modernists, Francis Fukuyama (who proclaims the "victory of Western civilization") and Samuel Huntington (who predicts a "clash of civilizations" and the demise of the West), generate grotesque narratives which in reality threaten the world. Pochta invokes a postmodern humility and openness in attempting to begin a more honest 'story' of Islamic civilization past and present.

Part IV, "Storying Science," proffers one paper delineating the story of "ecological culture" and the other storying the uses and abuses of technology.

Chapter IX, by Victoriya Levinskaya, "The Place of Ecological Culture in Civil Society," describes the 'story' of humanity's relation to Nature, giving most attention to 20th century Russian "philosophers of space" (such as Vernadskiy) who 'write' the ongoing transformation of the earth's biosphere into the cosmic noosphere as humankind initiates space-travel. Levinskaya next describes Russian theories about "aesthetics and ecological culture," and then concludes with an explanation of how these narratives have developed in part as a response to the modern "ecological crisis."

Chapter X, by Yu Xuanmeng, "Heidegger on Technology, Aliena-tion and Destiny," exposits Martin Heidegger's writings on technology, showing the bad side of technology (how it has degraded from the Greek *technē* to 'technology', which compels things and people to 'stand-in-reserve' only for instrumental use); and the good side of technology as *destiny*, as a way of 'unconcealing the Earth'. Yu ends with a compari-son to the Chinese notion of 'technique and the Tao': "Through the long history, Chinese intellectuals looked down upon technology, so the word 'technique' should replace 'technology'." The Sage is one who 'goes through technique to the Tao'.

Chapter XI, by Gan Chunsong, "Same Methods, Different Goals: Re-Storying Chuang-tsu and the Ch'an School," demonstrates similari-ties between Western postmodernism and traditional Chinese thought. Postmodernism's emphasis on the limitations of language is compared to Chuang-tsu's scepticism in the face of language and Ch'an Buddhism's famous dictum, "no [spoken] words, no [written] characters." Postmo-dernism's stress on private experience as the 'real' determinant of personal 'truths' is compared to Chuang-tsu's reduction of truth to an experience and Ch'an Buddhism's equation of religious truth and the 'experience' of enlightenment.

Chapter XII, by Duan Dezhi, "On Leibniz's Doctrine of the Harmony of Autonomy and Grace, and Its Contemporary Significance," explains Leibnizian 'concomitance' and the 'pre-established harmony' of mind (soul) and body. Duan delves into Leibniz's differences with Descartes in this regard, and then goes on to arguments for the relevance of Leibniz to the 21st century. Duan argues that the hypothesis of pre-established harmony can inspire a contemporary world suffering from three "spiritual diseases": (1) individualism without moderation, (2) extreme anthropomorphism, and (3) world-weary pessimism.

Chapter XIII, by David Kaulemu, "Western Philosophy Only Speaks and Listens to Itself," critiques – in relation to Africa – Thomas Bridges' study of the limitations of the West's 'Enlightenment-project' (i.e., the values of universal reason, and governmental protection of 'individual' liberty). After pointing out that the West's imposition of its values on Africa was, from the start, hypocritical, Kaulemu goes on to his main argument: that Bridges rightly calls for a reform of the Enlightenment's values, but that his critique is internal to the West itself, and still closes its ears to criticism from the 'other' (for example, Bridges condemnation of 'communitarian').

Chapter XIV, by Rosemary Winslow, "Homelessness and Hospi-tality/Alienation and Encounter: Rhetoric and Poetic in Ancient Paradigms and Modern Polis," treats the relation between violence and hospitality, examining both ancient interpretations and contemporary ones (Habermas, Farrell, Newton). Winslow seems to favor Newton's

Levinasian reading, but warns that Newton, too, seems blind to the violence that can be visited upon the homeless by the self-proclaimed 'act of charity'.

Chapter XV, by Brecken Chinn Swartz, "Strategies in International Broadcasting: New Directions in Understanding Media Production Values Across Cultures," reports the results of a survey of (1) Chinese and British ethnics working at BBC, (2) Chinese and non-Chinese Americans working at VOA, and (3) Chinese working at Chinese news media. The aim is to compare the 'gatekeeping', that is, the presentational criteria and styles, of these diverse groups. It turns out, for example, that Chinese ethnics, whether at BBC, VOA, or Chinese governmental media, rank 'justice' very highly, whereas the British ethnics favor 'freshness' and the non-Chinese Americans favor 'depth'.

Chapter XVI, by Richard K. Khuri, "A Firmer Footing for the Re-storied *Polis*: Ideas and Suggestions in the Form of Aphorisms," argues that in order to build a healthy 'polis' its citizens should be able to discern different moralities and to tell their own stories lived and experience from their own cultural traditions. However, Khuri notes that modernity simplifies complexities of human lives with its clarity and digitized thinking, while post-modernity relativizes the nature of truth. He suggests the spirit of gratuitous acts for goodness and avoiding so-called justice of resentment.

Chapter XVII, by Vilma Sliuzaite, "Merleau-Ponty: The Body as a Work of Art," analyzes Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notion of body-subject in relation to arts, especially paintings. Special attention to Paul Cézanne's paintings, Merleau-Ponty in his *Phenomenology of Perception* argues that body-subject is not as being *in* space, but rather as *of* space; and subject and object are not two different reality, but embodied subject as unity. Through the body the human being is in contact with the world and perceives and being perceived. Sliuzaite notes that for Merleau-Ponty both intellectualism and empiricism separate the internal relation between the perceived world and the lived body. In fact, the two constitute one inseparable system.

PART I

CLASSICAL AND ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVES

CHAPTER I

THE TIMELESS AND THE TEMPORAL THROUGH STORIES AND DIALOGUES IN THE UPANISHADS

R. BALASUBRAMANIAN

THE STRUCTURE OF *THE UPANISHADS*

The Upanishads are not only the concluding portion, but also the consummation, of the Vedas. There are four Vedas, and each Veda has four sections which are called *Mantras*, *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, and *Upanishads*. The *Mantras* are hymns in praise of gods and goddesses. The *Brahmanas* deal with sacrificial rites. The *Aranyakas* contain meditative practices. *The Upanishads* are philosophical treatises dealing with Being and beings of all kinds. Though we speak of the different sections of the Vedas, each section having a specific theme, the Vedas have thematic unity and help the spiritual aspirant to achieve the final goal of liberation through prayers and rituals, meditative practices and philosophical investigation. The transition from the *Mantras* through the *Upanishads* is comparable to the change from the twilight to the bright and brilliant sunlight of the day. What is implicit or suggested in the hymns becomes explicit through rigorous explorations in depth in the philosophical tracts. *The Upanishads* discuss the most fundamental question of metaphysics – the nature of Being and how beings, both living and non-living, are related to it. "Brahman," "Atman," and "Sat" are the terms which *The Upanishads* use for referring to the ultimate reality which is the source, support, and end of everything. Brahman is that which is big, infinite. What is all-pervasive, what fills and penetrates all bodies, is called Atman; the word "Atman" also means that which is the source, support, and end of everything. Sat is Being, mere existence; it is that which is subtle, without distinction, all-pervasive, one, pure partless consciousness. Though contextually we use the word "Brahman" when we refer to the source of the world and the word "Atman" when we refer to the inward Self of the individual, the two words signify one and the same reality. Brahman or Atman is Being which exists on its own whereas beings of the manifested world have dependent existence for they originate from, and exist in, Being.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

The Upanishads, which are assigned to 2500 BC, are extra-ordinary philosophical texts. They are extra-ordinary for two reasons. First of all, the subject matter they deal with is extra-ordinary. They are not concerned with stocks and stones, which can be known through perception and other sources of knowledge. On the contrary, they are concerned with Brahman or Atman which is trans-empirical, trans-relational, and trans-linguistic. They are not interested in the analysis of the different categories of knowledge such as substance, qualities, and action, the universal and the particular, and so on. Not that such an analysis is unimportant. There are philosophical systems and positive sciences which give us a lot of information about them widening the frontiers of our knowledge. There are two kinds of metaphysics, descriptive and transformative. Descriptive metaphysics has its own value; but it has its own limitations. Its major limitation is that it does not deal with Being, which transcends the space-time-cause framework, even though it is the ground of the world. It does not tell us about the inward Self in everyone of us, which remains covered or enveloped by the mind-sense-body complex which is material. The fundamental questions of metaphysics are: "Who am I? What is my relation to Being? How am I related to the external world?" A little reflection tells us that, endowed as we are with the mind whose emergence in the process of evolution has heightened the evolutionary course, our purposive life cannot be confined to the bodily, vital, and mental levels and that we must seek the inner reality, the Self in us, which is the source and support of all our mental, vital, and bodily activities. Through a system-atic analysis of our experience *The Upanishads* help us to dis-cover the Self in us by removing the veils which cover it and realize that it is no other than Brahman which is said to be the source and support of the world. The teaching of *The Upanishads* is that Brahman or Atman is the source of the manifested world, that it is immanent in all beings, sentient as well as non-sentient, that humans and other living beings are divine, and that nature is essentially spiritual. The metaphysics of *The Upani-shads* is not descriptive, but transformative. The subject matter of *The Upanishads* is, therefore, extra-ordinary.

Like the subject matter, the method of inquiry pursued and practiced by *The Upanishads* is extra-ordinary. It is true that they employ the tools of analysis and synthesis which are usually employed in philosophy. What is significant in the case of *The Upanishads* is that they employ these tools for deconstruction and reconstruction. Though it may appear that deconstruction is a new mode of philosophizing, the truth is that it is not really new. The technique of deconstruction has been used in the past by great masters, both in the East and the West, in

their creative writings. Since philosophical thinking does not take place in a vacuum, every creative philosopher has to undo, sometimes partially, sometimes radically, what has been done by his/her predecessors in order to build a new structure. Aristotle has to deconstruct what he inherited from Plato for constructing his philosophical system. Ramanuja has to demolish the solid structure of Advaita for reconstructting his philosophy on the basis of the traditional sources. In recent times Sri Aurobindo, the great mystic-philosopher-poet, created a magnificent philosophy of synthesis known as Integral Philosophy by resorting to deconstruction followed by reconstruction. So is the case with Martin Heidegger.

DECONSTRUCTION AND RECONSTRUCTION THROUGH STORIES AND DIALOGUES

To the Upanishadic thinkers philosophy in an important sense is anthropocentric. It does not follow from this that theocentric and cosmocentric discourses are absent in *The Upanishads*. Though all the three dimensions of philosophy – anthropocentric, cosmocentric, and theocentric are found in *The Upanishads*, the fact remains that philosophy is for the sake of man. God does not need philosophy. Nor do animals and nature require philosophy. But it is only humans who require the benefit of philosophy for their transformation or regeneration in life, for overcoming the foundational ignorance they suffer from and thereby discovering the Self in them, which is no other than Brahman. Sankara tells us that, owing to the foundational or spiritual ignorance, human beings are engaged in their day-to-day activities purely at the bodily, sensory, and mental levels as if they were no more than the mind-sense-body complex forgetting the spiritual reality in them. What is uppermost in our daily life is body-consciousness, or sense-consciousness, or mind-consciousness, and not Self-consciousness.[1] It means that there is identification of oneself with the body, or the senses, or the mind, leading to the superimposition of the characteristics of the body, the senses, and the mind, all of which are material, on the inward Self which is non-material. For example, we say, "I am stout/thin," "I am blind/deaf," "I am happy/miserable," and so on. Stoutness and thinness are the characteristics of the body; blindness and deafness are the characteristics of the senses; happiness and misery are the characteristics of the mind. Though the "I" which stands for the Self does not possess bodily, or sensory, or mental characteristics, these features, due to a wrong identification of the Self and the not-Self arising from ignorance, are superimposed on the Self. What is called existential predicament is a

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[1] See his introduction to the *Brahma-sutra*.

condition in which human beings do not have harmony of spirit, mind, and body at the personal level and harmony with others including nature at the trans-personal level. Absence of harmony is suffering; and the cause of suffering is spiritual ignorance, which can be removed only by ignorance. The aim of *The Upanishads*, according to Sankara, is to help human beings discover the Self which is Brahman and overcome the existential predicament. This goal can be achieved only by means of a new thinking, a radical questioning of the given, a rigorous inquiry into the life-world, which is bound to lead to a transvaluation of all values, through deconstruction and reconstruction. This is what *The Upanishads* have done. The work of radical thinking, which *The Upanishads* pursue in quest of the primal Spirit (called Brahman or Atman), is beautifully summarized by Heidegger as follows:

> What philosophy essentially can and must be is this: a thinking that breaks the paths and opens the perspectives of the knowledge that sets the norms and hierarchies, of the knowledge in which and by which a people fulfills itself historically and culturally, the knowledge that kindles and necessitates all inquiries and thereby threatens all values.[2]

The Self is timeless; all other things than the Self are temporal. Philosophy investigates the timeless. While the Self can easily be distinguished from the body and the senses, there is great difficulty in separating the Self from the mind. According to *The Upanishads*, the mind, like the senses and the body and the things of the external world, is material. The Self, which is spiritual or non-material, should not be identified with the mind and the intelligent functions it performs being inspired by the Self. Heidegger warns us against the wrong interpretation of the Self or Spirit as intelligence, as a tool in the service of others, as an entity in the realm of culture.[3] The neglect and misinterpretation of the Spirit, according to him, results in "the darkening of the world, the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the transformation of men into a mass, the hatred and suspicion of everything free and creative."[4]

Though *The Upanishads* are inspiring philosophical texts par excellence, they do not present their teachings in the form of a coherent system with premises and conclusions supported by lengthy arguments. Sometimes the Upanishadic statements are suggestive. We also come across declarations in them which are conclusive. There are texts which

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[2] Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 10.
[3] *Ibid*., pp. 46-49.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 38.

not only complement, but also contradict each other. It is not the case that logic is totally absent in them. When *The Upanishads* themselves suggest the need for the triple discipline of hearing, reflection, and contemplation, *sravana*, *rnanana*, and *nididhyasana* as they are called, for realizing the truth; it is wrong to conclude that they contain only insights without investigation.[5] Just as the philosophical ideas are scattered in them, even so the supporting arguments, though meagre but not flimsy, are scattered in them. It must be borne in mind that the Upanishadic thinkers were fully aware of the limitations of both logic and language in comprehending the ultimate reality. As Heidegger says, all thinking which solely follows the laws of thought formulated in traditional logic is incapable of understanding the fundamental question of metaphysics, let alone actually unfolding the question and guiding it towards an answer.[6] As for language, it operates in the realm of duality involving all kinds of distinctions such as subject and object, substance and qualities, cause and effect, and so on. Brahman or the Self, which is one and non-dual, which is free from distinctions and relations, cannot be brought within the scope of language like an empirical object. One should not, therefore, read the Upanishadic texts as one would read Aristotle and Aquinas, Sankara and Ramanuja. Notwithstanding these difficulties, one will not fail to notice what Radhakrishnan calls "the consistency of intuition" in them.[7] The message which they intend to convey is clear: there is nothing greater than the Self, which is immanent in everything, sentient as well as insentient, and to know the Self is to be free.

The Upanishads make use of stories and dialogues to convey their teachings which are the product of radical thinking. What is difficult to be conveyed through a philosophical system packed with premises, conclusions, and corollaries can easily be conveyed through stories. First, it is easy to understand the moral of a story even though it is not explicitly stated. Secondly, by providing a background it catches the attention of the hearer or reader. Just to give a few examples drawn from *The Upanishads*: the background of a story may be the problem which a son faces arising from the action of his father as in the case of Naciketas and Vajasravasa, or a decision taken by the husband which provokes one of his wives as in the case of Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi, or the philosophical debate among scholars in the court of Janaka, the enlightened emperor, and so on. In all these cases one reads or listens to the story with rapt attention. Thirdly, when the narration of a story is

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[5] See *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* (hereafter *BU*), 2.4.5.

[6] Heidegger, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[7] S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 7th impression), vol. l, p. 141.

interspersed with dialogue, it sustains the attention of the reader or the listener. In almost all of *The Upanishads* we come across stories and dialogues. In some cases the problem which is presented through a story and a dialogue is further developed in a narrative form. In some other cases what is conveyed through a narrative is concluded in a dialogue. It must be borne in mind that the Upanishadic seers about whom we know very little did not set forth their ideas as their personal views. As Radhakrishnan observes, "So careless were they of personal fame and so anxious for the spread of truth, that they focused their views on the honoured deities and heroes of the Vedic period."[8] We are, therefore, interested in the narratives connected with Prajapati, Indra, and Narada, with Janaka, Yajnavalkya, and Maitreyi, with Uddalaka and Svetaketu, and others. The stories and parables, dialogues and discussions, which we find in most of the *Upanishads*, are concerned with the central problems of philosophy, which are mentioned in the very beginning of the *Svetasvatara Upanishad*:

> What is the cause of the universe? Is it Brahman? Whence are we born? By what do we live? On what are we established? 0 ye who know Brahman, please tell us at whose command we abide here in pain and pleasure.
>
> The light of *The Upanishads* is neither dimmed by time nor blurred by the developments in philosophy and science because it illumines the timeless vis-à-vis the temporal.[9]

DEATH AND DEATHLESSNESS

The *Katha Upanishad* begins with the story of a young boy by name Naciketas who had the good luck to meet and question Yama, the god of Death, about the phenomenon of death, its cause and consequence. Philosophers and laymen, the young and the old, are interested in knowing about the phenomenon of death. "What is it that dies? What is it that survives death?" are the questions that we ask. There is an interesting discussion on the problem of freedom from the bondage of the body in Plato's *Phaedo*. Socrates says that a philosopher, who is not a lover of the body, is engaged in training for dying, in dissociating himself from the body, for the purpose of attaining the highest knowledge. The important question here is whether it is possible to overcome the cycle of birth and death, and if so, how. This question can be answered only if one knows the cause of birth, which leads to death,

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[8] *Ibid.*, p. 143.
[9] 1.1.

and the consequence thereof. Drawing a distinction between perishing" and "dying", Heidegger says that *Dasein* never simply perishes as do other animals, but it can end without authentically dying; this ending is called its "demise" (*Ableben*), which is different from "dying" (*Sterben*). According to Heidegger, a person who thinks of his existence as a Being-towards-death will act differently from one who lives only for the present moment. One who is successful in living an authentic life knows the art of dying authentically. As a young boy of seventeen, Ramana Marharshi presented himself in a situation of dying in order to find out what death is and what happens after death. Nothing is so common and also baffling at the same time as death.[10]

The story goes that Vajasravasa, the father of Naciketas, performed Visvajit sacrifice and gave away all his possessions as gifts. Naciketas was terribly unhappy with his father for giving worthless things as gifts. He asked his father: "Sir, to whom will you give me as a gift?" When he asked this question again and again, his father replied in anger: "To Death I shall give you." In order to fulfil his father's wish Naciketas went to Yama's abode. It so happened that Yama, the god of death, was away at that time. Naciketas waited for him for three nights without food and water; and when Yama returned, he learnt that a guest had remained uncared for in his home. Since Naciketas remained in Yama's house without food for three nights, Yama offered him three boons, one in respect of each night. The first boon that Naciketas prayed for was that his father should recognize and accept him when he went home. Then for the second boon he requested Yama to teach him the Fire-sacrifice by which one reaches heaven. Yama granted the young boy the two boons he requested and told him to ask for the third one. This time Naciketas requested Yama to instruct him about the secret behind death, that which survives death. The dialogue between Yama and Naciketas is quite interesting. To start with Yama was not willing to reveal the secret behind death. He said: "Even the gods of old had doubt on this issue. Also, this truth is subtle and not easy to understand. O Naciketas, choose another boon." As Naciketas was desirous of knowing the nature of the entity that survives death, he insisted on knowing the truth from Yama as no other boon was comparable to this and also as no one else was competent to reveal the knowledge about the reality which does not die. Yama tempted Naciketas with other offers – wealth and women, land, long life and all kinds of material comforts. Without yielding to any of these temptations Naciketas said: "The things you promised are transient. They wear out, O Yama, the vigour of all the senses of human beings. All life, moreover, is brief. Keep yourself the vehicles, dances, and songs. Man is not to be satisfied with wealth. The

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[10] *Katha Upanishad*, 1.1.21. *Ibid*., 1.1.26.

boon that is worth praying for by me is that alone which I asked." Being convinced that Naciketas was fit for receiving instruction about the immortal Self, Yama explained to him the great secret.[11]

Before considering Yama's instruction to Naciketas it is necessary to make two observations about the moral of the story. Both the observations are related to Naciketas' reaction to his father's external ceremonialism on the one hand and his refusal to accept perishable material benefits offered by Yama in lieu of the knowledge of the immortal Self on the other. Naciketas was annoyed at the pseudo-orthopraxis of his father who was only mindful of the external formalism of the ritual without caring for the inner spirit of the ritual action. It should be noted first of all that the *Upanishad* suggests the need for a change from the outward formalistic ritualism of the orthodox religion to the inward spiritual wisdom, which calls for a radical thinking into what we are, what we should do, and also how we should act. Secondly, human beings should lead a purposive life which should reflect their spiritual nature. Their life is at two levels – organic and hyper-organic. At the organic level their activities, like those of animals, are in pursuit of the basic needs of life such as food, water, shelter, and sex. But their life-activities should be fully reflective of their species character. Equipped as they are with the mind, they are capable of reason and will. While reason helps them to think of the higher values of life, will provides them the necessary energy to translate their ideas into action. Discrimination and dispassion are required to go beyond the organic level. The Upanishad tells us through Naciketas that human aspiration cannot be satisfied with worldly prosperity and earthly pleasures, which are ephemeral. It projects the ideal of the realization of the eternal Self which alone can provide abiding satisfaction. While the mind-sense-body outfit of a human being is perishable, the Self is beyond the clutches of death.

The fascinating dialogue is followed by the exposition of the nature of the Self which is the central theme of the *Upanishad*. Excepting for a few questions asked by Naciketas here and there, the rest of the *Upanishad* is merely narrative exploring the interior of the spiritual scape, Yama playing the role of the instructor to the young boy. Issues connected with the Self such as the proper mental frame for discriminating the eternal from the ephemeral, the empirical distinction between the individual self and the supreme Self, the parable of the chariot to highlight the ultimacy of the Self, the imagery of the fabulous world-tree to explain the relation between the world and Brahman, and the problem of rebirth for those who have not attained the saving knowledge, are discussed.

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[11] *Ibid.*. 1.2.26.

There are two approaches to metaphysics, epistemological and axiological. It is usual to make the transition from epistemology to metaphysics. A systematic and rigorous inquiry into the nature of truth in epistemology takes us to the absolute truth, eternal and unchanging, which is the core of metaphysics. One may also, as Yama does, proceed to metaphysics from the axiological side and show that the ultimate good is the absolute reality. Drawing a basic distinction between the good (*sreyas*) and the pleasant (*preyas*), Yama tells Naciketas:

> Both the good and the pleasant approach a man. The wise man, pondering over them, discriminates. The wise chooses the good in preference to the pleasant. The simple-minded, for the sake of worldly well-being, prefers the pleasant.[12]

He adds:

> Widely apart and leading to divergent ends are these, ignorance and what is known as wisdom. I know you, Naciketas, to be eager for wisdom, for even many kinds of enjoyable things did not tempt you.[13]

The good which Yama speaks about is not just moral goodness, but the highest good, the ultimate value, which is the Self, ever free and never bound. It can be realized only by the wise and not by the ignorant. Naciketas is interested only in the Self, the highest good which transcends the space-time caused world. He asks Yama:

> Tell me that which you see beyond right and wrong, beyond cause and effect, beyond past and future.[14]

In response to this Yama describes the nature of the Self, which is lodged in every being, as follows:

> The intelligent Self is neither born nor does it die. It did not originate from anything nor did anything originate from it. It is birthless, eternal, unchanging, and ancient. It is not slain even when the body is slain.[15]

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[12] *Ibid.*, 1.2.2.
[13] *Ibid.*, 1.2.4.
[14] *Ibid.*, 1.2.14.
[15] *Ibid.*, 1.2.18.

The Self is eternal, one, and infinite. There is nothing like or unlike it. It is homogeneous, partless, and indivisible, and so it does not admit of internal differentiation. It is of the nature of consciousness. Though infinite, it appears to be individuated and finite because of its association with the mind-sense-body material outfit. Not knowing the real nature of the Self, the birth and death of the mind-sense-body adjunct is wrongly superimposed on it; and so we speak of it as though it has birth and death. Though it is one, it appears to be many because of the plurality of the mind-sense-body adjuncts. It means that, though the Self (Atman) is one, the individuated selves (*jivas*) are many. The individuated self, because of its material adjunct, functions as the subject of knowledge (*inata*), the agent of action (*karta*), and the enjoyer of the consequences of action (*bhokta*) in the empirical life. It is, therefore, subject to pleasure and pain; in the day-to-day life it has to make a choice between the right and the wrong exercising its freedom, accept responsibility for the choice it makes, and the resultant action it performs. In short, the individuated self finds itself in the existential predicament. In the context of the existential constraints of the individuated self in the day-to-day life, the *Upanishad* draws a distinction between the Self-in-itself and the Self-in-the body. The former is absolutely free while the latter is totally bound; the former is untouched by pleasure and pain while the latter is affected by both of them. The suffering of the latter is because of the mind-sense-body adjunct with which it identifies itself forgetting its essential nature. When Yama speaks of two selves,[16] the one enjoying the fruits of life and the other remaining as a passive spectator of the happenings of life, he is referring to the conditioned self, i.e. the Self-in-the-body, and the unconditioned Self, i.e. the Self-in-itself The two selves are popularly known *asjivatman* and *paramatman*.

Yama introduces the parable of the chariot for the easy comprehension of the nature of the Self as different from the mind, the senses, and body. The following is the description of the Self riding the chariot which is the psychophysical vehicle:

Know the Self as the lord of the chariot and the body as, verily the chariot; know the intellect as the charioteer and the mind as, verily, the reins. The senses, they say, are the horses; the objects of the senses are the roads; the Self associated with the body, the senses, and the mind, the wise declare, is the enjoyer.[17]

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[16] *Ibid.*, 1.3.1.
[17] *Ibid.*, 1.3.3.

The moral which the parable seeks to convey is obvious. The choice is between the inward life and the outward life. One whose mind is drawn towards external things by the uncontrolled and ever-outward-going senses is always caught up in the existential predicament. On the contrary, one who keeps the mind and the senses under control will go inward towards the Self, realize it, and become free. For such a person there is no more bondage. He becomes liberated-in-life (*jivanmukta*). Concluding the parable of the chariot, the *Upanishad* says:

> The person who has understanding, who has control over his mind, and is ever pure, reaches the goal from which he is not born again.[18]

The *Upanishad* suggests a method of inquiry, which may be characterized as regressive, for reaching the Self we have to proceed from the gross to the subtle, from the outward to the inward, until we reach the Self or the Purusha than which there is nothing higher or subtler. One has to give up stage by stage the things which are not-Self – the senses and their objects, the intellect and the mind till one reaches the Self. This method of transcendence from the gross to the subtle, from the subtle to the subtler and then to the subtlest is the way of mystical contemplation. The Self is the limit of transcendence. The Upanishad presents the imagery of an unusual peepul tree (*asvattha*) whose roots are above and branches below. The description of the tree is as follows:

> This is the beginningless peepul tree that has its roots above and branches below. That (which is its root) is pure; that is Brahman; that is called immortal. In it all the worlds rest and no one transcends that. This, verily, is that.[19]

The tree with its roots and branches represents Brahman or the Self in its manifested form. The concept of the tree suggests that the things of the world, like a tree, are subject to change, that they come into existence, develop, decline, and finally disappear. It is the root system that supports a tree, and it remains concealed as it is covered by the earth. Like the roots, it is Brahman that supports the world-tree. Though Brahman, the cause of the world, cannot be seen in the way in which an empirical object is seen, still we conclude that it exists as the source and support of the world. Brahman, the root of the tree of the world, is pure (*sukram*) as it remains the same all the time untouched by anything good

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[18] *Ibid*., 1.3.8.
[19] *Ibid*., 2.3.1.

and bad. It is immortal (*amrtam*). How the timeless and the temporal are related is a mystery.

The *Upanishad*, through Yama who is its spokesman, assures us that a person who successfully controls the mind and the senses and is free from desires becomes immortal here itself. In the words of the *Upanishad*:

> When all desires clinging to one's heart fall off, then a mortal becomes immortal (and he) attains Brahman here. When all the knots of the heart are destroyed, even while a man is alive, then a mortal becomes immortal. This much alone is the instruction (of all the *Upanishads*).[20]

We have all kinds of desires. It is not enough to be free from desires by controlling the mind and the senses. One should also remove the "knots" of the mind (*hrdayasya granthayah*). Sankara in his commentary on the above text says that a "knot" is a wrong idea that we entertain and act on and that it binds a person fast like knots. On account of ignorance we have the wrong ideas such as "I am a man," "This wealth is mine," "I am happy," and so on. In all these cases, as pointed out earlier, there is a wrong identification of the Self with the mind, the senses, and the body resulting in the superimposition (*adhyasa*) of the qualities of the not-Self on the Self "When the bondages of ignorance," explains Sankara, are destroyed by the rise of the opposite knowledge of the identity of the Self and Brahman in the form, "I am Brahman indeed, not the transmigrating self," then the desires originating from the knots get totally eradicated."[21]

INQUIRY INTO MAN AND THE WORLD

Philosophy is a thinking consideration of things. There is a widely and strongly prevalent view that the Vedanta system which invokes scriptural authority in support of its position is not philosophy at all as it has dispensed with reason in the formulation and justification of ideas. This is anything but truth. Such a view betrays a lack of understanding of the spirit of Indian philosophy in general and of Vedanta philosophy in particular. Even though Vedanta accepts scripture as the source of knowledge of Brahman or the Self, which is trans-empirical, it accepts perception and other sources of knowledge in matters empirical. Also, it makes use of reason in the analysis, explanation, and justification of the scriptural position. It is neither irrational in accepting scriptural authority

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[20] *Ibid.*, 2.3. 14-15
[21] 2.4.5.

nor dogmatic in exposing the limitations of reason. Moreover, it maintains that there is no conflict between scripture which deals with the trans-empirical and other sources of knowledge, whose scope is restricted to things empirical. A text of the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* says that what is known through scripture should be investigated through reasoning (*manana*) and then should be repeatedly contemplated upon. What is accepted without proper inquiry, says Sankara, will not be conducive to the good. Consider the opening aphorism (*sutra*) of the Brahma-sutra which systematizes the various ideas of the *Upanishads* for the purpose of inquiry into them. The opening sutra says: "Now, therefore, the inquiry into Brahman." According to the traditional commentators like Sankara, this brief statement not only says that Brahman, the subject matter of the *Upanishads*, should be inquired into, but also points out when and why this subject matter should be taken up for inquiry.

The *Taittirya Upanishad* narrates the story of the universe from its origin till the emergence of the human being and then gives an in-depth analysis of the constitution of the human being in order to show through the parallelism between the individual and the cosmic being that Brahman is the source and support of everything. This narrative is followed by the celebrated dialogue between Bhrgu and his father, Varuna, which reiterates the epic of the universe narrated earlier. The dialogue conveys, among other things, that philosophy by its very nature is inquiry and that the truth about the ultimate reality can be known only through inquiry. There is a thematic unity among the three sections of the *Upanishad*. The first section explains scriptural rites and meditations which are remote aids to the attainment of Brahman-knowledge. While the performance of scriptural rites in a spirit of dedication to the Lord purifies the mind, the practice of meditation leads to the concentration of the mind. Only a person whose mind is purified and who is capable of concentration is eligible for the study of the *Upanishads*. The second section of the *Upanishad* explains the nature of Brahman to the eligible person. What is known through the study (*sravana*) must be inquired into through reasoning (*rnanana*). The third section of the *Upanishad* teaches the method of inquiry into Brahman. Eligibility for study, then actual study, and thereafter inquiry – this is the sequence, chronological as well as logical, as we move from the first through the third section of the *Upanishad*. Philosophy is a serious study. It requires the right frame of mind which is the *sine qua non* both for understanding and inquiry. It is against this background that one has to hear the narrative and follow the dialogue.[22]

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[22] *Taittiriya Upanishad*, 2.1.1.

The second section of the *Upanishad* makes a dramatic beginning. Without saying anything about the person who knows and the object to be known, it announces all on a sudden the fruit that accrues to the knower of Brahman. Its declaration is in a lapidary style. "The knower of Brahman," it declares, "attains the Highest." After defining Brahman as real, knowledge, and infinite, it proceeds to show that from Brahman, which is the same as the Self, ether and other elements came into existence, and finally the human being emerged. The Self in the human being is covered by five sheaths, – the sheath of matter, the sheath of vitality, the sheath of mind, the sheath of intellect, and the sheath of bliss, which are arranged in a telescopic manner one inside another, the outer sheath deriving its being from the inner. The sheaths constitute the gross, the subtle, and the causal bodies of the individual and the cosmic being. What is true of the human being is true of the cosmic being. That which is real in the human being and that which is real in the world – they are the same, though they are spoken of respectively as the Self and Brahman for the purpose of conceptual analysis.

The dialogue between Bhrgu and Varuna, which occurs in the third section, highlights the need for, and the method of, metaphysical inquiry. The highest metaphysical truth cannot be revealed at once even to the earnest seeker of truth. Instruction has to proceed from what is obvious and easily comprehensible to what is subtle and difficult to understand. In this dialogue the father himself plays the role of a teacher. Bhrgu requested his father, Varuna, to teach him Brahman. Varuna did not describe Brahman as such-and-such. After stating that matter, life, etc. are the gateways to the knowledge of Brahman, Varuna, without telling what Brahman is, gave him a definition of Brahman. He said:

> That, verily, from which these beings are born, that by which they live, that into which they finally enter – that, seek to know. That is Brahman.[23]

It was difficult for Bhrgu to make out the nature of the thing defined from this definition. He felt that the instruction given by his father was incomplete inasmuch as he had to find out Brahman by applying the definition. So with a view to inquire into this definition he performed *tapas*, which in this context means reflection on the subject matter. Reflection is reasoning. The kind of reasoning which Bhrgu employed is called the logic of *anvaya-vyatireka*, i.e. the method of agreement and difference. Though inquiry helped him to realize the truth, he had to go a long way m his metaphysical exploration correcting himself from stage to stage as his findings were partial and incomplete.

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[23] *Ibid.*, 3.1.1.

After performing *tapas*, matter (*annam*), he thought, is Brahman, for everything seems to originate from matter, is sustained by it, and finally becomes matter. But he was not sure about his conclusion. So he approached his father with the request, "Venerable Sir, teach me Brahman." Once again his father asked him to do further inquiry for knowing Brahman. Next he thought that life (*prana*) is Brahman and wanted to know from his father whether he was right in his finding. The father again advised him to pursue his inquiry. As a result of further investigation under the guidance of his father, Bhrgu thought that mind (*manas*), and then intelligence (*vijnana*) answered the definition of Brahman. Finally, he realized that bliss (*ananda*) is Brahman.[24] So the method of inquiry that Bhrgu pursued led him from matter to life, from life to mind, from mind to intelligence, and from intelligence to bliss; and his inquiry came to an end when he realized that bliss is Brahman. The Self is bliss; and so Brahman and the Self are identical.

A few comments are relevant at this stage. First, revelation and reason supplement each other. What scripture reveals is made intelligible by means of reasoning; and reasoning is guided by scripture. Second, inquiry (*vicara*) which is indispensable for knowing the truth comes to an end only when the goal is reached. Third, one will be able to follow the logic of the dialogue between Varuna and Bhrgu only when it is closely examined against the background of the narrative contained in the previous section of the *Upanishad*. Fourth, matter, life, mind, and intelligence through which Bhrgu moves in his metaphysical exploration are aspects of reality. Many of us are tempted to say on *prima facie* consideration that matter is the reality. There are philosophers who hold the view that everything can be explained in terms of matter and motion. Further inquiry reveals that life which shows a higher organizational complexity cannot be explained in terms of matter. So is the case with mind and intelligence, each of which functions as an organizing principle at higher levels. To abstract any of these principles out of the whole and consider it by itself will amount to having a fragmented view of the reality. Matter, life, mind, and intelligence – all these are the manifestations of the reality; they constitute a hierarchy with matter which is gross at the bottom and the Spirit or the Self which is subtle at the top.

The analysis of the grades of existence, or levels of reality, from matter to Spirit is from the metaphysical perspective. We can also view them from the axiological side. The life of human beings is at different levels – material, vital, mental, intellectual, and spiritual, because they are endowed with matter, life, mind, intellect, and Spirit; and the different values they pursue constitute a hierarchy. Bodily values are the

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[24] *Ibid*., 3.2-6.

lowest while spiritual value is the highest. The higher value does not annul the lower value, but fulfils it. The *Upanishad* says that the wise one, who has realized Brahman and who remains as Brahman, attains all desires. The liberated person is in harmony with himself and also harmony with all. Commenting on the life of a *jivan-mukta* (the liberated-in-life), Radhakrishnan observes:

> The enlightened one attains unity with the All. He expresses wonder that the individual with all limitations has been able to shake them off and become one with the All. To get at the Real, we must get behind the forms of matter, the forms of life, the forms of mind, the forms of intellect. By removing the sheaths, by shaking off the bodies, we realise the Highest. This is the meaning of *vastrapaharana*. "Across my threshold naked all must pass."[25]

"EVERYTHING IS DEAR FOR THE SAKE OF THE SELF"

The *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad* is the greatest of the *Upanishads* – greatest not only because of its voluminous size, but also because of its declarations and dialectics, *upadesa* and *upapatti*. This *Upanishad* presents us with Yajnavalkya, the greatest champion of non-dualism, who strode the philosophical stage like a Colossus. A scholar and debater without par, he had as his patron and pupil, King Janaka. He had two wives, Maitreyi and Kiatyayani by name. Maitreyi was a meet companion of this great master of metaphysics. She was responsible for eliciting from her husband some rare passages elucidating the nature of the Self. Yajnavalkya' s dialogue with Maitreyi, which occurs m the second chapter of the *Brhadaranyaka Upanishad*, highlights three points – the nature of the Self as the ultimate value, the distinction between absolute and relative standpoints called respectively *paramarthika* and *vyavaharika*, and the importance of the spirit of renunciation in the scheme of life for realizing the Self.

Announcing his decision to become a sannyasin, Yajnavalkya told his wife, Maitreyi that he would leave his entire property to be shared by her with Katyayam, his second wife. Maitreyi was a perceptive thinker with philosophical orientation, and so she did not quietly receive Yajnavalkya's announcement.

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[25] Radhakrishnan, *The Principal Upanishads* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953), p. 561.

She wanted to know from Yajnavalkya: "Venerable Sir, if this whole earth filled with wealth were mine, could I become immortal through that?"[26]

"No," replied Yajnavalkya, "your life will be like that of the rich. There is no hope of immortality through wealth."

Then Maareyi said: "What should I do with that wealth by which I cannot become immortal? Please tell me, Venerable Sir, the means to immortality."

Being pleased with this question Yajnavalkya said: "O, you, who are dear to me, now speak dear words. Come, sit down, I will explain to you the means to immortality. Even as I explain, carefully reflect on what I say."

Following this dialogue he started his explanation of the nature of the absolute Self. "Nothing is dear for its own sake, he declared, but everything is dear for the sake of the Self."[27] Referring to the love we have for someone as husband, wife, son, and so on, he says that the husband is dear to the wife not for the sake of the husband, but for the sake of the Self. Similarly the wife, or the son, is dear not for the sake of the wife or the son, but for the sake of the Self. One has to extend the logic involved here to other things. His conclusion is that everything is dear, cared for, and loved not for its sake, but for the sake of the Self. It means that the Self which is bliss by its very nature is primary, that other things, whatever they may be, are secondary in relation to the Self, and that the knowledge of the Self is the means to immortality. After explaining the nature of the Self, Yajnavalkya exhorts Maitreyi:

> The Self, my dear Maitreyi, should be realized – should be heard of, reflected on, and meditated upon. By the realization of the Self, my dear, through hearing, reflection, and meditation, all this is known.[28]

It will be helpful to review and reflect on the dialogue between Yajnavalkya and Maitreyi at this stage. First, it is necessary to mention in this connection that Maitreyi was not the only woman with whom Yajnavalkya discussed the highest philosophical truth. There was another woman philosopher by name Gargi, bold and stubborn, who dialogued with Yajnavalkya in the court hall in which there were many scholars. This shows that women during the Vedic period were as learned as men and that they participated in the philosophical debates and deliberations on a footing of equality with men. As Radhakrishnan

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[26] *BU*, 2.4.2.
[27] *Ibid.*, 2.4.5.
[28] *Ibid.*

remarks, the subjection of women as well as their exclusion from Vedic studies, which was a later development, was not prevalent during the Upanishadic period. Second, when Yajnavalkya says that through wealth one cannot attain immortality, he makes an indirect comment on the utility of scriptural rites as means to liberation. Sankara in his commentary points out that for the performance of rites wealth is needed and that, if wealth is not the means to liberation, rites too for whose performance wealth is needed cannot be the means for attaining liberation. Third, the Self which Yajnavalkya is speaking about in his discourse is not the individuated self-identified through the mind-sense-body complex as David or Devadatta. On the contrary, it is the universal Self, the sole reality identical with Brahman, which is the source, support, and end of the entire manifested world. Fourth, interest in, and the pursuit of, the Self should not be construed as selfishness, because the Self which one pursues is the Self of all. Fifth, it is a matter of common experience that in our daily life we not only make all kinds of distinctions, but also evaluate the worth of things in terms of their relation to oneself. Our children are nearer to us than our property. One's spouse is nearer to one than one's children. One's body is nearer to one than one's spouse. The priority of enumeration in respect of these objects, Sankara observes, is in the order of their closeness to us as sources of joy. The hierarchy among these objects is determined by the degree of attachment to them. The closeness or distance of an object depends upon the intensity of our attachment to it. The more the attachment to an object, the closer it is; the less the attachment, the greater is its distance to us. It may be noted that the problem of nearness or distance of an object is mental and not physical. Sixth, though we consider wealth, children, and spouse as sources of joy, the real source of joy is the Self, because the Self by its very nature is bliss; and all worldly objects, kith and kin, husband and wife, are only manifesters of happiness derived from the Self. The empirical evidence for this is the state of sleep (*susupti*) in which one experiences happiness in the absence of any of these external things – one's spouse, children, wealth, and so on. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* discusses this point at great length in its celebrated calculus of pleasure.[29] Seventh, Yajnavalkya's teaching is not intended to show that the things of the world have no value. All of them are valuable to the extent that they help the individual to realize the Self. No object in itself is valuable, but every object is valuable in relation to the Self. Eighth, the inward journey to the Self will be possible only if there is progressive renunciation of the things of the world for the sake of the Self. And finally, the spiritual discipline is so structured that its pursuit and practice presuppose the threefold division of tuner. There are three

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[29] 2.8.1-4.

Stages in spiritual discipline. Hearing (*sravana*) of scripture is followed by reflection (*manana*) which, again, is followed by contemplation (*ntdidhysana*).

After explaining the nature of the Self, Yajnavalkya gives illustrations to show how the Self is everything in the manifested world. The various objects in the world are differentiations of the one underlying reality which is not usually noticed; however, they do not exist apart from the underlying reality just as the particular notes of a drum, which are but differentiations of the one sound of the drum, are not heard apart form the whole sound of the drum. Just as all objects originate from the Self, even so all of them merge in the Self. As the ocean is the one goal of all waters, even so, argues Yajnavalkya, the one primal reality is the goal of all objects. When the river merges in the ocean, it loses its identity, i.e. its name and form; in the same way when all the objects of the world go back to the source from which they came, they lose their identity, i.e. their name and form. In order to drive home his point to Maitreyi, Yajnavalkya gives another example:

> As a lump of salt thrown in water becomes dissolved in water and there would not be any of it to seize forth as it were, but wherever one may take it is salty indeed, so, verily, this great being, infinite, limitless, consists of nothing but knowledge. The Self comes out as a separate entity from these elements, and its separateness is destroyed with them. After attaining this oneness, it has no more [particular] knowledge for him. This is what I say, my dear.[30]

A brief explanation is necessary in order to correctly understand what Yajnavalkya means when he says that one who has become identical with the Self, i.e., one who has realized the Self, has no more particular knowledge or consciousness. We carry on our daily life thinking that I am a Brahmin or Kshatriya, that I am a celibate student or a householder, that I am stout, or blind, or happy, and so on, on the basis of what Sankara calls *adhyasa*, which is due to spiritual ignorance. We transact all kinds of business in our daily life on the basis of the different kinds of cognitions we have. Cognition, desire, and action constitute a causal nexus. We cognize something; we like it or dislike it; and then according to our mental frame we engage ourselves in appropriate action. Every cognition that we have, every mental episode that takes place in us, is a particular cognition (*visesa-jnana*). Every cognition has a *cognitum*. On the basis of the plurality of *cognita* we say that there is a

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[30] *BU*, 2.4.12.

plurality of objects. It means that our daily life is based on distinctions such as cognizer, cognition, and cognized. Yajnavalkya says that when the Self, the plenary reality, is realized through knowledge, there is no more plurality, the reason being that the foundational ignorance (*avidya*) which is the cause of plurality disappears at the dawn of knowledge just as darkness disappears at the onset of light. In other words, Yajnavalkya points out that there is a basic distinction between the state of ignorance and the state of knowledge, a distinction of far-reaching importance to Advaita. The following is his explanation to Maitreyi:

> Because when there is duality, as it were, then one smells something, one sees something, one thinks something, one speaks something, one knows something. [But] when to the knower of Brahman everything has become the Self, then what should one smell and through what, what should one hear and through what,…what should one know and through what? Through what should one know that owing to which all this is known – through what, O Maitreyi, should one know the Knower.[31]

The man of wisdom transcends the world of plurality. The distinction between the state of ignorance and the state of wisdom is intended for the purpose of highlighting the spiritual ascent from the empirical to the transempirical.

THE LIGHT OF LIGHTS

The two basic epistemological questions which we raise are: "How do we know?" and "What do we know?" While the first question is about the sources of knowledge, the second one is about the objects of knowledge. The dialogue between Janaka and Yajnavalkya helps us to identify the basic principle of all knowing, what Husserl called the principle of principles. King Janaka himself sought instruction from Yajnavalkya on one occasion in fulfilment of a boon granted to him by the latter. The focus of the dialogue was on the self-luminosity of the Self, the light of lights.

The king started the discussion by asking the question, "What serves as the light for a man?"[32] Yajnavalkya replied, "It is the light of the sun, for with the help of the sun he moves about and transacts his business."

"When the sun has set, what provides the light?"

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[31] *Ibid.*, 2.4.14.
[32] *Ibid.*, 4.3.1-6.

"The moon," Yajnavalkya said, "is his light, for he can do his work with the help of the light of the moon."

"In the absence of the sun and the moon, what provides the light?"

"The fire," replied Yajnavalkya.

"When there is no fire, what serves as the light for a man?"

"Speech, indeed, is his light."

"When the sun and the moon are set, when the fire has gone out and speech has stopped, what provides the light for a man?" asked King Janaka.

"The Self, indeed, is his light, for with the help of the Self one carries on with his work."

Before we proceed further with the dialogue, it is necessary to bring out the epistemological significance of Yajnavalkya's final reply. Sun no doubt is the primary source of light for us; other luminaries like the moon shine and give us light through the light borrowed from the sun. Moon, fire, and speech do help us as light in some situations. When Yajnavalkya says that the Self is the light through which we know things and get involved in actions, he is highlighting the nature of the Self as pure consciousness which is the presupposition of all kinds of knowing. Usually we say that we know things through the sense organs and the mind. The sense organs by themselves cannot reveal anything unless they are helped by the mind. The mind also by itself cannot reveal anything unless it is helped by the light of the Self. No material object can reveal anything. Since the senses and the mind are material, they cannot reveal anything. The mechanism of the process of knowing is as follows: the Self which is consciousness is reflected in the mind; the mind which carries the reflection of the Self is able to inspire the senses through the borrowed illumination from the Self; thus we are able to cognize things through the senses and the mind. It does not follow from this that the Self always requires the help of the mind and the senses for the purpose of revealing things. The Self is eternal seeing. It can reveal things through the medium of the mind, which is called the internal organ; it can also reveal things directly without any medium. Drawing a distinction between the seeing of the Self and the seeing of the Self through the mind, Sankara observes:

> Seeing is of two kinds, ordinary and real. Ordinary seeing is a function of the mind as connected with the visual sense; it is an act, and as such it has a beginning and end. But the seeing that belongs to the Self is like the heat and light of fire; being the very essence of the witness (Self), it has neither beginning nor end....The ordinary seeing, however, is related to objects seen through the eye, and of course has a beginning....The eternal seeing of the Self is metaphori-

cally spoken of as the witness, and although eternally seeing, is spoken of as sometimes seeing, and sometimes not seeing.[33]

So the Self which is of the nature of consciousness is the presupposition of all knowledge; it is the light of lights. At this stage Janaka wants Yajnavalkya to clarify a doubt. So he asks Yajnavalkya, "Which is the Self?"

"This infinite entity that is identified with the intellect and is in the midst of organs, the light within the intellect, is the Self...," so answered Yajnavalkya.[34]

Yajnavalkya tells Janaka that the Self which is identified with the intellect or the mind and which exists in the midst of the organs should be distinguished from them. Though in our day-to-day life the Self gets involved in waking and dream experience, it remains unaffected by the happenings therein. It moves as it were from waking and dream to deep sleep state, in which it remains quiet, and once again returns to waking and dream states. Yajnavalkya explains this idea with two examples.

As a great fish swims alternately to both the banks (of a river), eastern and Western, so does this infinite being move to both these states, dream and waking.

As a hawk or a falcon flying in the sky becomes tired, and stretching its wings, is bound for its nest, so does this infinite being run for this state, where falling asleep he craves no desires and sees no dreams.[35]

The point to be noted here is that the objects experienced in waking and dream states do not alter the nature of the Self, which is unattached. But in sleep the Self does not experience anything; it has neither desires nor dreams; in this state a father becomes a non-father, a mother, a non-mother, the worlds, non-worlds, the gods, non-gods, and the Vedas, non-Vedas.[36] All distinctions vanish, but consciousness remains; for consciousness which is the Self can never be lost; it is indestructible. There is nothing which it can see in that state, for there is no other than it.

Yajnavalkya concludes his elucidation of the nature of the Self by pointing out that a person who does not attain the saving knowledge will be reborn. One's karma will determine one's future birth. "The doer of

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[33] *Ibid.*, Sankara's commentary on 3.4.2.
[34] *Ibid.*, 4.3.7.
[35] *Ibid.*, 4.3. 18-19.
[36] *Ibid.*, 4.3.22.

good," declares Yajnavalkya, "becomes good, the doer of evil becomes evil. One becomes virtuous by virtuous action, bad by bad action."[37] While a man of desires cannot escape the cycle of birth and death, one who becomes free from desires becomes immortal, attains liberation, here itself. So in conclusion Yajnavalkya says:

> The man who does not desire, who is without desire, who is freed from desire, whose desire is satisfied, whose desire is the Self his breaths do not depart. Being but Brahman, he is merged in Brahman.[38]

FROM THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE ONE TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF ALL

The sixth chapter of the *Chandogya Upanishad* contains a good introduction to metaphysics. Instead of starting with the definition of metaphysics, the nature of Being and beings, and so on, which we usually find in a textbook on metaphysics, the *Upanishad* provides a family background of a concerned father and his conceited son engaged in a dialogue on metaphysical issues. The dialogue starts with the familiar examples which reveal metaphysical principles of great significance. It proceeds from what is ordinary to the extra-ordinary. Though the presentation is simple, the analysis of the issues is sophisticated. It covers the entire range of metaphysics with the view to bring about a transformation of a far-reaching character in the individual. Being an adept teacher, Uddalaka gradually prepares the ground for the surprising denouement, and with a dramatic swiftness makes the great declaration "That thou art" (*tat tvam asi*) at a time when neither Svetaketu, his son, nor the reader of this Upanishadic text is ready for it. He assures Svetaketu that there is something which is worth knowing by knowing which everything is known; and after giving a few examples by way of illustration he formulates the thesis that Being (*Sat*) of which the world is a manifestation is one only without a second (*ekam eva advitiyam*).

According to the story Uddalaka sent his twelve-year old son Svetaketu to school for studying the Vedas. Svetaketu returned home after twelve years of study, greatly conceited, thinking himself well read, and he was arrogant. Naturally Uddalaka was not happy with his son. He asked his son: "Do you know that through which the unheard of becomes heard, the unthought of becomes thought of, the unknown becomes known?"[39]

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[37] *Ibid*., 4.4.5.
[38] *Ibid*., 4.4.7.
[39] *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6.1.3-7.

"How, venerable Sir, can there be such teaching?" inquired Svetaketu.

"Just as, my dear, by one clod of clay all that is made of clay becomes known, the modification being only a name arising from speech, while clay alone is real..." answered Uddalaka.

"Verily those venerable teachers," said Svetaketu, "did not know this; for, had they known, they should have taught me. Venerable Sir, please teach me that."

Uddalaka said: "In the beginning, my dear, this (world) was Being alone, one only without a second..."[40]

Thereafter Uddalaka gave an account of the manifestation of the world from Being. First of all, fire came into existence from Being, from fire came water, and from water came earth. It is not necessary in this context to go into the details about the threefold development narrated by him, his explanation of sleep, hunger, and thirst, and finally of death. Uddalaka told Svetaketu that one who does not realize the Self has to die only to be reborn.[41]

Having prepared the ground for the final teaching Uddalaka tells Svetaketu: "That which is the subtle essence (the root of all), this whole world has for its Self. That is the true. That is the Self. That thou art, Svetaketu."[42]

While explaining the nature of sleep. Uddalaka said that, when a person is asleep, he is merged in the Self, i.e. he attains his own Self though he does not know it. Svetaketu requested his father to instruct him still further as he could not understand how a person in the state of sleep gets absorbed in the Self. Also, if the individual self gets absorbed in the supreme Self for a little while during sleep, how is it that the individual concerned does not know it? Uddalaka helps his son to understand the problem by means of examples. Just to quote one example: "Just as, my dear, the bees prepare honey by collecting the essences (juices) of different trees and reducing them into one essence. Having become one essence, they do not have such distinctive ideas as 'I am the essence of this tree, I am the essence of that tree,' even so, my dear, all these creatures, though they reach Being, do not know that they have reached Being. "The merger in Being during sleep is only temporary. When these creatures wake up, they become what they were earlier."

There is yet another difficulty faced by Svetaketu. He was wondering how from Being, which is pure existence devoid of name and form, the differentiated world could come into existence. This time

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[40] *Ibid.*, 6.2.1.
[41] *Ibid.*, 6.2-8.
[42] *Ibid.*, 6.8.7.

Uddalaka resorts to the example of the banyan (*nyagrodha*) tree in order to explain the point.

> He ordered Svetaketu, "Fetch a fruit from this banyan tree."
>
> "Here it is, Sir."
>
> "Break it."
>
> 'It is broken, venerable Sir."
>
> "What do you see in it?"
>
> "Sir, I see these extremely fine seeds."
>
> "Dear son, break one of them."
>
> "Sir, I have done it."
>
> "What do you see in it?"
>
> "Nothing whatsoever, Sir."

Then he told Svetaketu, "My dear, that subtle essence which you do not perceive inside the seed is the source and support of this great banyan tree. Believe me, my dear." Once again Uddalaka reiterated what he said earlier, namely that Being is the essence or the Self of the entire manifested world and that it is also the Self of Svetaketu. In other words, Being is the reality of all beings, living as well as non-living.

The thesis which Uddalaka formulates on the basis of the illustrative examples such as clay and the objects made of clay brings out not only the relation between Being and becoming, but also their ontological status. This world of becoming was Being alone in the beginning. It means that Being has assumed the form of becoming; but at the same time it remains "one only without a second." Though Uddalaka's thesis is apparently simple, it contains the problematic which has engaged the attention of philosophers from the beginning. Heraclitus and Parmenides were concerned with the problem of Being and becoming. In recent times Heidegger has examined this problem. The Upanishadic thinkers have discussed this problem at great length. A careful reading of the thesis formulated by Uddalaka in the light of the examples given by him will show that Being is real while becoming is an appearance. The expression "one only without a second" is intended to show that there is nothing else besides Being, similar or dissimilar to it, and that it is also free from internal differentiation. There are three kinds of difference – difference between two objects belonging to the same class as in the case of two mango trees, difference between two objects belonging to two different classes as in the case of a tree and a stone, and internal difference as seen in a tree consisting of various parts such as the root system, the trunk, the branches, and so on. These three kinds of difference are known as *cajatiya-hheda*, *vuatiya-hheda*, and *svagata-hheda*. The three words in the expression "ekam eva advitiyam" are intended to show that Being is free from all the three kinds of difference. If so, there cannot be the world of becoming. The fact is that we do experience the world of becoming, what is frequently referred to as the world of name

and form (*nama-rupa-prapanca*). What is experienced cannot be denied. At the same time the world of becoming cannot be real, because Being is the sole reality, one only without a second. The Upanishad tackles the problem of Being and becoming by holding that, while Being is real, becoming is an appearance. Being and becoming do not have the same ontological status because both are not real; and so there is no possibility of conflict between them. It is not a case of either Being or becoming, or of both Being and becoming; but it is a case of Being appearing as becoming. This will become evident if we consider the illustrative examples given by Uddalaka.

Take the case of clay and the objects made out of it. Uddalaka says that clay which is the material cause of pot, pan, and so on is real, whereas its modifications (*vikaras*) such as pot, which are effects, exist only in speech and are, therefore, not real. Every object of our experience has name and form; and what strikes us most when we see an object is its form and not its essence. Whole the former is perceptible, the latter is not with the result that we are forgetful of the essence or the reality of the object. In this respect we are no better than children. Being fascinated by the beautiful form of an elephant made of clay, a child gets absorbed in it without knowing its reality. To it the "elephant", the plaything having a form and a name, is real and not the clay out of which it is made. In the same way we get absorbed in the pluralistic universe without knowing the reality, which remains concealed by it due to our foundational ignorance. It is now easy for us to understand the promise or the assurance with which the dialogue between Uddalaka and Svetaketu begins. A person who knows clay can claim that she knows all the objects made out of clay, because all of them, whatever be their names and forms, are clay and nothing but clay. It is the clay that appears as pot, pan, elephant, and so on. Likewise, it is Being (Brahman! Atman) that appears as the world of becoming. Just as clay alone, which is the cause, is real, even so Being alone which is the final cause or ground of the world is real. It follows that to know Being is to know everything. That is why Uddalaka asks his son whether he has known that "thing" by knowing which he could say that he knows everything.

The analysis of the three states of experience, waking, dream, and deep sleep, finds an important place in the teachings of the Upanishads. It brings out the nature of the Self vis-à-vis the mind and the senses. In our normal waking state we experience objects through the functioning of the mind and the senses. Of course, the Self which is the revealing principle supports the work of the mind and the senses. As distinguished from the waking state, the dream state is a condition in which the senses do not function, but the mind is active getting the support of the Self. But in the state of deep sleep both the mind and the senses do not function; only the Self is present as the revealing principle even though

there is no object, external or internal, to be revealed by it. It is quiet and peaceful as it is not disturbed by the mind. *The Upanishads* make use of the dream experience for establishing the unreality of the objects of waking experience. Just as the objects perceived in dream are unreal, even so the objects perceived in the waking state are unreal. It is not necessary to go into the details about the similarity between dream and waking states. Again, *The Upanishads* make use of the state of deep sleep in order to show how we have access to the Self-in-itself in sleep and enjoy happiness without knowing it. In the state of sleep we remain as the Self losing all distinctions because of the absence of the functioning of the mind and the senses. It is to this experience that Uddalaka refers when he says that, even though we get absorbed in the Self in sleep, we do not know it. The moment we wake up, all kinds of distinctions such as colour, caste, gender, and so on arise because of the functioning of the mind and the senses. The moral that is suggested by this analysis of the triple states of experience is obvious. The happiness that we enjoy in sleep is only temporary; it has been possible only because of the absence of the functioning of the mind and the senses. One who controls the mind and the senses through moral discipline and transcends the empirical life with the help of knowledge attains eternal bliss, which is characterized as the state of liberation.

There are two kinds of texts in *The Upanishads*: they are called subsidiary texts (*avantara-vakyas*) and major texts (*rnaha-vakyas*). *The Upanishads* purport to teach the identity of the individual self and the supreme Self, what is called *pva-brahma-aikya*. The role of the subsidiary texts is to explain the nature of Brahman, the cause-effect relation between Brahman and the world, the condition and constitution of the *jiva*, and so on, and prepare the ground for the work of the major texts, which directly teach the identity of the *jiva* and Brahman. There are four major texts representing the four Vedas: "Consciousness is Brahman" (*prajnanam brahma*),[43] "This Self is Brahman" (*ayam atma brahma*),[44] "That thou art" (*tat tvam asi*),[45] and "I am Brahman" (*aham Brahma-srni*).[46] The *maha-vakya*, "That thou art," occurs nine times in the sixth chapter of the *Chandogya Upanishad*. The repetition of the text is for the purpose of emphasizing its importance. Uddalaka instructs his son how from Being (*Sat*), one only without a second, the world came into existence. After describing in detail the process of the objective manifestation of the Self of the universe, Uddalaka turns with a dramatic swiftness and says that the universal Self is identical with the Self of Svetaketu, his

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[43] *Aitareya Upanishad*, 5.
[44] *Mandukya Upanishad*, 2.
[45] *Chandogya Upanishad*, 6.8.7.
[46] *BU*, 1.4.10.

son. There is only one Self. The Self in the *jiva* is no other than the Self of the manifested world. Uddalaka expects his son to realize that he is not a finite being limited by the mind-sense-body outfit, forgetting the immortal and infinite Self in him. He should dis-cover the Self by transcending the mind-sense-body complex. To know the Self is to be the Self. Since one can attain the knowledge of the Self in this life itself, *The Upanishads* hold the view that liberation, which is the ultimate goal, can be attained in this life itself.

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CHAPTER II

UTOPIA AND SOCIAL PLANNING

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As a literary genre utopia is a narrative account of the institutions and the interactions of a good society. The author's values and concept of man and society are expressed in concrete terms as a set of norms, processes, interpersonal, intergroup and interclass relations associated with the roles and functions required by an organic or systemic communal whole. These are usually treated at the level of the polis or a larger national or imperial (trans-national) polity.

In Thomas More's archetypal *Utopia* the first book discusses the social issues confronting England and more broadly a Western Europe moving into modernity. T societies are characterized by increased agricultural and industrial efficiency, increasing ease of transport and communication, the machine technologies dating back to the watermills and wind mills of medieval Europe but now enhanced by the clever machines of such men as Francesco di Giorgio and Leonardo da Vinci. Industrial organization and regional specialization had appeared in the Low Countries and the Po Valley. International banking instruments, orderly bureaucratic government and regular systematic tax collection, effective constabularies and courts, an international academic language (Latin) and intellectual mobility, printing and the widespread diffusion of books, broadsides and prints and their collection in widely accessible libraries such as the Lorentian Library in Florence or the Federician in Urbino, artillery and firearms and a revolution in fortification and professional military forces (*soldati*) whose costs required ever larger political units: these were but some of the factors requiring a revolutionary re-thinking of social institutions when More's *Utopia* was released in 1516 and quickly became an international "best-seller" that has remained almost continuously in print until the present day. The broad issues it addresses and the mode of address remain perennially relevant.

The very title of this study, "Re-storying the Polis," reflects the fact that there are narrative approaches to alternative possibilities in the form of scenarios, descriptions of possible and probable alternative futures within limits, alternative models of normative and institutional structures in terms of explicit values commitments. The Communitarianism of Etzioni, the Libertarianism of Arendt and her followers, the platforms and manifestoes of international parties in the liberal parliamentary tradition reflect a wide range of values. The selective choice of

a few key variables reflect certain efforts to create models of the global community either as a whole in the Club of Rome-sponsored *Limits of Growth* (1972) or on a continental or regional base that characterizes its successor volume *Mankind at the Turning Point* (1974). These inter-active models amenable to computer simulation may emphasize such quantifiable (or seemingly quantifiable) factors as population, resources, agricultural base and production, pollution etc. Others, like Julian Simon, emphasize humans and their creativity as *The Ultimate Resource* (1981). A scenario in Kahn's and Wiener's *The Year 2000* (published in 1967) looks at the possible effects of scarcity driving the price of copper to ten dollars a pound. Thirty years later owing to the development of optical fiber to carry information, a human invention, the price of copper was 75 cents a pound – and inflation had raised general price levels four or five times during those 30 years.

Marx, in positing an ideological superstructure based upon the reality of underlying economic relations and modes of production, opened our thinking to a recognition of knowledge and value as, at least in part, a social construct. Karl Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia* (1929) not only laid the groundwork for the Sociology of Knowledge as an academic discipline but also suggested that the image of an alternative and better set of social institutions (utopia) is the motor of mass movements and revolutionary change. Utopia and utopian thinking merged into radical politics, but also into the meliorism of progressive politics, the limited goals of the "city beautiful" movement, Doxiadis' vision of planning in *Ekistics*, Buckminster Fuller's *Dymaxion* notions of a technological elegance achieving more with less. Such thinking eventually became part and parcel of every program in Public Administration, Technology Assessment, Environmental Studies and Future Studies with their emphasis on social planning.

In law as a profession, increasing emphasis is being placed on attorneys' narratives and on rhetorical factors as they structure a body of facts, hypotheses, precedents and legal principles to tell alternative stories favorable to each side of each case whether criminal or civil. "Spinning a yarn" is a metaphor for telling a story and that story's tendentious bias is now termed "spin" in politics and public relations. The modern genre "science-fiction" is replete with thought experiments, scenarios that attempt to explicate or investigate the possible and probable consequences of new machines, technologies, processes and intervenetions into human physiology and behavior, into the consequences of knowledge and technique for social institutions and communities at every level. Science and technology are not restricted to the hard sciences and engineering but may well deal with the investigation and manipulation of such ephemera as public opinion or the more profound

depths of culture and values, diet and hormonal balance, conditioning, social consciousness and the social unconscious.

Motivational Research, for example, tries to explicate the symbolic and archetypal elements entering into consumer decision-making and even the choice of political leadership. One such study made in Italy led to a major party consciously choosing a parliamentary leader whose rhetoric and policy posture were sufficiently ambiguous to permit the connivance of fundamentally opposed factions, each with a distinguished protagonist whose polarizing personality and policies rendered him unacceptable to the convergent majority.

Contemporary society at every level from the family to the global community, every nation and cultural area, is the subject of disorders and dysfunctional institutions. Given the globalization of social relations these problems tend to be inter-related and in their entirety encompass the whole earth and the whole of humanity. The arbitrary overvaluation of real estate in Japan has market repercussions in Zurich and Sao Paolo. A virus nurtured in the sexual underworld of New York and Port au Prince is now pandemic in Africa and infects millions of children. Automatic weapons from the People's Republic of China arm drug dealers in North America, and Islamic states look to North Korea for the long-range weaponry that might intimidate Israel. Urbanization and affluence threaten biodiversity in megapolitan strip cities while monoculture renders vulnerable ever more extensive tracts of tillable land. Energy consumption increases exponentially and climatic change seems imminent. Rising and not easily satisfied expectations incite the envy of much of the world population while a mad hedonism, affluence, moral nihilism and a sort of sophisticated incompetence seem to characterize the ruling elites of many of the "advanced' nations. The range and vastness of the world's contemporary malaises suggest the need for a critical look at social institutions and structures at every level of community and across the whole range of functional organization. How can we structure or re-structure the community, polity, economy and culture to make them more people-friendly, to serve better the human nature and values, the common welfare of the species to which they pertain?

The U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Science and Technology published a discussion of the Scope of Environmental Management (Appendix 1). In effect this morphology of the natural and social environment suggest the inter-relatedness of issues and institutions. At every level of the community these form a complex web and re-storying civil society implies separating out these strands, analyzing significant interactions, identifying dysfunctionalities, injustices and inequities and alternative structures and institutional relations that might rectify or ameliorate existing inequities and disequilibria. The potential impact of the

suggested alternatives on the overall system must be subject to comprehensive analysis, perhaps expressed in narrative form.

Anthony Wiener and I discussed this problem and approach at a conference in Lynchburg, Virginia – looking toward the analysis of social dysfunctionalities and suggested institutional alternatives in the literature and especially in the science-fiction of this century when globalization has brought about a concatenation of inter-related problems based on exponential growth, war and revolution, technologi-cal change and mass communication, concentrated state and economic power, and an unparalleled capacity for human behavior-control at both the individual and aggregate social level. The volume of the published material to be reviewed and appraised raised serious issues of research organization and analyst reliability; nothing came of our discussion.

On the other hand the democratic process, both electoral and legislative, coupled with the information exchanges involving interest groups, the media and "opinion leaders" provides a continuing exposition of the foci of public concern, issues, values, behaviors, social diagnostics and programmatic proposals. These are sifted through the political process and clearly failed institutions, analyses and policies are relegated to the trashbins of history. In some cases the end is rapid and violent, the product of war and invasion as in the case of Nazism and Fascism. In other cases the institutional system implodes by its very inadequacy as in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union between 1989 and 1991, or by violent revolution as in France (1789) or Imperial Russia (1917).

The historical process itself can thus be viewed as a macro-experiment or experience in the probing of alternative large scale adjustive and adaptive social responses to the challenges of complexity in an open-ended developmental situation characterized by the interactions of billions of free agents, human persons endowed with intelligence and will. Contemporary history becomes a "storying" of the emergent world. "Transparency" and "participation" become the keys to self-correcting social processes and institutional decision-making that is both responsive and responsible.

Such a vision gives great weight and significance to the historical process as such and may suggest guidelines to both theory and praxis as the human future emerges. The synergic outcome, itself is ever-emerging, of the intersection of human thought, will and action as related to the social and physical environment, natural and man-made. Among the core values to be safeguarded are:

1. Integrity of the human genome and its diversity.
2. Biodiversity, preservation of plant and animal species and the full range of variants in each species.

3. Preservation of the physical environment, geosphere, hydrosphere, atmosphere and the integrity of the stratosphere and near space.

4. Making the built-environment people friendly.

5. Accepting the risk of natural or man-induced catastrophe and institutionalizing the capacity to "degrade" gracefully. In the event of a breakdown of more complex social organizations and interactive processes through natural catastrophe, war, depression, revolution, market-collapse or other systemic failures, smaller and less complex groupings stand ready to provide the necessities of human and social life albeit at a reduced level of productivity and well-being.

6. Relegating social decision-making to the lowest competent level. Avoid unitary, comprehensive, enforceable central decision-making.

7. Institutionalize the capacity for effective community defense of its existence and core values at every level.

8. Institutionalize effective mechanisms for conflict resolutions at every level of social and community organization.

9. Institutionalize effective mechanisms of social defense in terms of basic human and civil rights culminating in individual or group ostracism, isolation and disarmament.

These suggested guidelines for a global constitutional order (formal or informal) resemble in some ways the thinking underlying the Constitution of the United States as originally conceived and approved at the founding, with its emphasis on checks and balances and a division of powers. It is a plea for a pluralistic world order in which no power could become so great, so untrammeled, so omnipresent and Omnicompetent as to control and instrumentalize all men living. In some sense it implies a pessimistic assessment of human nature and man's capacity for evil, for destructive and disordering behavior, for a level of moral nihilism bringing about chaos. It is equally an affirmation that the universe is not anthropocentric, operating inexorably to optimize human happiness and maximize human survival. Hurricanes and earthquakes may produce tragic consequences. Drought, pestilence, climatic change, pressures on the resource base, all present challenges requiring effective adaptive response through the prudent allocation of social resources.

Widespread ignorance, poverty and disease in our contemporary world are the effects of maladaptive responses, administrative failures, maladroit policies based on inadequate or incorrect models of natural or social reality. In brief, social evils do not necessarily imply individual human moral culpability, conscious and willful choice of evil. In perfectly good faith good men may choose bad counselors, bad policies, bad alternatives; the last Tsar, Nicholas II, is deemed by many a Christian saint.

Prior to this century epidemic diseases were thought an "act of God" and no moral responsibility could be assigned; now most such outbreaks of traditional epidemic diseases like the plague or cholera are avoidable and their reaching epidemic proportions demonstrates morally culpable maladministration and misfeasance. Once again, even in this matter, when the etiology of the disease was unknown the isolation of a subject microsocial system (ship, household, village or town) through quarantine anticipated the relevance of hierarchical systems theory to planning a graceful degradation of a large scale system by control of subsystem boundaries in emergencies while looking toward their eventual reintegration into the larger, functionally more complex and competent community of which each was a part.

Today that larger, more complex social system is the global community, of persons, political and ethnic communities, organizations and associations in itself and in relation to the natural, built and symbolic environments interacting and inter-related systemic entities in their own right, and equally amenable to being understood historically, as emergent in time both in themselves and in their interactions. This is the context in which biological, geological and social evolutionary theories contribute to our understanding.

In this context it is also clear why the contemporary social and political problematic is so complex and why every law, policy proposal, personal and institutional decision must be scrutinized.

Most human activities are institutionalized, routinized; learned behavior is performed by rote. Institutions are congealed products of social learning; they produce our food, build our houses and furnishings, teach our children, police our streets, fight our wars, make our laws, collect our taxes. Globally, they are the product of a social learning process that peacefully or violently replaces maladaptive institutions. That process is increasingly conscious and responsible. Social evils and maladaptive institutions must be identified. Alternatives must be probed, tested, accepted, rejected, modified. When this is done experimentally, experientially, the economic, environmental, social and personal costs can be enormous. The omnipotent nation-state has been tried and found wanting; colonial exploitation, the Napoleonic wars, the American Civil War, two World Wars finally brought on the emerging global economic order, NATO and the European Union which are themselves, in turn, being tested. How much human waste and suffering has been occasioned by our massive social experiments in drug use and abuse, organized crime, pan-sexualism, probing the limits of expression and communication, denying individual and group difference in abilities, charismas, modes of thought and expression. Could this social, frictional loss have been at least partially averted or reduced?

Methodologically I suggest that individual and social decision-making directed at remediation of evils and inequities, or at adaptation to new realities, or a meliorative social change must be contextual, taking account of the whole range of possibility significant variables and impacts. Only then can it be fully conscious and responsible. Surely such decision-making will employ all of the scientific and mathematical tools available: modeling and simulation, impact analysis, measures of cost and effectiveness, optimization criteria, etc. It will also employ scenarios and story-telling as analysis probes the more subtle personal, psychological, cultural, ideological and religious implications. What will be the effect of this decision, this change, this allocation of resources on current and future levels of well-being (and how shall we define alternative "well-beings"?), on future generations, on friends and neighbors, on adversaries and enemies, on the inter-relations within the social-structure at every level from the small group to the global community? This can only be done by narration, storytelling and a qualitative analysis in which values are explicated, alternatives explored.

As the biological unity of humankind becomes ever clearer, it is equally clear that we are indeed siblings. Who is my friend? my enemy? my competitor? my adversary? Ultimately my adversary is not the person, my brother, but the disorder, the injustice, the incoherence, the evil, the denial or negation of the freedom to be fully human. For to be human is to know, to create, to love, to nurture, to help weave the wondrously complex historical tapestry of the earth and of humankind.

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CHAPTER III

THE CHALLENGE OF BUILDING CIVIL SOCIETY IN A HETEROGENEOUS SOCIETY: THE NEED FOR NARRATIVE RECONSTRUCTION

GERVASE TUSABE

Introduction

Following the demise of the communist system in Eastern Europe, and with the ascendancy to supremacy of economic 'rationalism' in most parts of the world, many people have developed a fear that the idea and act of creating a more compassionate and just society may come to disappear from both the political and economic agenda of most parts of the world. There is a danger that many people will develop an *asocial* attitude where the individual's rights will be exalted and the individual human person be treated as an isolated monad withdrawn into oneself.

To guard against such a danger, many scholars – philosophers and non-philosophers – conceive it as vital for people to develop not only political structures that can protect the individual person, but even more to develop civil society founded on a broader social sense of others characterized by both solidarity within, and subsidiary relations between, groups. But building such civil society may not be an easy task. It may require us to revisit our cultural situations and carry out some reconstruction there if we are to build a viable civil society. In doing this, it is perceived as fundamentally significant to look into the narratives and stories, which people in the particular cultures did develop but which narratives have conditioned them to behave in ways they actually live. This is particularly significant in a heterogeneous society where the different peoples may appear to be having more or less opposing narratives about their view of social living. This situation may call for a social reconstructionist to discover and expose those civic virtues by which the various people can be able to harmoniously work together in the process of realizing their existential ends.

This paper makes a humble attempt at giving what may be conceived of as a normative ethical description of civil society. The description is followed by an explanation of how some narratives that are held in some cultural situations may in one way or another act as obstacles to the realization of a humane civic community.

Following this explanation, the paper attempts to show how some of these narratives need to be reconstructed but in such a way as to possess sufficient capacity to generate the sensibility of positive solidarity within, and the practice of subsidiarity between groups, which virtues the paper conceives to be vital in a humane civic community.

Meaning of Civil Society: A Normative Ethical Position

In this paper, civil society is conceived of as a relational group or groups of people just above the individual and yet below the State, and characterised by a high degree of moral commitment and social cohesion. Its citizens are diversified according to their fields of competency and personal concerns, and have an adequate consideration of others. This consideration is expressed through group activity with the affirmation of the condition of mutual dependency. Civil society, in this sense, was somewhat similar to the ancient Greek normative concept of "Polis". In ancient Greece, the "Polis" designated a not-too-large organized community. It was conceived of as a community of relatives – a kind of association of families working together for the sake of realizing the common good. As a people having common goals, each citizen in the "Polis" was morally obliged to be a reasonable citizen. Reasonability, in this sense, required each citizen to be willing to work out one's differences with others by means of humane discourse rather than brute force, by persuasion rather than by coercion. One significant fact worth noting, however, is that the "Polis" lacked a certain signifycant aspect – something which makes it fail to effectively tally with what is conceived in this paper as civil society. Besides condoning slavery, the "Polis" discriminated against women. Citizenship was exclusive to the male Greek adults. Women were condemned to public invisibility, were denied education, and excluded from the public realms of the market and intellectual life. With such a fact, thus, the "Polis" did harbour some serious elements of oppression against a considerable number of persons, which is unacceptable in a humane civilized society.

Civil society, as an ideal social reality which this paper contends we ought to emulate, stands more 'above' the "Polis". Civil society abhors negative discrimination of persons on grounds of their sex, ethnicity or race. Civil society is a social atmosphere which calls upon all its people's responsibly to exercise their freedoms motivated by a mutual recognition of liberties and a mutual protection of the ability to exercise them.

R.D. Putnam sums up the characteristics of what is conceived of here as a humane civil society:

- In civic engagement, citizenship in civil society is marked by active participation in public affairs. Devotion to public causes is the key sign of civic virtue. The citizens carry a self-interest that is alive to the interests of others.

- With regard to political equality, citizenship in civil society entails equal rights and obligations for all [men and women regardless of race, ethnicity, or religion]. Civil society is bound together by horizontal relations of reciprocity and cooperation, not by vertical relations of authority and dependency. Citizens interact as equals, not as governors and petitioners.

- On the issue of the principles of solidarity, trust, and tolerance, citizens in civil society on most accounts are helpful, respectful, and trustworthy towards one another, even when they differ on matters of substance. Civil society is not blandly conflict-free, for its citizens have strong views on public issues, but they are tolerant of their opponents.

- On the domain of associations and social structures of cooperation, the norms and values of civil society are embodied in, and reinforced by, distinctive social structures and practices. Citizens form [voluntary] associations which instill in their members habits of cooperation, solidarity and public spiritedness.[1]

Such is the type of civil society which is conceived, by this paper, as worthy of emulation. But although the above picture of civil society may be desirable, it does not necessarily follow that people will readily adopt it. In many of the societies in the world today, people have been nurtured in a variety of types of narratives which have conditioned their ways of living and interactions with other members of society. Some of these ways of social interactions have the capacity of acting as fetters to the realization of a viable civil society.

The Plurality of Narratives in Societies

If one considered just a city in any of the many parts of the contemporary world, one would not fail to notice that in that city "there are thousands of different groups: race, sex, and age groups; various nationality, political, economic, occupational, religious, and other

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[1] Robert D. Putnam, ''Democracy, Development and the Civic Community: Evidence from an Italian Experiment'' in *Culture and Development in Africa*, edited by Ismail Serageldin and June Taboroff, Proceedings of an International Conference held at the World Bank, Washington D.C, 2nd to 3rd April, 1992, pp. 47-48.

groups; cliques, factions, sects, and parties."[2] And if one took a step further, and now considered the confines of a State, the number of such groups and strata is still greater. This fact of diversity of social groups and strata should not be conceived of as an evil as such, but there is something that we need to note about these various groups.

One thing is that each of them has an inherent narrative that tempers its being and distinguishes it from the other groups. These narratives are very different, often with closed-criteria and sometimes contradictory. Each group narrative generates values and norms of conduct which are sometimes irreconcilable with those of other groups. What one group may affirm, another may detest. Such atmosphere stands very likely to act as a fetter to the efforts of building a humane civil society that is characterised by the virtues of positive solidarity and subsidiary relations. Indeed, as Scott Russell Sanders observes, in some of these narratives can be found vices which "instead of drawing us into a thoughtful community, [can] lure us into an unthinking herd, or, worst of all, into a crowd screaming for blood."[3] Examples of bloody conflicts partly brewed by such narratives are not scarce in the world. One can site the protracted conflict in Sudan between the Islamic north and Christian south; the conflict between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland; the bloody conflict that has persisted between the two Somali clans since the late 1980s; the current conflict between the ethnic Turks and Greeks in Cyprus; the former bloody conflicts in Apartheid-South Africa between the black and white Africans. Perhaps to illustrate better how lived closed-criteria narratives can cause serious havoc, let us take the story behind the bloody experience in Rwanda. As A.R. Byaruhanga tells us:

> In Rwanda, since the 1962 revolution, the Hutu wielded power while the Tutsi lived in diaspora. For a long time, the principle of the Hutu's administration was based on the belief of suspicion and hatred of the Tutsi.
>
> It was generally believed and sometimes expressed that if the Tutsi returned to Rwanda or, worse still, if they gained power, the Hutu would be harassed or even annihilated. Not only was this belief expressed, but it was also turned into a divisive ideology which percolated through the whole society in Rwanda and outside. Thus, [in the early 1990s]

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[2] P. Sorokin, *The Reconstruction of Humanity* (New York, Kraus Reprint Company, 1971), p. 130

[3] S.R. Sanders, "The Power of Stories", in *The Georgia Review*, Volume LI, Number 1, Spring 1997, p.117.

when the Tutsi started to negotiate their return to Rwanda, anti-Tutsi feelings were presented as truths among the Hutu who also organised resistance against the return of the Tutsi to Rwanda. As a terrible consequence, when the Hutu president was killed, genocide ensued.[4]

Besides stories such as the above which inspired Rwanda's recent genocide, there are also the "sacred" stories and myths of origin which some social reconstructionists feel can be invoked in the process of building civil society. But although these stories could hold some significant cultural values, these stories may also divide people especially those in multi-ethnic States between those who are 'inside the circle' and those 'outside', between 'us' and 'them'.

For instance, among the Baganda in Uganda there is a myth of origin. It narrates that Kintu is the first Muganda, and in some versions not only the first Muganda but the first human being. And since the story affirms the Baganda are descendants of Kintu, some Baganda have come to conceive themselves as 'the Bantu' – a position which literally means 'the people'. This myth was developed by the royalty with the right intention of binding the people of Buganda, to ensure a family-like unity which would inspire ethnic solidarity and cohesion. Similar myths exist among the other ethnic groups of Uganda, for instance, the Bagisu of eastern Uganda who believe they are descendants of the first human beings – the man and woman – known by the names, Mundu and Sera, respectively.

The problem with such myths is that if they are uncritically lived, they can blind a people to making a distinction between the history of the human species and the history of a particular society. This can generate a type of ethnocentrism which excludes the 'others' as unworthy of being associated with. R.G. Olson warns that we need to be cautious of such mythical traditions because: "social cohesion based on a commitment to such social traditions [often goes] hand in hand with an 'ingroup-outgroup' mentality, or a tendency to exalt one's own society or group while dismissing other societies or groups not merely as different but also as inferior."[5]

Of course, we need to appreciate that such myths of origin were developed a long time ago and have been maintained because they harness what are in themselves legitimate human aspirations, such as the

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[4] A.R. Byaruhanga, "Ethnicity, Culture and Social Reconstruction." A paper read in the seminar on the theme "Social Reconstruction in Africa," held at Makerere University, Kampala, 1996.

[5] R.G. Olson, *Ethics: A Short Introduction to Ethics* (New York: Random House, 1978).

desire for a sense of collective identity. But the problem with them is that, in the contemporary context, if they are uncritically lived they may create a situation in which the agents who are motivated by them come to satisfy their legitimate existential needs but on the condition of excluding anyone not a member of their group. With such stories, some people can easily develop a type of negative fellow-feeling whereby they carve out their own group to whom to express sympathy and interest at the expense of the 'others'. Such negative fellow-feeling has the power of leading to the emergence of overt fundamentalist ferocious sectarians who may cause harm to the 'others' and in consequence destabilising the general social order. Indeed, as P. Wheelwright puts it, "By becoming sharply restricted within certain [narrative] boundaries and very strong within these boundaries, negative fellow-feeling can produce factions and warring nations."[6]

We can also site some other new narratives that have actually been embraced by a considerable majority of people today in the world. These involve stories which emphasize that social life is either about profit maximisation or power seeking, or both. Such stories have become so pervasive and those who live by them have come to the point of 'thingifying' their fellow human beings now relegated to a level of mere means of production and targets of domination.

It can, thus, be observed that in today's heterogeneous society side by side with the ethical desire to build a humane society tempered with a broader social sense of others, there are many narratives which embody numerous beliefs deep-seated in the hearts of men and women that can generate further, inter-group misunderstanding and bloody conflicts. Such beliefs need to be kept in mind as some of the obstacles that may stand in the way of building civil society – a social environment that is seen as the one that is most convenient to promoting the virtues of justice, tolerance, and concern for the poor and the natural environment.

How then can we reconstruct the values and norms of conduct of those various groups in such a way that they become mutually harmonious and reconcilable. These need to remain in solidarity with one another as individuals within their groups, to practice subsidiary relations between themselves as groups, and to see that their individual members as moral agents are at least motivated by a self-interest that is alive to the interests of others?

We need to find a principle [or principles] that if appreciated can help to assert and re-assert, to affirm and re-affirm, and strengthen a sense of shared communality. These will not coercively move the

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[6] P. Wheelwright, *A Critical Introduction to Ethics* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1935).

various people into a crushing uniformity, but if appreciated can help a people acknowledge its oneness as human beings and yet give the capacity to appreciate their differences and unique positions as human persons. If lived this can endow an ability to develop a viable civil society in which voluntary associations of people, diversified according to their fields of competency and personal concerns, creatively exercise their responsible freedom in the context of the common welfare.

The Concept of a Common Humanity

I wish to suggest here the concept of a common humanity as one of those concepts which can provide the moral sensibility conducive to building and strengthening a viable civil society. This concept of humanity, as A.T. Dalfovo observes, leads to the human person as the essential constituent of humanity. It calls on us, in the context of civil society, to give the person all that belongs to his/her freedom.[7]

This concept of common humanity may appear to advocate some kind of uniformity that may stand against the creation of diverse voluntary associations that are vital to civil society. But this is not actually the case. The concept only provides a common ground that ought to constitute the inner cohesion of any human and humane society. It is not antagonistic to a people's formation of, let's say, voluntary business associations, philosophers' societies, fathers'/mothers' unions, or any other groups of the sort. It is a concept which simply does call us to recognise that any group or voluntary association is actually a derivative of humanity in the sense that one is human before being a member of any such group or voluntary association. Thus, we need to appreciate that reference to a common humanity does not supersede our individual, group, or associational characteristics, but rather provides their foundation. Indeed, a humane civil society has its reason for existence in the humanity of the citizens who create it and live in it.[8] In this case, then, responsible philosophy of civil society as one of its major tasks needs continually to make a critical appraisal of the concept of common humanity if we are "to avoid its being appropriated and manipulated by any one part of humanity."[9] This critical appraisal needs to be done through highlighting the basic characteristics of the human person, since he/she is the essential constituent of humanity.

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[7] A.T. Dalfovo, "Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Life: The Moral Continuum," *The Foundations of Social Life: Uganda Philosophical Studies, I* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1992), p. 89.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] *Ibid.* p. 89-90.

The Human Person

In founding a humane civil society, there is a need for us to conscientize or re-conscientize ourselves, or strengthen our consciences of the meaning of person since as we have observed the human person is the essential constituent of humanity. Milton Gonsalves tells us that every human being, by virtue of his capacity of reason and free will is necessarily a person.[10] And Martin Heidegger also reminds as that any human person is by his/her existential nature a co-existent being – 'a being-with-others-in-the-world'. This implies then that "I am because we are, and we are because I am."[11] In other words, the person is not wholly a person if completely isolated and alone. The 'other' contributes to my growth by what he/she shares with me, and vice versa. The 'other', therefore, ought to be recognized as a person like me, one who should neither be abused, 'thingified' as a means of production or seen as a target of domination, but as one who is endowed with an intrinsic worth. Such an awareness can develop in us an ethical appreciation of the 'other' as a subject of rights to whom I have duties. In appreciating his/her freedom as I appreciate my own, "far from subjecting the 'other' to myself, I help him/her to become him- or herself in the full exercise of his/her self-directing freedom."[12] As a person I ought to bear in mind that I myself should be open to others, and as rational and free responsive intellectually and emotionally to other persons regardless of their differences and positions of facticity.

The Significant Possibilities: Results for Appreciating and Living the Ethic of a Shared Humanity

A. If a people tried to live by the ethic of a shared humanity, it has the capacity of helping them, as S.R. Sanders would say, "to reach across the rifts not only of gender and age, but of race and creed, geography and class."[13] In other words, it generates a kind of social sensitivity which G. McLean calls bonds of solidarity "which spread out, beyond family and blood relations, to strangers we meet and hopefully even to people afar."[14] Indeed, this is a significant achievement, if ever

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[10] A. Fagothey and M. Gonsalves, *Right and Reason: Ethics in Theory and Practice*, 9th Edition (New Jersey: Mosby, 1989), p. 189.

[11] J. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann, 1996), p. 214.

[12] M. Gonsalves, *op. cit.* p.192.

[13] S.R. Sanders, *op. cit.* p.118.

[14] See G.F. McLean, "The Aesthetic Approach to Civil Society: The Epistemological Need for Storying the Polis," chap. 1.

realized, because again as G. McLean observes, "solidarity and coope-ration between persons and communities is the more necessary in our task of binding together increasingly different groups."[15]

B. The ethic of a shared humanity is significant because it does not simply abstract a universal that lays out a set of duties applicable across the whole. True, it points to a theory of the whole, some kind of overview of humanity, but not a unity that destroys plurality, not the sort of moral law that forgets history. By recognizing the basic constituent of humanity as being the human person, it acknowledges every people's history, cultural identification, personal experiences and choices. This ethic of a shared humanity, that comes to us through an understanding of the human person, is one that rejoices in plurality, beauty, harmony. It appreciates the person with a proper name who, let's say, is a Ugandan, a Chinese, a Muganda, a member of such and such a group or asso-ciation. The worldview it presents is an open one that is lived along global lines. It is a view which allows the subjective 'I' to live in a singular communion with social and historical/existential realities.

C. Because the ethic of a shared humanity is embedded with the belief that the human being is 'a being-with-others-in-the-world' and that the person is not 'wholly a person if completely isolated and alone', its appreciation can develop in members of society an awareness that all true and meaningful living is a transaction with others in a process of mutual enrichment through free associational groups. Hence, if moti-vated by such awareness people can be encouraged to organise them-selves in a diversity of voluntary associations through which they can realize their existential goals.

D. If public administrators appreciated the virtues deriving from the concept of humanity, they will be able to acknowledge the value that lies in decentralizing and relegating social decision-making to the lowest competent social group level. For it will now be clear to them that human persons as existential beings have unique problems which they themselves know better and if empowered are in capacity of resolving better. This affirms the significance of C.R. Dechert's admonition when he warns that public officials should "avoid unitary, comprehensive, enforceable central decision-making."[16]

E. And when the cooperative ethic takes root through the volun-tary associations set in place by the citizens, the cooperative motivation to work hard on behalf of all will increase. The pie to be shared will stand higher chances of becoming larger partly because some people will be willing to contribute resources they otherwise would have kept to

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[15] *Ibid.*

[16] C.R. Dechert, "Utopia and Social Planning", see Chapter II of this volume.

themselves, including their labour. Indeed, even if the voluntary cooperative ethic did not enlarge the pie, certainly it has the capacity to increase experienced welfare, since it is engaged voluntarily and not as the result of coercion.[17]

The Violent Nature of the Human Being: A Resolvable Challenge

The major inspiration behind this paper has been to discover an open and inclusive 'story' that can act to ethically temper the various types of stories and narratives that may obstruct our endeavour to build a humane civil society. The concept of a common humanity has been cited as one of the bases that can generate a moral sensitivity conducive to building that kind of desirable society. Up to now the paper has tried to show that an appreciation of this concept can help to avert the danger of putting at the centre of our concerns something other than the human person. So far so good. But some scholars may stand to condemn the above advocacy of common humanity as being an exaggerated optimism that does not take into full account the nature of the human being. Such scholars may include people like F. Hegel, S. Freud, and K. Lorenz, to mention but a few. Through their studies, these scholars have discovered that "violence is a specifically human phenomenon....It is rooted in human nature in so far as [it] consists in the freedom of one person to encroach upon the freedom of another."[18] Following this revelation one may deduce that the human being is naturally necessitated to live some forms of a violent culture towards others.

Reporting the findings of some of these scholars, M. Sastrapratedja writes: Hegel shows that consciousness can emerge to become 'for-itself' in negating the other. Freud maintains that the Oedipus complex leads to violence towards fathers as a necessary factor in order to achieve autonomy. Lorenz, through his biological analysis of aggressiveness has discovered that it is an essential component in the vital organisation of instincts.[19] The discoveries of these scholars need not be underestimated. They actually do describe some of the features which are often times manifested by human being and for which what this paper seeks to find a prescription.

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[17] N. Murphy and G.F.R. Ellis, *On the Moral Nature of the Universe* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), p. 127.

[18] M. Sastraperatedja, "Violence, Justice and Human Dignity", in Zhu Dasheng, et al., eds., *The Human Person and Society; Chinese Philosophical Studies*, VIIA (Washington D. C., The Council For Research in Values and Philosophy, 1997), p. 28.

[19] *Ibid*. p. 29.

It is the contention of this paper that although the above findings are true about human nature, the instincts of violence are not overriding. The human person as a cultural being can bring such instincts under control. Indeed, as Sastrapratedja shows, "recent philosophical anthropology explains that it is the deprivation of instinct and consequently also the possibility of culture which distinguishes human beings from other species."[20] We need to acknowledge that despite the fact of human beings having to some extent psychological and biological tendencies to violence, "they are also endowed with the freedom to order their own tendencies. As an expression of human freedom culture can order chaos into cosmos."[21]

And if it is true that some of our psychological and biological elements made us develop those types of stories that have inspired the violence we witness in the various parts of the world, that stands as a challenge to human beings and their moral responsibility to change those stories that inspire violence leading to the disrespect of human dignity. This paper, as already observed, offers the concept of a common humanity as one of the many ethical ideas that ought to motivate our task of building a humane civil society. Its internalisation and appreciation can be achieved through education which ought to be an integral part of any cultural context. Education is essential because, as Alvin Toffler shows, the knowledge we acquire is through education: Education "is the most versatile and basic, since it can help one avert the challenges that might require the use of violence and can often be used to persuade others to perform in desired ways out of perceived self-interest that is alive to the interest of others. Knowledge yields the highest-quality power.[22]

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to assert that in our task to build a humane civil society, there ought to be an effort of sympathetic comprehension of values, parameters of judgement, and ways of approaching existential problems which are fundamental not only those in one's own group but also of those 'others' beyond one's own group. Indeed, there is a need for us to develop a hermeneutic understanding, an experiential encounter, that involves the merging of the horizons of one's own historical and existential experiences with the horizon or horizons of those to be understood and lived with. If this encounter is to be meaningful, it is imperative that we internalize and appreciate our common humanity which calls us to make critical ethical appraisals of the human person.

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[20] *Ibid.*

[21] *Ibid.*

[22] *Ibid.* p. 28.

This ethical concept of common humanity is an 'ought' which stands for us either to choose to live by it, or not to so choose. The power of choice is ours.

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PART II

THE POSTMODERN NARRATIVE, *CONTRA* AND *PRO*

CHAPTER IV

K. TWARDOWSKI'S AND W. TATARKIEWICZ'S ARGUMENTATION ON THE TRUTH ABSOLUTE

JOSEF DEBOWSKI

Since the increase of the influence of various relativist doctrines has been observed in recent years (at times reaching the border of a programme of total destruction), it seems necessary to reconsider the philosophical bases of these attitudes. For this purpose – yet only as a foreword or introduction to discussion – I should like to: firstly – refresh particular arguments quoted by 20th century critics of the relativistic truth concept (especially Twardowski's and Tatarkiewicz's arguments); secondly – differentiate clearly the relativism of the type discussed (i.e., the theory of existence of absolute truths) from other theories with which, although unjustly, it is often confused; thirdly – critically consider the effects of the critique of relativism employed by Twardowski and Tatarkiewicz; finally, fourthly – present the absolute character of truth also in a broader than logical context (*scilicet* strictly axiological), usually omitted altogether by 20th century critics of logical relativism (including Twardowski). I deem all these factors necessary to broaden the theoretical self-awareness of both adherents of relativism and its opponents.

TWARDOWKSI'S VIEWPOINT

1. What does it mean that truth is an absolute value? Does it mean that certain theses, especially logical judgements, are absolutely true? It seems that the truth absolute may be discussed in a double sense: first – when we talk about truth in the logical meaning, second – when truth becomes a value for its own sake (autotelic value). In parallel, Kazimierz Twardowski (1866-1938)[1] argued in his renowned dissertation, "hardly

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[1] The dissertation mentioned is "O tak zwanych prawdach wzglêdnych (*On So-called Relative Truths*)", written between 1899 and 1900, published first time in Ksiêga Pamiatkowa Uniwersytetu Lwowskiego ku uczczeniu piêtsetnej rocznicy Fundacji Jagielloñskiej Uniwersytetu Krakowskiego (*The Lwów University Memorial Book to Celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Jagiellonian Foundation*) (Lwów: 1900). In 1902 a German translation of the dissertation was published (transl. by Prof. M. Wartenberg). The Polish second impression was released in K. Twardowski. Rozprawy i artykuly filozoficzne. Zebrali i wydali Uczniowie (*Philosophical Dissertations and Articles. Gathered*

anyone questions the existence of relative truths." Since the conviction of truth's relativity (at times the total human truth is also included here) is really so widespread, as Twardowski's opinion suggests, it is worth considering the foundation of the conviction. Its popularity is not decisive for its reliability, although undoubtedly it creates a useful starting-point for continual reflection on the nature of truth.

It is worth realising that, on the other hand, the absolute character of certain phenomena (features, qualities or states) is manifested when we admit their presence using the adjective "true." We do it saying for instance true friendship, true love, true gem, true wisdom, etc. The use of the word true in the above examples is certainly only loosely connected with its strict sense, accepted in logic or philosophy and referring most often to judgements, more rarely to thoughts and language expressions; apart from one moment – i.e. stressing the very absolute, categorical and non-problematic values.

2. From the viewpoint of formal logic, which, among its primary principles, includes the principle of (in)consistency and the principle of excluded means, the differentiation of relative and absolute truths is nonsense. Moreover, it is both groundless and unacceptable. It destroys the rationality of the cognitive efforts undertaken by man, for it involves us in the conflict with what has been considered as a canon and the main measure of rational activity, thinking and learning.[2] So far, any endeavour to question the principles of (in)consistency and excluded means has always ended in a similar way: to the extent it was consistent in its radicalism or nonchalance, it was each time also theoretically destructive, fruitless in cognition, and in the extreme cases totally nihilistic.[3]

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and Published by the Students) (Lwów: 1927). The third Polish impression was released during Twardowski's life, in 1934, which I use here. Cf. K. Twardowski. O tak zwanych prawdach wzglêdnych (*On so-called relative truths*) Lwów: Lwowski Oddzia PTF, "Ksinica – Atlas", 1934. It is worth to add that this dissertation was also included in the post-war edition of Wybrane Pisma Filozoficzne (*Selected Philosophical Works*). (Warszawa: PWN, 1965), pp. 315-336.

[2] Cf. K. Twardowski, *O tak zwanych...*(*On so-called...*), p. 30 onwards.

[3] The attempts to omit or question the so-called "primary reasoning principles", mainly the principle of (in)consistency and excluded means, have appeared in the history of philosophy rather sporadically, although the earliest of such attempts appeared even before formulating the principles by Aristotle (Antisthenes, erastics of Megara, Heraclitus' and Protagoras' students). Cf. Aristotle. *Metafizyka* (*Methaphysics*), transl. by K. Lesniak (Warszawa: 1983), pp. 77-101 (1005a-1012a). Indeed, the 20th century brought, first of all, numerous attempts to create semantics of possible worlds: semantics and logic describing worlds containing classic contradictions. Cf. N. Rescher, R. Bran-

Despite this – despite the perspective, which can hardly be deemed as encouraging (in any sense, including psychological) – the theory of the existence of relative truths' has somehow always found its spokesperson. Some will still say that especially today, relativism possesses a considerable circle of admirers, and an even wider circle of covert, silent and, so to say, shy followers.[4] For, at least at first glance,

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dom. *The Logic of Inconsistency* (Oxford: 1980). Cf. also J. Pacœniczek. "O przedmiotach sprzecznych (*On Inconsistent Objects*)". *Studia Filozoficzne* (*Philosophical Studies*), no. 8, 1984. Secondly, the adherents of the now famous epistemological anarchism more and more remorselessly pose the question "Is there really a need to remove any inconsistency from science?" The question is posed not only by maniacs and Paul K. Feyerabend, but also other and more prominent representatives of modern science philosophy. Cf. G. Munever. "Dopuszczanie sprzecznosci w nauce (*Allowing inconsistency in science*)" in K. Jodkowski (ed.) Czy sprzecznosc moze byc racjonalna? (*May Inconsistency Be Rational?*), "Realizm. Racjonalnosc. Relatywizm. (*Realism. Rationality. Relativism*)" series, vol. 4 (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS), pp. 209-214. Cf. also P.K. Feyerabend. Watpliwy autorytet logiki w dyskusjach przyrodniczych in metodologicznych (*Doubtful authority of logic in natural science and methodological discussions), Ibid.*, pp. 215-223. The attempts to question the (in)consistency principle appear today also among extreme evolutionists, inspired by Darwinism and the idea of Hegelian dialectic. Cf. G. Politzer. Wyklad filozofii (*Lecture on Philosophy*) (Warsaw: 1950), p. 154. Generally, the tendency prevails to make the classical binary logic compatible to multi-value types of logic and with Hegelian dialectic logic (which allows itself to be consistently interpreted, e.g. in Rogowski's four-value categorisation). The attempts to make dialectic logic compatible to classical logic are also being made by some Marxists. Cf. A. Schaff. "Dialektyka marksistowska a zasada sprzecznosci (*Marxist Dialectic vs. the Inconsistency Principle*), *Mysl Filozo-ficzna* (*Philosophical Thought*), no. 4, 1955; and J. adosz. *Wielowartosciowe rachunki zdañ a rozwój logiki* (*Multi-value Sentence Accounts and the Develop-ment of Logic*). (Warszawa: 1961), pp. 251-280.

[4] This modern trend may be illustrated by the well-known P.K.Feyerabend's maxim *Anything goes!* and the methodological programme constructed around the idea. For broader treatment of the problem, see K. Jodkowski. "Nauka w oczach Feyerabenda (*Science in the Eyes of Feyera-bend*)", in *idem*, Czy sprzecznosc...(*May Inconsistency...*), pp. 227-270. For the philosophical atmosphere, however, and views prevailing now in certain Polish philosophical circles, a participant's (of the "Marxism Today" conference, Jadwisin near Warsaw, November 1986) statement is very illustrative. It was said during discussion on Prof. M. Hempoliñski's paper: "The age of truth is coming to an end!" – the speaker stated, and it was not a separate voice as for the subject matter and the tone. "We don't have to fight for objectivity, for the truth. Nobody asks for the truth anymore. The issue of subject support for knowledge has not been solved. It is therefore better to accept in epistemology the sociology of knowledge perspective or J. Derrida deconstructionism". See M.

the claim that there are no "eternal truths", "supreme truths", "unchangable and unquestionable claims" (*scilicet* dogmas), generally sounds sensible, evokes sympathy and favourable interest.

In the dissertation *O bezwzglednosci dobra* (*On the absolute of truth*) W. Tatarkiewicz (1886-1980), characterising the twentieth century relativist and subjectivist trends in ethics and axiology, stated: "Fake arguments and fake subjectivist theories create the atmosphere of sympathy and adulation for subjectivism; man today is not impartial toward subjectivism, as subjectivism in general and ethical subjectivism in particular reflects the state of mind. It is perceived as being critical; while the objectivist stand is marked by dogmatism. And yet, there is no constant relation between subjectivism and criticality. There have been periods of human thought when, conversely, subjectivist stand was perceived as a lack of criticism".[5]

3. Although it is significant, let us omit the broad cultural and social context which fuels the creation and dissemination of views expressing favourable understanding for all relativity, including the relativity of truth. Inclusion of the context is rather the task of a sociologist of culture, of knowledge or of social psychology. Herein, taking the example from our Polish twentieth century philosophy classics (Twardowski, Tatarkiewicz, and Ingarden), let us only consider the purely theoretical context. Following the above philosophers' footsteps let us start from the introductory, yet basic, terminological propositions.

Firstly, truth will be understood here according to its classical concept, appropriately to the Isaac ben Salomon's (IXth century) formula, reinforced by Saint Thomas Aquinas (*Contra Gentiles* I, 159; *De veritate* 1, 2), and may be defined generally in the following way: *Veritas est adaequatio intellectus et rei, secundum quod intellectus dicit esse quod est vel non esse quod non est.* Secondly, such conceived "truth" (to be more exact: the feature of "truthfulness") will be related exclusively to judgements in the logical sense, where the word "truth" will mean the same as "truthful judgement." Resulting from this, thirdly, "relative truth" is "judgement relatively true," while "absolute truth" is "judgement absolutely true." Fourthly, following Twardowski, and also in accordance with the traditional meanings of "relative" and "absolute," let us assume that the absolute truths are those judgements which "are true absolutely, with no objections, irrespective of any circumstances,

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Hempoliñski. "W obronie obiektywnosci prawdy (*In Defence of Truth's Objectivity*)", *Philosophical Education*, vol. 2, (Warszawa: 1987), p. 52 onwards.

[5] See W. Tatarkiewicz. "*O bezwzglednosci dobra* (*On the Absolute of Good*)", *idem*, *O filozofii i sztuce* (*On Philosophy and Art*) (Warszawa: 1986), p. 107.

which are truths at any time or place."[6] And accordingly, the relative truths are those judgements "which are true only under certain conditions, with restrictions imposed, due to certain circumstances: those judgements are not true irrespective of time and place."[7] It seems that it is the basic meaning of the words "relative" and "absolute," which can be proved by the same way of reasoning not only in logic and knowledge theory, but also in ethics, aesthetics and our customs, i.e., when we, for instance, talk about the relativity or absoluteness of good, beauty, or obedience.[8]

4. The most frequently and willingly applied method of philosophical reasoning seems to be the elenchus method, which is often known as "indirect proof" or "reduction to the absurd" (*reductio ad absurdum*). This method is especially useful for criticising, yet not only. Also when trying to prove the primeval character of a value or argument the so-called "first laws of thinking," we are also usually doomed to use the elenchus method to prove their truthfulness. It was well understood by both Twardowski and Tatarkiewicz. They thought that, at least for those who do not question the principle of (in)consistency and excluded means, it is a way of proving that it is equally effective and valid as other classical ways of proving, especially in the deductive way.

At first glance it can be perceived that, as they argued, in the dispute on the nature of truth three possibilities may be discerned: either [1] we will take the nominalist stand, i.e. we will assume that truth and fallacy do not exist, or [2] we will be the adherents of the relativistic thesis, that is we will admit that truth and fallacy are merely relative features of judgements in the logical sense, or still [3] we will claim that truth and fallacy are the absolute features of judgements. If so, in the situation when we reject nominalism and at the same time we are able to prove the irrationality of the relativistic thesis, we will stay left with nothing but to admit the righteousness of the anti-relativistic stand or still, if one is not afraid of straightforward expressions, the righteousness of absolutism.[9]

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[6] Cf. K. Twardowski. *O tak zwanych...*(*On so-called...*), p. 5.

[7] Cf. *ibid.*, p. 5.

[8] This does not mean, however, that the "relative – absolute" opposition has not been understood differently, e.g. in the sense of rationalism. The problem will be dealt with in the second part of the paper (II).

[9] Obviously, Twardowski and Tatarkiewicz were not secluded in their methodological strategy. This way of reasoning and the use of this strategy has been applied by nearly all relativism critics (regardless of its variety). The strategy seems to be the only right one especially when, out of doctrinal reasons, the possibility of direct intellectual insight (*intellectuele Anschauung*) into states of matters which are dealt with by logic or so-called (by phenomenologists) pure cognition theory is being rejected. *De facto*, even those who

5. When Twardowski is considered, it may be said that he argued against the adherents of 'relative truths' existence' theory, by some called 'logical relativism', by others called epistemological relativism,[10] in four basic manners.[11]

Firstly, he pointed out their lack of differentiation of judgements in the logical sense (Latin: *propositum*, German: *Urteil*) from their external verbal expression, i.e. sayings or utterances (Latin: *enuntiatio*; German: *Aussage*).[12] However, only perception and consideration of the difference between a tangible utterance (*enuntiatio*; *Aussage*) and a judgement which it expresses (*propositum*; *Urteil*) makes avoidance of a series of disastrous misunderstandings possible and allows for support the rationality of every material argumentation. The fact of the existence of multiple meaning words and expressions in every language is, naturally, well known. Ellipsis of expression is equally common. It probably stems from the fact that language serves first of all practical needs: communication in the simplest possible way and using the smallest number of lexical items.

In this situation it seems obvious that a particular linguistic expression may represent a great deal of different judgements in the logical sense – both true, and false. The relativists are therefore wrong taking the sameness of external expression as equal to the sameness of

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allow intellectual insight or certain type of intellectual perception (resp. intuition) into cognition of primeval principles or mathematical and logical objects, do not reject indirect arguing methods, including the elenchus method and indirect proof. This route was taken, for example, by the most significant 20th century critic of various types of relativism, subjectivism, psychologism, scepticism and agnosticism, namely Edmund Husserl (1856-1938). Cf. E. Husserl. *Logische Untersuchungen*, I. Band. (*Prolegomena zur reinen Logik*), Dritte Auflage, Halle-Saale 1922. Cf. also J. Debowski. *Husserlowska krytyka psychologistycznej i relatywistycznej interpretacji logiki* (*Husserl's criticism of psychologist and relativist interpretation of logic*). In K. Jodkowski (ed.) *Czy sprzecznoœœœ...,* op.cit., s.173-192.

[10] Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz. "*O bezwzglednosci dobra* (*On the Absolute of Good)*", pp. 79, 83 onwards.

[11] The criticism of the relativist concept of truth was carried out by Twardowski mainly in "*O tak zwanych...*

[11] The criticism of the relativist concept of truth was carried out by Twardowski mainly in "*O tak zwanych...*(*On so-called...*)". A few years later he revived and broadened the criticism in a series of lectures on ethics, published recently in a new edition of "*O sceptycyzmie etycznym* (*On ethical scepticism*)". Cf. "Ethics" 1971, no. 9. As the basis for the latter are considerations devoted to ethical issues, while the one of most interest to us is situated in the background, therefore the centre of our attention will be occupied by *O tak zwanych prawdach wzglednych* (*On so-called...*).

[12] Cf. K. Twardowski. *O tak zwanych..., (On So-called...)* p. 8 onwards.

the judgement based on it. For, although there are close relations between the linguistic expression and the relevant judgement in the logical sense (*scilicet*: the matter of the expression), the sameness of the external expression of a judgement, the sameness of the utterance only (saying – as used by Twardowski), is not, and has never been a sufficient guarantee of the sameness of the judgement (*propositum*).[13] Hence, when they state that certain claims are true at a particular time, then false at another time, and they do not prove that "a true and false judgement expressed by the same saying is indeed one and the same judgement", then we can expect that we do not deal with one and the same judgement, but with two different ones, although expressed with exactly the same lexical items (or equal shape expressions). All of the examples of so-called relative truths favoured by relativists (e.g. "The flower smells nice", "It is raining", "Father is alive", etc.) – after application of single meanings to the lexical items composing the sentences and elimination of ellipsis – are by no means true at one time, and false at another (depending on the circumstances), but on the contrary: either they are always true, or always false. The claim cannot be supported that – resulting from the sameness of linguistic utterance: identical phonetic aspects or equal shape of expressions (or inscriptions) – that the same judgement turned from true to false (or the reverse), when at closer analysis it may be proved that an expression which is apparently identical (the same inscription, resp.) in reality expresses totally different judgements. Obviously, the judgements may be, in accordance with the excluded means principle, either true or false, yet never (against the [in]consistency principle) both true and false.

Secondly, Twardowski proves, although in a modest way, that the adherents of the relativist theory of truth mix up the logical value applicable to judgements (their truth or fallacy) with the knowledge of the value, i.e. its cognition.[14] The most frequent and striking example of this are the attempts to make truth and fallacy relative against the current level of human experience and general knowledge development.

Indeed, the view is often disseminated that truths included in scientific theories and hypotheses drawn inductively also possess

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[13] Cf. *ibid*., p. 9.

[14] Cf. *ibid*., p. 27-28. The common and continually repeated error of lack of perception of the difference between "truth" and "truth cognition" was comprehensively analysed by Rudolph Carnap (1891-1970) – one of the main adherents of so-called redundant theory of truth. Cf., on this subject, R. Carnap. *Remarks on Induction and Truth*, "Philosophy and Phenomenological Research" 1946, vol. IV, pp. 590-602. Cf. also R. Carnap. *Truth and conformation*. In "Readings in Philosophical Analysis", H. Feigl, W. Sellars, eds. (New York: 1949), pp. 119-127.

relative character. Above other things it must be realised that those theories and hypotheses are characterised by greater or smaller degree of probability, yet they are never certain. Thus it would seem improper to interpret them as absolute judgements. It often happens so in everyday life, but still it is not a rarity in science. We claim, fully convinced, that "In a week's time we are going to Cracow" or that "The Earth revolves around the Sun."[15] However, no such hypothesis can be defined as true, but always as probable.[16] It means that the judgement included in a particular hypothesis cannot be defined as true or false, while, at present level of knowledge, we are inclined to treat it as true. In spite of this, it may not be ruled out that it will not turn out false some day, with full certainty.

Twardowski writes "If we encounter a case that a particular hypothesis or theory was – as the relativists say – true only at a certain scope of experience, the fact is that the hypothesis or theory was not true at all, but was false from the very beginning. However, at the time when it was accepted some facts proving its fallacy could not be perceived, and it was accepted, as the hypothesis/theory at that time was deemed the most probable of all the others.[17]

Thirdly – as the relativist thesis is sometimes deduced from the epistemological subjectivism foundations – Twardowski invariably and consequently proved the total delusion of those foundations. And indeed, it is a very effective direction of criticism. No subjectivism has ever proven that considering a judgement as true makes it true. For – at least in the situation of standing on the grounds of the classical theory of truth (nonetheless, any other, so-called "non-classical", always presupposes the classical, but most often tacit) – the existence or non-existence of the object of a judgement proves its truth, not considering it as true. And regardless of the person considering; also regardless of God. Thus the problem comes down not to considering (or not considering), but to righteousness or validity of the considering (or not considering). From this point of view – following F. Brentano, and in opposition to Pythagoras – it may be said that man is the "measure of everything" only if indeed s/he measures righteously (correctly, resp. validly). In other words, unless it is a poor "measure," even though, on the other hand, human.[18]

Relativism based on subjectivism was born – as Twardowski claims – on the basis of judgements of the external world, and it would

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[15] All the above examples are taken from Twardowski.

[16] Cf. K. Twardowski. *O tak zwanych* (*On So-called...*), p. 27.

[17] See *Ibid*., p. 27.

[18] In the context, cf. also the criticism of subjectivism (genre and element) foundations by Husserl. E. Husserl. *Logische...,* op. cit., pp. 117-124 and other.

seem that it has supreme chance to acquire a large number of arguments in this field. It stems from the conclusion that the picture of the external world perceived by man is a kind of illusion, or to put it straightforward, hallucination. Anything we try to conceive or image will always stay within our human conception or imagination.[19] Only naive realism identifies those conceptions or imaginations directly with external objects. All other epistemological stands clearly differentiate the world within itself from the world imaged by man.

Do the subjectivism foundations really provide us with arguments for the relativists' thesis? Twardowski replies as follows: "As our judgements on the external world are applicable only to the objects which we image, and they cannot reach the world which possibly exists independent of our imaginations, thus subjectivism is argued as far as it makes the features of the external world imaged by man dependent on man's organisation and as far as it claims that the judgements about the world depend on the way of the external world imaging. However, relativism is wrong to conclude thus, that truths applicable to the external world are relative. For if a cause R, existing independent of us – and it may be an object itself, atoms and their movements, God, etc. – creates in man the object image r, and in another being the object image r', if, resulting from this, man creates a judgement on this object r-p, and another being a judgement r'-p', there is no basis for claiming that the judgement given by man is true only to himself, and untrue for another being. This different being cannot realise the same judgement that the man gives at all, since the being's data consist of r' and p', not r and p."[20]

As we can see, only following the naive realists – i.e. identifying objects r and r' with this, existing in itself, object R – one can come to a conclusion that man is right in giving the R-p judgement, and similarly the second being is nonetheless right in giving the R-p' judgement on the very same object. Then, however – that is when we strongly endeavour to agree with the naive realist's stand with relativistic view of truth – we indulge in an evident inconsistency. In this kind of reasoning

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[19] The dramatic situation outlined here may be reflected by the basic question of any classical epistemology: "What can we know about the objects themselves on the basis of their reflections?" This old Kantian question was often made invalid in the 20th century (considered as a derivative of myth, thus non-scientific, or even nonsense), or it was modified in numerous ways (e.g. in Neo-Kantian or phenomenological transcendentalism). For this matter, cf. *Obecnosc mitu* (*The Presence of Myth*) (Paris: 1972), pp. 18-26 (II, *Mit w pytaniu epistemologicznym* [*Myth in an epistemological question*]).

[20] See K. Twardowski. *O tak zwanych...(On So-called...)*, pp. 35-36.

the situation which cannot be agreed upon with the rationality canon put forward by the logical principle of (in)consistency reappears.

Finally, fourthly, Twardowski undermines the sceptical stand. According to the sceptical point of view, man is not able to reach the world of "objects themselves," for – as sceptics, supported by subjectivists, argue – there are always only fake images (illusions), symptoms (phenomena), and only certain representations (visual, notional or symbolic) given to him/her. The fact, however, – as Twardowski claims[21] – proves only (and at most) the limits of our knowledge, not the relativity of truth. The fact that the way man images objects, and resulting from this, also the way he judges them, being inevitably dependent of his/her psychic and physical organisation, is at most the cause for man giving more false than true judgements. So once a judgement given by man proves to be true, then it will never cease to be true for anyone. At the same time, lack of agreement between two or more object images (including judgements) most often does not have to prove their inconsistency. The inconsistency does not necessarily happen, for – perhaps – every such image (or judgement) possesses its own distinct object. On the other hand, in the situation when the object is indeed one and the same, and the images are still in disagreement, then, according to the (in)consistency and excluded means principles – only one of them (at most, and also at least!) is true.

Let us notice that – against all pretence – the very disagreement of the judgements given by man (or even their inconsistency) in fact directs towards cognitive optimism. This proves the possibility to discard extreme scepticism and cognitive nihilism.[22] For in the case of inconsistent judgements the certainty may be achieved that – according to fundamental principles of rational reasoning – one of them is absolutely true.

6. In the last paragraphs of the dissertation *On So-called Relative Truths,* Twardowski clearly approaching a general conclusion – poses the following question: "If relativism indeed lacks any basis, if the view sanctioning the existence of only relatively true judgements cannot be argued, how can the fact be explained that the view is so widely spread and appears often even in everyday speech and reasoning?"[23]

Searching for the explanation of the puzzling state of affairs, Twardowski notices next that unreasonable equalisation of judgements in the logical sense (*propositum*; *Urteil*) with their external expression, i.e. utterance or saying (*enuntiatio*, *Aussage*) fuels the phenomenon. This

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[21] Cf. *ibid*., pp. 31-34.

[22] for criticism of so-called "sceptical relativism" (*skeptischer Relativism*) cf. also R. Husserl. *Logische...,* pp. 110-154 (paras 32-38).

[23] Cf. *ibid*., p. 42.

kind of trend, as Twardowski states, is visible even in Plato. And today we also – using such locutions as "sentence", "statement", "negation", "thesis", etc. – at one time mean only the products of certain psychic acts, at another time their verbal expression. What is more, even such key categories as "subject", "predicate", and "copula" are related both to judgements in the logical sense and to verbal utterances. Due to this, it is easy for misunderstandings to appear: what applies to judgements only we state in utterances, and vice versa. This situation appears especially often when features of truth and fallacy are concerned.

If then we subscribe the truth feature to utterances, the next feature of truth or fallacy will be relativity. For this may be claimed about utterances, i.e., that they are "relatively true", or "relatively false". "For [Twardowski argues-] the truthfulness of a saying depends on the judgement expressed with this saying being true." Since one and the same utterance may usually express many different judgements (both true and false), the utterance is because of this only relatively true. "Relatively true" means true only under certain conditions: i.e., as much as it is the expression of a true judgement. In opposition to relatively true utterances, utterances which are absolutely true may exist only when they are formulated strictly enough, so that it is impossible to find the expression of a false judgement in them.

Principally then, "the differentiation between relative and absolute truthfulness exists only in the area of sayings, to which the truth feature applies only in figurative, indirect meaning; when the judgements themselves are concerned we cannot talk about relative and absolute truthfulness, for each judgement is either true, and then it is true at any time or place, or it is false, and also false at any time or place. The existence of the science of relative truths may be sustained only thanks to the lack of differentiation between judgements and sayings and loses its basis when the difference between judgements and sayings is strictly and systematically observed."[24] This is the final conclusion of Twardowski's argumentation – argumentation aimed against the theory of so-called relative truths, *scilicet* logical or epistemological relativism.

TATARKIEWICZ'S VIEWPOINT

1. Relativism in the form defined above was the object of fierce criticism also from other twentieth century Polish philosophers. What is interesting, the criticism was often undertaken independently from Twardowski's interpretation, and thus may be its crucial addition. Special attention is due to the analyses and differentiation done many years ago by W. Tatarkiewicz in his dissertation *On the Absolute of*

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[24] See *ibid*. pp. 43-44.

Good (1919). Tatarkiewicz demonstrated, among other things, that the broadly understood relativism – both common and partial relativism (e.g. only ethical or logical) – is very often, although in an unjustified way, mixed (*scilicet* joined or even equalised) with epistemological theories, whose connection with relativism is purely superficial and accidental (e.g. purely psychological). In fact the theories are divided by a crevasse of sense. Undoubtedly, some common usage, in the historical sense, of the terms is an encouraging factor for the state of affairs, as well as certain psychological links (most often differing from the logical one), which may be frequently detected between some epistemological stands (e.g. subjectivism or rationalism) and a relativistic view.[25] Probably, great importance may be also given to mixing of terms, typical for relativists (of various levels and subjects) and theoretical nonchalance, bordering or disorder (mental and linguistic). A good illustration of all those trends and preferences is not only the epistemological and methodological anarchism of P. Feyerabend or so-called sociology of knowledge, but above all the perfectly eclectic post-modernism and deconstructionism, promoting (after J. Derrida) the so-called "deconstruction without reconstruction."

Obviously, when Tatarkiewicz launched his criticism of modernism and defence of absolute nature of truth and good, the phenomena mentioned above had not been known yet, and he himself did not probably predict them. Nevertheless, it does not seem that, as a result of the transformations which took place in the twentieth century philosophy, his findings (similarly to Twardowski's findings) lost their instructive quality, their explanatory power or their theoretical significance. Because of this, there are strong incentives to note the findings, consider them, and, perhaps, appreciate them.

As a result of the terminological chaos existing, according to Tatarkiewicz it is necessary to differentiate all relativistic theories – including ethical and logical relativism (resp. epistemological) – from the empirical fact of the lack of accord in people's convictions: lack of accord in convictions on good and evil, truth and fallacy, beauty and ugliness, etc.[26] Not going into great details, the differentiation should be implemented on exactly the same basis which is used for differentiation of theories from facts. It is even more grounded, as the theory in the scope of our interest deals with truth and fallacy (i.e. logic and epistemology research object), whereas facts detected – discrepancy of people's convictions – are in the scope of research of psychology, sociology, history and similar sciences (so-called "factual sciences"). Moreover, a fact which also has to be taken into account, the mutual discrepancy of

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[25] W. Tatarkiewicz. *O bezwzglednosci… (On the Absolute...)*, pp. 83-95.
[26] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

people's convictions and judgements lends itself to easy explanation in another than relative way. Nominalists provide us with different interpretation of the fact (truth is only a metaphorical definition of psychic states of particular individuals – states found in different people), and so do sceptics (truth is impossible to be found, and it can only be inferred, hence the natural discrepancy of judgements) as well as provenancialists, fundamentalists (truth is a cognisable feature of judge-ments, yet as the human mind is limited and often erroneous, at times discrepancy in views appears).

2. Naturally, no probabilistic concepts constitute relativism of the type considered, as within them the probability of claims and theories is mentioned, not their truth or fallacy. According to the concept, all sentences and theses of science are neither true nor false – in any sense of those words – they are more or less probable. In the field of ethics the concept is parallel to the comparable theory of good and evil (ethical comparativism), according to which there are no good or evil objects in the moral sense, but only "better than", and "worse than".[27] Subsequently, in art science the theories will be parallel to – *per analogiam* – aesthetic comparativism, according to which no artist creates objects which are absolutely and finitely beautiful (or ugly), but only "more beautiful than" (or "uglier than"). The need to keep true sentences apart from probable or hypothetical sentences was already mentioned by Twardowski.[28] To keep it orderly, let us note that as it is not allowed to confuse truth and probability – correlatively – for similar reasons it is not allowed to confuse: truth theory with probability theory, moral goodness science and ethical comparativism, and beauty science with aesthetic comparativism.

3. Following point 2, in general it becomes clear that epistemological relativism does not include the so-called approximative theory of truth. Its adherents – e.g., F. Engels[29] – although using the term "relative truth", use it with a particular meaning. Firstly, they do not question the sense of valuating particular statements from the point of view of truth and fallacy in their classical sense. What is more, some of them (e.g. F. Engels) allow the possibility also for logical and mathematical statements, which proves that they consider science of this kind as synthetic, not as, for example, neopositivists who assume only analytical.[30] Secondly, they are ready to accept some catalogue of truths – a collection of entry statements which are the simplest, basic – as "eternal truths"

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[27] W. Tatarkiewicz. *O bezwzglednosci… (On the Absolute...)*, p. 84.
[28] Cf. K. Twardowski, *O tak zwanych…*(*On So-called...*), pp. 26-27.
[29] Cf. F. Engels. *Anti-Dühring*. Warszawa: 1949, pp. 86-90.
[30] Cf. S. Amsterdamski. *Engels* (Warszawa: 1964), pp. 116-117.

or "supreme truths".[31] W.I. Lenin is a representative of the same stand within Marxism. It seems that the stand of Lenin himself is even clearer and more definite. For, he states unambiguously that all objective truth (truth in the classical sense) is always absolute truth. "The relative element – as he writes in *Materialism and empiriocriticism* – may be negated in different human representations, at the same time not negating the existence of objective truth".[32] Thirdly and finally, the notion of relative truth – most often understood as an infinite series of approximative links, none of which may claim to be full, finite and complete knowledge – does not seem to be the third and competitive logical category to the two traditional values. This is because it applies either to "the total of human knowledge of a certain epoch", or to "its certain comprehensive domain", e.g. certain science or at least scientific theory.[33]

To put it simply, the approximative theory of truth – only because the object of its assessment are larger theoretical entities (theories, scientific disciplines, science, and finally the entire human knowledge at particular stages of its historical development), rather than particular claims, *scilicet* judgements in the logical sense, – cannot be synonymous with the discussed type of relativism. Relative truth – according to the approximative theory of truth – equals truth which is limited, partial, changeable in the historical perspective as it is constantly updated and perfected, never complete and absolute. Clearly the term "relative truth" is used here in a specific meaning – one that stresses both the incompleteness of our (human) knowledge about the world, and the incompleteness of our knowledge about knowledge (resp. truth).

4. As Tatarkiewicz notes, the relativistic concept of truth is most frequently confused with epistemological subjectivism[34] whereas they are two separate theories. The first states that truth and fallacy are relative features of judgements, thus features not applicable at any time or place. The second states that truth and fallacy belong to the same category of features which being dependent on a certain object, are thus subjective. At most a psychological relationship exists between relativism and subjectivism, while the logical relationship (in the sense of

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[31] Cf. F. Engels. *Anti-Dühring* (Warszawa: 1949), p. 86.

[32] Cf. W.I. Lenin. *Works*, vol. XIV (Warszawa: 1949), pp. 137-138.

[33] Cf. S. Amsterdamski, *Engels,* p. 121 onwards. Cf. also M. Hempolinski. *W obronie...(In Defence...*), *op. cit.* pp. 41-44 and onwards.

[34] The confusion of subjectivism with relativism as well as subjectivity with relativity was noticed also by others, including W.I. Lenin in his dispute with Bogdanow. Cf. W.I. Lenin. *Dziela.* (*Works*), *op. cit.*, p. 137 onwards.

relation: if S then R or – if R then S) cannot be detected. For a relative feature may be objective, and a subjective feature may be absolute.[35]

5. According to Tatarkiewicz, relativism and subjectivism are also divided by another important issue. If all sentences and theories (including primarily scientific sentences and theories) may be divided into two basic groups – [1] sentences which state particular states of affairs on the basis of direct data and [2] sentences (resp. theories) which are deduced from other sentences or theories – then relativism is a theory belonging to the first group, while subjectivism is a theory belonging to the second group.[36] The fact that truth and fallacy are relative or absolute features can be detected directly on the basis of the analysis of the very features themselves. It is impossible to determine in a direct way (*scil*. without using reasoning or some form of discourse) if truth and fallacy are subjective features. The relativist's task is only to show – scil. reveal and assert – a particular state of affairs, i.e. that truth and fallacy are relative features of judgements and sentences in the logical sense. Hence the natural tendency of relativists to quote various examples of so-called relative truths – examples illustrating only the postulated relativity of truth and fallacy. On the other hand, the subjectivist's task is to prove the righteousness of his/her thesis. The difference given above takes place also when theories opposite to relativism and subjectivism are concerned – in the case of epistemolo-gical absolutism (resp. fundamentalism) and objectivism (resp. realism). Absolutism and fundamentalism only reveal, show, illustrate and assert certain states of affairs. Objectivism, on the other hand, proves its claims and thus asserts their importance in an indirect and discursive way (e.g. deductively).

As it is easy to see that Twardowski's cited observation will disagree with achievements of those relativists who try to show the rightness of their thesis on the existence of relative truths by an attempt to deduce the thesis from the assumptions of epistemological subjecti-vism (which would have to mean the logical primaeval status of the latter). In fact, there is no logical relationship between subjectivism and relativism. Relativists simulate the relationship by trying to prove, on the basis of the discrepancy of judgements given by man, that any truth is always and only a truth for someone, thus something relative, which is not obligatory always, everywhere, and for everyone. Yet they do not take into consideration the fact that the starting point of their reasoning – the discrepancy of people's views – may be, and is, explained differently than only relativistically. Since the starting point of relativists' rea-soning, which is the discrepancy of judgements given by people, may be

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[35] Cf. W. Tatarkiewicz. *O bezwzglednosci...*(*On the Absolute...*), pp. 87-88.
[36] Cf. *Ibid*., p. 96.

explained in some other way than relativistically, they cannot treat the fact as an argument for their stand.

6. In the dissertation *On the Absolute of Good,* Tatarkiewicz also proposes that the ethical relativism (for basically his dissertation is devoted to criticism of this type of relativism) should be clearly differentiated from the theory stating that "Every good object is also evil, and every evil object is also good".[37] Tatarkiewicz writes that the theory has not much to do with ethical relativism, for stating that objects possess mixed features – i.e., good and evil – is not equal to the thesis that good and evil are relative. They would be relative only when the appearance of a feature of good or evil in an object was dependent from the relation of this object (P1) to another object of the same or different type (P2). According to Tatarkiewicz, this does not take place in the case of good and evil for according to him, good and evil in the moral sense (and also all other ethical values) possess definitely absolute character because they are applicable to different objects independently from the relation of the objects to any other objects.

At this point the question appears: Is this kind of absoluteness, which according to Tatarkiewicz is the feature of good and evil, also characteristic of truth and fallacy? If we keep to the terms of "relativity" and "absoluteness", which were formulated by Twardowski, the negative answer comes forward. In other words, truth and fallacy – as distinct from good and evil, as well as other ethical values[38] – do not possess the feature of absoluteness in the sense of non-relationality. The reason for this is simple. Truth and fallacy, according to their classical definition, are in their nature relational: for a judgement in the logical sense to be true, there must exist, apart from the very judgement (object P1), some other object (P2) to which it is in some way related. The relation, the reference, was named differently: adequateness (*adaequa-tio*), similarity (*conformitas*), correspondence (*correspondentia*), con-ventionality (*convenientia*), overlapping (German: *Deckung*) or still differently. Generally the view prevailed that only its appearance causes that a certain category of objects (thoughts, sentences, or judgements in the logical sense) may be equipped with the feature of truth. Thus the classical definition treats truth as a specific type of relation – relation which exists between a

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[37] Cf. *ibid*., p. 85.

[38] Roman Ingarden (1893-1970), besides ethical values, considered aesthetic values as non-relational (and in this sense absolute). Cf. R. Ingarden. *Uwagi o wzglednosci* (*Remarks on Relativity*) and *Czego nie wiemy o wartosciach?* (*What Don't We Know About Values?*). In *idem*, *Experience – Creation – Value* (Kraków: 1966). M. Scheler and N. Hartmann were of a similar opinion in this matter.

judgement (resp. a thought or sentence) and a certain different state of affairs (to which the judgement is applicable).[39]

The relativity of truth does not discredit its absoluteness in the sense discussed by Twardowski. That is because relationism and relativism in Twardowski's sense are two distinct matters. It may be agreed that the latter, in opposition to Tatarkiewicz's stand, may be equalised with a particular, specific variant of the theory stating that objects possess mixed features (e.g. at one time they are true, at another time false)[40], but relativism in the sense of relationism excludes this kind of equalisation. To put it briefly, for Tatarkiewicz relationism is relati-vism par excellence, while for Twardowski relationism is not relativism and it does not have to lead to relativism. In Twardowski's view relativism would include the view according to which one and the same object (e.g. a judgement in the logical sense) – depending on various circumstances – at one time possesses a specifically defined feature (e.g. it is true), at another time it does not possess the feature (scil. it is untrue).

DOUBTS AND PROVISIONS

1. In the light of arguments presented by Twardowski (*vide* part I) and on the basis of differentiation made by Tatarkiewicz (*vide* part II), an impression may be created that both logical relativism and ethical

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[39] It should be remembered that sometimes – even in the twentieth century philosophy – the classical definition of truth was interpreted in a definitely anti-relational sense. An example of such anti-relational interpretation is the "redundancy theory" which was popularised by, among others, G. Frege, A.J. Ayer, A. Pap and R. Carnap. Generally, however, the clearly relationist under-standing of the classical definition of truth prevailed, which resulted in the so-called "correspondence theory of truth" or, to put it shorter, "the correspond-dence theory". G. Moore and B. Russell were fierce adherers of the latter.

[40] In ancient times the "view that everything is true and everything is false" was parallel to this type of relativism – a view which was criticised by Aristotle in a separate chapter of the Fourth Book on Metaphysics (*Meta-physics,* 8; 1012a-1012b). According to Aristotle, such a stand was represented by, among others, Heraclitus and his student Kratylos. Independently from that, they may be reconstructed on the basis of ancient Sophists' views, especially Gorgias' (who claimed that every thought is false, for full accord is possible only between a particular object and the very same object) and Protagoras' (who claimed that every thought is true, for it is identical with the very same thought itself). Cf. Aristotle. *Metafizyka* (*Metaphysics*), 1009a – 1012a. In modern times this trend was represented by all those who – as G.W.F. Hegel – questioned the (in)consistency and excluded means principles. As it may be clearly seen, only as a result of neglecting of radical questioning of the above mentioned principles may there appear a thought that every judgement possesses simulta-neously the feature of truth and the feature of fallacy.

relativism are completely groundless stands, based on confusion of notions, distinctions and entirely divergent areas of theoretical reflect-ion. I do not determine that the impression is righteous, that indeed all relativism (both comprehensive and partial, e.g. only logical or ethical) originates only from (or above other things) from lack of clarity, precision and discipline of reasoning. Perhaps then, to avoid difficulties and theoretical traps to which different "relativisms" lead, it is enough to follow the route of differentiation set by Tatarkiewicz or to create such subtle differences for oneself. Perhaps. The point is that, however, despite all the advantages which Tatarkiewicz's and Twardow-ski's criticism of relativistic doctrines provides – at the same time it creates a great deal of doubts and provisions. I would like to present shortly some of these. Besides, resulting from the thematic limitation of this paper (*vide* title), almost the only addressee for those doubts and provisions will be Twardowski.

2. As we already know, Twardowski is a strong adherent of the anti-relativistic (resp. absolutist) concept of truth and fallacy. It means that truthfulness and fallacy are considered as absolute features of judge-ments in the logical sense. However, even if we skip the argument on the nature of truth and what constitutes its dwelling place (thought, the matter of thought, or appropriate linguistic expression?) and agree with him that the feature of truthfulness belongs only to judgements in the logical sense, then still a most important question remains open: what is a judgement in the logical sense?

Judgement is not equal to a linguistic expression, utterance, saying – this is what we know. In this area Twardowski does not leave a hint of doubt. We do not know, however – for it is, as it may be assumed, a problem which was not solved by Twardowski in a definite and clear way[41] – what is the status of judgement: if and, if so, to what extent is it a creation of the psychic act of judging, something subjective or (despite genetic dependence from psychic phenomena and processes) is it something objective? The latter case – which can be supported by significant hints in Twardowski's reasoning[42] – then the open question remains the following one: are those judgements what Husserl calls "ideal meaning" (*ideale Bedeutung*), or maybe they are what K. R. Popper included in the so-called "third world"? Perhaps they should be

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[41] Cf. E. Paczkowska: *Psychika i poznanie Epistemologia K. Twardows-kiego*. (*Psyche and Cognition. K. Twardowski's Epistemology*) (Warszawa: 1980), p. 190 onwards.

[42] Cf. K. Twardowski. *O idio- i allogenetycznych teoriach sadu* (*On Idio- and Allogenetic Theories of Judgement*) and *O czynnosciach i wytworach* (*On Activities and Products*). In *Wybrane...(Selected...)*, *op. cit.,* pp. 198-199 and 219-240.

provided with the purely intentional existence? – existence which, according to R. Ingarden is characteristic of all works of art?

It seems that before we decide if truthfulness and fallacy are relative or absolute features of judgements, prior to that we should understand what a judgement itself is, and also – perhaps there is need to take into account – other objects which may be declared true or false. Twardowski did not fulfil this duty for he did not set what other features – necessary and possible – are applicable to those objects being declared true or false.

3. In connection with that, secondly, the following issue creates doubts: Does Twardowski's concept of judgement, as a creation of certain psychic activities, lend itself to be interpreted in the purely anti-psychologist and objectivist spirit? This kind of worry results from, among other things, Twardowski's psychological language and way of thinking. One thing is certain here: Twardowski never questioned the psychic genesis of judgements (in the sense that their origin is a psychic act of judging by a particular and empirical human being). On the other hand, his openly declared anti-psychologism in the theory of judgements was never sufficiently radical to place it, without a shadow of doubt, in the mainstream of theory-cognitive concepts developed by such fierce anti-psychologists as B. Bolzano, G. Frege or E. Husserl. If so, what constitutes in fact the individuality of Twardowski's anti-psychologist proposition? The answer to the question will be achieved only when Twardowski's view on the character and level of autonomy as entity of judgements in the logical sense is defined. I am afraid, however, that today the task is extremely difficult (if at all possible?).[43]

4. Thirdly, Twardowski – by the way, according to the method-logical manifesto of the whole Lwów-Warsaw school – is a representa-tive of the optimistic view (later characteristic of British analytical philosophy) that it is possible to make people's utterances clear, by simple analytic and linguistic activities, to the extent that the multi-meaning feature of common language, as well as ellipsis, may be avoided. Twardowski, admittedly, demonstrates attempts in this direct-ion, but at the same time does not notice that the result of each of those attempts is far from the assumed ideal. It seems then that, at least on the grounds of colloquial language (from which certain sciences, as the humanities, will never be able to escape) the ideal possibility pointed out by Twardowski may not be achieved. For, as it seems – not mentioning all the technical difficulties (heavy, long sentences, multitude of expressions and discourse markers, etc.) usually either we say less than

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[43] For the alleged connections of Twardowski's doctrine with psycholo-gism cf. J.Wolenski. *Filozoficzna szkola lwowsko-warszaw*ska, (*Lwów-Warsaw Philosophical School*) (Warszawa: 1985), pp. 40-42.

we realise, or we realise less than we say. Analogical phenomenon happens also on interpersonal communication; e.g. an interlocutor infers more than we have said, and we have a clear feeling that although we have produced a large number of words, we did not state much. As a result a question appears: When and what utterance (*enuntiatio*, *Aussage*) adheres to particular judgements in the logical sense? When is a particular utterance an absolutely unambiguous and full external representation of a particular judgement in the logical sense? In other words: Is, and if so in what situation (under what conditions), the language able to fulfil the role of the "transparent medium" – constitute a *medium quo*, and not only, always and exclusively, *medium quod*?[44]

5. Fourthly, Twardowski did not explain what axiological status truth had. Truth is most often declared to be a logical value. This common (at least among logicians and philosophers) use of the word "value" in connection with truth shows that it is something which we crave, what we want to reach and obtain. Fallacy, on the other hand, is something which we try to avoid, which we try to overcome, pass by. Twardowski either does not see the perspective, or intentionally skips it. He says that truth is a logical value, but in a very peculiar sense of the word "value" – in the sense, so to say, axiologically neutral. Truth, as he writes, is a true judgement, and truthfulness is a feature (which is absolute and cannot be rejected) of a highlighted group of judgements in the logical sense. The assessment of judgements from the viewpoint of truth and fallacy is not, however, an axiologically valid assessment. It is an ordinary statement of a certain state of affairs, similarly as in the situation when we try to set a particular mathematical (numeric) value, a particular physical value or an economic parameter. Twardowski does not endeavour to analyse the circumstances in which truth (and fallacy) appears as a non-logical value: once as an instrumental value and only relative, at another time as an autotelic and absolute value ("in itself and for itself" value).

In this situation – to fill the philosophical perspective in which truth appears as an absolute value and at the same time value in the full meaning of the word (being the subject of axiological analysis, not only logical or theory-cognitive) – I will allow myself to formulate several ideas on the context avoided by Twardowski. The ideas are to a great extent inspired by axiological considerations of Roman Ingarden, yet today it is difficult for me to separate what is my own from what is Ingarden's.

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[44] For different interpretations of "transparent sign principle" cf. L. Koj. *Zasada przezroczystosci a antynomie semantyczne* (*The Transparency Principle and Semantic Antonyms*). In idem, *Mysl i znak. Bialystok*: 1990, pp. 10-37.

TRUTH AS AN ABSOLUTE VALUE

1. The fact of truth (resp. true knowledge) as appearance in the role of direct utility value, or the necessary condition for its existence, is commonly known (and appreciated). That is why there is no need to convince anyone that truth (true knowledge, especially science) is often an instrumental value: it is appreciated for its importance to life (utility) for a particular subject of activity – both an individual and community. Such conceived value of truth is obviously only a relative value. The knowledge of value in this sense is not always and everywhere of value, but only as much (then and there) as it is important for life, as it justifies particular activities, as it makes the activities empirically possible.

I will not go into full detail here, let me just mention that – firstly – truth may but does not have to serve the utility function. The possibility or fact of empirical usefulness of certain knowledge is not necessary for the knowledge to be true.[45] Secondly, in order for some purposeful activity to appear at all it is necessary (obligatory, though not sufficient) for the subject of the activity to possess true knowledge. The knowledge may be useful in certain situations, and useless in others. Yet for any activity to be effective, some true knowledge must be possessed by the subject (although at the same time it does not have to realise the possession). True knowledge is then the basis and necessary condition of any life-supporting activities, but not vice versa.

This claim may seem to be a paradox. It is obvious that to know something you first have to live and undertake activity; *primum vivere, deinde philosophari* – as ancient wise thinkers claimed. And, undoubtedly, they were right. However, I suppose they were sufficiently insightful to see that it is only a genetic relation. I shall repeat: to acquire knowledge you need to live first. However – and let me quote the famous E. Husserl's metaphor – "Similarly as for the value of gold that we possess, the way we have achieved it is unimportant, so for the value of knowledge which we have at our disposal its origin is equally insignificant."[46]

2. Returning to the temporarily forsaken subject of absoluteness of truth in a non-logical sense, firstly I would like to note that it would be difficult to talk about the absoluteness of the value (as it would be difficult in the case of others: both cognitive and non-cognitive) in any radical meaning, for example: that it is directly an ideal object, or

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[45] Cf. K. Ajdukiewicz. *O wolnosci nauki* (*On the Freedom of Science*). In *Jezyk i poznanie*. vol. II (Warszawa:1985), p. 278.

[46] Cf. E. Husserl. *Indeen zu einer reinen Phanomenologie und phanomenologische Philosophie, Erstes Buch*, "Jahrbuch fur Philosophie und Phanomenologische Forschung", I. Bd. (Halle-Saale: 1913), p. 45.

something existentially dependent from objects of this type (Platonic tradition, in the 20th century probably most clearly represented by N. Hartmann, and less clearly also by M. Scheler). As it seems, the circumstance that all values (including truthfulness and fallacy) are always values of something, e.g., a feature of judgements in the logical sense, determines it leaving no doubts. It means that to exist values need some existential foundation: a basis, a carrier. At the same time the circumstance determines that they are somewhat instrumental and made more or less objective: something independent (transcendent) from accidental psychical states of the subject of the activity and cognition, something irresponsive to the relation of the subject to the state of affairs assessed. In this sense there is some right in claiming that sometimes (and Ingarden was just one to hold such conviction) man only discovers values – according to his/her abilities uncovers their objectively conditioned presence and then reacts to it. It seems that truth and fallacy are such values.

In extreme cases human reactions to the revealed presence of truth or fallacy may be strong and powerful to the extent that in the name of the need to give an "evidence of truth" (or fallacy) people tend to devote a great deal: at times even their own or someone else's lives. Examples of this kind – even if someone says that they happen sporadically – prove strongly that truth is being regarded (also *de facto*) as an absolute value, so the order mentioned in the old Latin proverb, sometimes happens to be reversed (*primum philosophare…*).

3. Someone may notice that the absoluteness of truth has been confused here with the absoluteness of its worship, which in certain situations – which is widely known – may easily transform into e.g. mindless fanaticism. Indeed, the remark would be fully righteous if the example given (of life because of truth, and by this in its shadow) was to be treated as an argument for the thesis on the absolute of truth. However, it is unnecessary and was not supposed to be so. I quoted the example because it can easily lead us to a trace of different understanding of the absolute of truth. Namely, certain judgements (e.g. scientific claims, especially mathematical) are true or false irrespective of the fact that man realises its truthfulness or not. They are true or false also irrespective of the fact that man is or is not able to prove their truthfulness or fallacy (e.g. to prove the Pythagorean theorem). If so, truth is also absolute in the sense that it exists irrespective of human knowledge about it. In its truthfulness a judgement is also completely independent from the fact of people wanting it to be true, or the opposite, namely, that they wish it to be false. No human power – no authority and no community (president, parliament, nor even a genius as A. Einstein) – is able to alter anything in the matter of mathematical theorems, e.g. cause 2+2 to be equal to the *pi* ratio. No dictator or authority (nor the General

Assembly of the UN) is able to render the Pythagorean theorem false or half-true, say from the third millennium AD. Wishes, imperatives, decrees, sentiments and the usual lack of consciousness (no mind and no decree) will be able to alter the fact that certain thesis are really true, others are really false. Any dictator or authority is indeed powerless: both individually and collectively: No Nobel prize winner, no Sophist, not even Providence.

4. Finally, we can discuss the absolute of truth also in the sense that it is independent from the fact of existence (or lack of existence) of other values: both cognitive and semi-cognitive (ethical, aesthetic, economic, customary, etc.) The fact that between some values there exist certain relations – whether crucial or insignificant (accidental) – is a fact which cannot be questioned. The relations often possess a functional character. Some values may appear only "at the expense" of another one, but the appearance of one value may be a necessary condition for another value's appearance (or strengthening). Relations of this type may be easily observed in the fields of aesthetic, ethical and utilitarian values.

There also exists a certain category of values which seem to be definitely insensitive to the presence of other values of the same or different type. Truth belongs to these. The truthfulness or fallacy of a judgement does not change with respect to the company of any other values: ethical, aesthetic, or utilitarian – both positive and negative. It cannot be claimed (unless metaphorically, or in the non-precise, colloquial sense) that as a result of the appearance of some other values truth "goes pale" or on the contrary – it glows or becomes more intensive. In colloquial language we find this kind of expressions, yet – putting it strictly – people stating such opinions usually mean only (or first of all) the degree of popularity or common use of some knowledge or perhaps also the level of readiness to admit something to be true, and probably nothing more.

5. An additional question appears, however: is truth insensitive to the fact of appearance or lack of appearance of values from the same purely cognitive values family? It seems it is. Such cognitive values as logical consistency (coherence), certainty, communicativeness, generality, ability to be proven, strictness, clarity (simplicity), completeness, and others are either fully independent of truth, or they are its consequence. If some relations between truth and the rest of cognitive values may be detected, simultaneously it is equally visible that it is not a symmetrical relation (*scil*. mutual relation), but a one-sided relation or a non-symmetric one. It leads from truth to other values, not vice versa. To put the issue differently is – as it seems – to confuse the cause and

the effect (the right with the consequence), and to take the symptom for the nature of the object.[47]

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[47] As an example, cf. the analysis of the "truthfulness relationship" (German: *Wahrheitszusammenhang*) and the "relationship of argumentation" (German: *Begrundungszusammenhang*) conducted by Ingarden in his dissertation *O uzasadnieniu* (*On Argumentation*). Cf. R. Ingarden. U podstaw teorii poznania (*At the Foundation of Cognition Theory*). Part One. Warszawa: 1971, especially pp. 430-436. On the same issue cf. also A. Pfander. Logik, *Jahrbuch fur Philosophie und Phanomenologische Forschung.* IV. Band, Halle-Saale: 1921, pp. 393, 407, and 435.

CHAPTER V

REALITY, KNOWLEDGE AND AFRICAN EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF A POSTMODERNIST WORLD

STUART FOWLER

Everyone, it seems, is talking about postmodernism. Depending on the point of view, it is used to sum up all that is deemed desirable, or undesirable, about today's world. Yet the fundamental question, "What is postmodernism?" is all too often left hanging in the air.

POSTMODERNISM OR POSTMODERNITY?

Andy Hargreaves (1994:38, 39) makes a strong distinction between postmodernism and postmodernity, arguing that his own work is concerned with the latter rather than the former. His purpose, he says, is "to understand the condition of postmodernity and its implications for teachers" without himself embracing postmodernism. He claims that his account of postmodernity is a "modernistic one" (1994:40). In short, he claims to be a modernist in a Postmodern world.

While the distinction he makes is a valuable one, it may be doubted whether the link between postmodernity and postmodernism is as limited as he claims. He is able to sustain it only by a narrow definition of postmodernism that limits it to those intellectual systems that hold that "no knowable social reality exists beyond the signs of language, image and discourse". (1994:39). Undoubtedly positions of this type figure prominently in academic versions of postmodernism, but it seems to me that limiting postmodernism in this way does not help us to understand the postmodern world.

By "the postmodern world" I understand the world of human society in the wake of the collapse of the certainties of reason and science on which the modern world was built. This world can be understood only as we understand the complex of beliefs that give it shape; a complex of beliefs that differs in fundamental ways from the beliefs that provided the underpinning for the modern society. "Post-modernism," then, is best understood as standing for this belief complex that undergirds the postmodern world, justifying the characteristic practices of that world.

I concede that it is possible to define the word in other ways, including that assumed by Hargreaves. I have no interest in arguing over

words. However, I suggest that narrower definitions tend to obscure the link between postmodernity and the underpinning beliefs that shape the practices of the postmodern world. The academic discourse in which postmodern thought is most clearly stated is the intellectual articulation of patterns of belief that underlie the whole enterprise of the postmodern world. To limit "postmodernism" to this academic discourse in its most overtly postmodern forms obscures this important connection. It is for this reason that I adopt the broader definition of "postmodernism."

My point, simply, is that the phenomena of a postmodern society cannot be separated from the values and beliefs that give these phenomena shape and validity for those who live within this society. These values and beliefs are what I understand by postmodernism. And these values and beliefs will be held, implicitly at least, also by many who know nothing of postmodernist academic discourse; and will shape social practices, including educational practices, of many who are unaware of this discourse.

It is clear that Hargreaves himself accepts important features of these postmodernist values and beliefs, even as he criticises features of postmodernity. His positive assessment of the absence of any "single inherent meaning or value" in postmodern society as a situation offering a social arena that provides new opportunities for "moral and political values and commitments in education" to be played out involves an endorsement of a fundamental value of postmodernism (1994:43). Giving positive value to diversity of meanings is a quite distinctive feature of the postmodernist values that undergird the postmodern society.

This is, of course, a dilemma for any critic of postmodernism, and Hargreaves is certainly such a critic. A refusal to play by postmodernist rules in a postmodernist world means increasing marginalisation and, ultimately, relegation to the "lunatic fringe." I do not suggest that surrender to postmodernism is the only way to function within a post-modern environment. It is certainly possible to play by postmodernist rules without surrendering to postmodernism. However, any critique of postmodernity that fails to recognise the inseparable link between the phenomena of postmodemity and the undergirding postmodernist beliefs and values will lack critical penetration.

MODERNITY, POSTMODERNITY AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

One of the distinctive features of the belief system that supported the modern world was the privatisation of religious faith. No doubt the rise of modern science signaled the beginnings of the modern era. Yet, it was not until the eighteenth century that modernism came of age as a fully developed way of life. This coming of age was marked by the work

of Immanuel Kant, who may be regarded as an archetypical representative of modernism, particularly in its earlier manifestation.

Ever since Plato, the Western world had maintained a belief in the ability of rational thought to gain knowledge of reality independently of religious faith. Yet, especially following the Christianisation of the West, a strong link was maintained between religious faith and rational knowledge. On the one hand, rational thought was enlisted to establish the validity of the claims of faith. On the other hand, no claim of rational thought could be accepted as valid if it denied the basic tenets of the accepted religious faith.

While a number of those involved in the development of modern science prior to the eighteenth century pursued their work in ways that had a tendency to undermine the foundations of orthodox Christian faith (Westfall, 1986), they did not openly break the link between science and religious faith. With Kant, however, that link was decisively severed. He neither rejected faith in God nor severed the connection between faith and reason. However, by the way in which he linked faith in God with the practical faculty of reason (Kant, 1788) and scientific knowledge with the theoretical faculty of reason (Kant, 1787) he decisively broke the link between religious faith and scientific knowledge.

Religious faith, for Kant, is a matter of practical reason, owing nothing to the faculty of theoretical reason from which scientific knowledge is gained. At the same time, scientific knowledge is a matter of theoretical reason that systematises what we encounter with our senses and owes nothing to religious faith. In matters of religious faith, and other matters beyond the reach of our senses, Kant "found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith." (1787:29).

In the later development of the modern world, it was an easy step to deny any kind of rational necessity to religious faith, assigning it to a realm of private experience wholly internal to the individual person. Room was left for faith, but no longer as a necessity imposed by reason on all rational persons. It became an option for those who felt a need for it, on condition that it did not intrude into the domain of public discourse, including the public epistemic enterprise.

The collapse of the modernist world has made it once again respectable to talk about faith and spirituality in public discourse (Griffin, 1989: xxiii, xxiv). This is, without doubt, an important feature of the postmodernist world. Yet it would be a serious misreading of the situation if, as Griffin appears to do, we were to conclude that this means that religious faith is now re-stored as a universal and fundamental constituent of our knowledge of the world.

It was the belief in the universalist epistemic claims of human rationality that led to the exclusion of matters of religious faith from public discourse. To allow these issues into public discourse was seen as

frustrating any attempt to establish a universally verifiable knowledge founded in a universal reason. The collapse of faith in the universalist claims of reason, which is a characteristic of postmodernism, has made it once again respectable to bring these issues into the realm of public discourse.

However, this is not due to a reinstatement of the universal claims of religious faith as claims that are rationally binding on all. Rather, it is due to the abandoning of the possibility of any kind of rationally binding universal claims. In the postmodern worldview the validation of knowledge claims is not subject to any universal authority but is internal to particular communities. Public discourse becomes dialogue between these diverse communities. While it is acceptable to introduce issues of religious faith into this dialogue, it is only acceptable as a statement of the views of particular communities. It is equally acceptable for others not only to reject particular statements of faith but to reject for themselves any role at all for religious beliefs

Postmodernism has allowed religious faith back into public discourse only on condition that such faith does not make any kind of universal claim based on rational verification. It is only one claim among many of equal rank from which people may choose.

KNOWLEDGE AND REALITY

One of the difficulties in dealing with postmodernism is the wide diversity of the positions that find a place under this heading. For this reason, any approach to the question that focuses on the views and practices of one representative as typical of postmodernism is bound to result in a false clarity in thinking about the question; a false clarity that disguises a fundamental confusion.

Marshall's characterisation of postmodernism, for example, (1992:4) as being about language, "how it controls, how it determines meaning, and how we try to exert control over language", while appropriate when speaking of an important strand in postmodernism, is less than adequate as a blanket characterisation of the diversity of positions that have been discussed under the heading "postmodernism."

There is also the problem that certain terms that are now commonly associated with postmodernism have also been associated with versions of modernist thought. An outstanding example is "constructivism", which now commonly refers to an approach to learning closely associated with postmodernist versions of pragmatism. Yet the label "constructivist" has been appropriately applied to the decidedly modernist position of Jean Piaget, and the important strand of francophone philosophical thought to which he belonged (Fowler, 1986:70-77, 110-113).

Despite the acknowledged difficulties, I think that it is possible to identify a common factor uniting the diverse contemporary alternatives to modernism that does justify calling them all "postmodernist", and at the same time distinguishes them from all versions of modernism.

Richard Bernstein, in an analysis of Gadamer, Habermas and Rorty as representatives of postmodern thought, argues that, despite significant differences, there is a common project that unites them. He describes this common project (1986:370) as "nonfoundational prag-matic humanism." He acknowledges that Gadamer would probably not be happy with the appellation "pragmatic" and that "there is no evidence that he has ever grappled with the American pragmatic tradition". Nevertheless, despite this "blindness" on Gadamer's part, he argues that there is an "affinity between the best of Gadamer and the best of American pragmatism". (1986:371).

This issue aside, there is little doubt that the description "non-foundational" or perhaps even "antifoundational" (Bernstein, 1986:370) is an apt description of the position of all three as of others who may appropriately be regarded as representatives of postmodernism. Yet, while this points us in the right direction it does not yet take us to the core issue.

Rorty's discussion of "representationalism" vs. "anti-representa-tionalism" (1991:1-12) similarly, yet in a somewhat different way, points us in the direction of the core issue that distinguishes postmo-dernism. He argues that anti-representationalism is to be distin-guished from antirealism, since the "realism" vs. "antirealism" debate is a non-issue for the anti-representationalist (1991:3-5). "Representationalists" typically "find it fruitful to think of mind or language as containing representations of reality" (1991:2). "Anti-representationalists", on the other hand, find it entirely unhelpful to attempt to identify any class of statements or concepts as representations of reality. Rather all language and thought is to be seen in terms of interaction with the environment for the anti-representationalist (1991:10).

It should be noted that Rorty's anti-representationalist does not deny that there is a reality that is other than the human subject. Rather he, or she, denies that any class of statements can represent this reality. All statements are products of interaction between "a language using organism" and the environment in which this organism lives.

Foundationalism is not the same as Rorty's representationalism, of course, though they commonly go together. However, they share the belief that there is a class of knowledge claims that can be verified as universally true on grounds that compel the assent of all rational persons, such that the knowledge claims in question have the status of indubitable certainty. The foundationalist believes that there is a class of infallible beliefs that provides such grounds for a universal verification.

The representationalist maintains that certain statements or concepts are universally verifiable because they are true representations of empirical reality.

The rejection of any such belief in the possibility of a universally verifiable account of the experienced world recognised as such by all rational persons is characteristic of all forms of postmodernism. It is what distinguishes postmodernism, in all its forms, from all forms of modernism.

It should be noted that the issue is not whether there exists a common reality distinct from the experiencing person. Neither is the issue whether humans can give an account of such a reality. The issue that distinguishes postmodernism from modernism concerns the relation between any such reality and the accounts we give of it. Modernism insists that a universally verifiable account of the experienced world, giving the status of indubitable certainty to the relevant knowledge claims, is possible while postmodernism rejects the possibility of any such universally verifiable account.

At this point it is worth noting the misconception sometimes encountered that the deconstruction advocated by Jacques Derrida – who is certainly postmodernist on any account – involves the destruction, or denial, of all structures of reality. As Derrida himself has made quite clear (1992:88, 89), his deconstruction is not a denial of all structure in human experience. The aim is to demolish the arbitrary and unhelpful construction of structuralism – "*une edification, un artefact*" – so that the structure that is may be recognised. His attack is not an attack on all structure but on a formal structure that explains nothing, being neither a centre, nor a principle, nor a power, nor even the law of events – "*…une structure formelle qui n'expliquait rien, n'etant ni un centre, ni un principe, ni une force, ni même la loi des évenements....*"

For the postmodernist, none of our accounts of the world can be universally verified as universal truth. They can only be validated on grounds that are internal to particular historical communities. Even within these communities, a diversity of equally valid knowledge claims is recognised.

Exactly what it is that is seen as validating our accounts varies with different versions of postmodernism. For Rorty (1991:21-34), the validating communities are cultural communities; a shared culture provides the basis for validation. For Gadamer (1989:438-474) they are linguistic communities in which a shared language provides the basis for validation; "in language the order and structure of our experience itself is originally formed and constantly changed". (1989:257). For Habermas (1981:94-101, 306-308) validation comes from the praxis of communicative action in the normative context of a "lifeworld" shaped by a cultural tradition (1981:70, 71).

These three do not, of course, exhaust the diversity of positions to be found within postmodernism. They do, however, usefully illustrate both the diversity and the commonness that characterises postmodernism. The common element is the denial that knowledge claims can be universally verified so as to be given the status of undeniable universal truth.

THE IDEA OF PRIVILEGED KNOWLEDGE

Continuing a tradition going back at least to Plato, modernism maintained the idea of a privileged form of knowledge. That is to say, it maintained that knowledge claims meeting the specified universal criteria of verification have precedence over all other possible knowledge claims. While other knowledge claims may be admitted as representing knowledge at a lower level of authority, preeminent cognitive authority, overriding all other claims to knowledge, attaches only to universally verified knowledge. All else is opinion or unverified belief.

Initially, the whole body of scientific, or theoretical, knowledge in the older broader sense was included in this privileged knowledge. However, as modernism developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this was narrowed to scientific knowledge that conforms to a positivist paradigm. The use of mathematically quantifiable procedures characteristic of physical science came to be regarded as the indispensable condition for universally verified knowledge. Among other effects, this led the practitioners of other academic disciplines, including educational researchers, to adopt research procedures that could look as much like those of physical science as possible in order to stake a claim for themselves within the privileged realm of verified knowledge having the status of universal and indubitable certainty.

Postmodernism not only rejects the positivist paradigm as a basis for the verification of knowledge claims but denies the very possibility of a universally verifiable knowledge. At first sight, this would seem to mean the abandonment of all claims to a privileged knowledge. Certainly, it has meant a willingness to admit a wider range of knowledge claims into the circle of valid knowledge. However, the idea of a privileged knowledge has by no means been abandoned.

Rorty (1991:28-30), for example, in refuting the charge of relativism, denies that all knowledge claims have equal status. On the contrary, he insists that the claims of the cultural community to which he belongs, which he designates "liberal society", have a privileged status that gives them precedence over all other knowledge claims. He bases this not on the application of some universal criterion but on the perceived practical advantages that follow from the adoption of these beliefs.

In the educational arena, Carr and Kemmis (1986) promote a version of action research that gives a privileged place to knowledge claims based on Habermas' theory of communicative action. After disposing of other models, they put forward the idea of a "critical educational science" (1986:155-176) as providing the basis for a privileged educational knowledge.

While Doll's "post-modern perspective on curriculum" is apparently more open in the discussion of a theoretical base, his discussion of evaluation (1993:172-174) not only involves a negative judgement on modernist knowledge claims but also advocates a privileged status for claims based on his own "transformative" model of learning.

Postmodernism, then, has not meant an end to the idea of a privileged knowledge; a knowledge that has precedence over all other claims to knowledge. It has only meant an end to a universal basis for asserting such a privilege. There are now a number of rival claimants to this privileged status with no agreed basis for determining between them.

Which of the rival claimants prevails in a postmodernist world depends on the dynamics of social power rather than rational argument. In the educational world, in particular, which version of postmodernism prevails, and the extent to which all versions are held in check by a modernist rearguard, depends entirely on who holds power within the relevant educational institution. Since there is no court of appeal to which appeal can be made on the grounds of commonly agreed rational principles, all depends on who is able to win the relevant communal support.

PRAGMATISM IN THE POSTMODERNIST CURRICULUM

In so far as Bernstein (1986:370, 371) is attributing an epistemological pragmatism to Rorty, Habermas and Gadamer he seems to be wrong. Of the three, only Rorty is an epistemological pragmatist. Nevertheless, a social pragmatism is a significant force in the postmo-dernist world and that place is implicitly sanctioned by postmodernism in all its forms.

This is well illustrated by the privileged place that the learning of mathematics and the physical sciences continue to have in the school curriculum in the postmodernist world, even though postmodernism offers no universal basis for determining their superior value to other kinds of learning. Feyerabend (1978:299), who is undoubtedly a postmodernist, argues that science retains this privileged place in education only because of an oppressive alliance between the state and science paralleling earlier alliances between state and church.

No doubt the inherently conservative nature of social institutions and the continuing influence of modernism go some way to explaining this. Yet, given the extent to which postmodernism has changed educational practice in other ways, this is not sufficient to explain the failure to displace these forms of knowledge from their privileged place in the educational curriculum.

Within a modernist framework, this privilege is epistemologically justified by the belief that these forms of knowledge are the models of universally verified knowledge. They provide us with knowledge that, with unique precision and reliability, puts us in touch with reality, with the way things are. For this reason, they merit a privileged place.

Since postmodernism denies that any kind of knowledge can be universally verified, these forms of knowledge clearly lose their epistemological justification for being given a privileged place in learning. But, it should be noted, so does any other kind of knowledge. On postmodernist grounds, no kind of knowledge can have greater intrinsic merit than any other. Knowledge is valued, and can only be valued, by the beliefs of particular historical communities.

While this cuts away the modernist justification for the privileging of mathematics and the physical sciences, it opens the way for their continuing privileged status on other, pragmatist grounds. While no form of knowledge is inherently superior to any other, a particular historical community may determine that a particular form of knowledge merits a privileged place in its education system on the pragmatic grounds that it makes a unique contribution to the achievement of that community's social goals.

It is precisely this pragmatist argument that is increasingly relied on in a postmodernist world to justify the privileging of mathematics and the physical sciences. Pre-eminent among the social goals of the postmodernist society, as in the modern society, is the goal of access to an ever expanding range of consumer goods as the measure of the good life. The very term "standard of living" has come to mean nothing other than the degree of access people have to consumer goods. Some may wish to add other goals to this but, in the social mainstream, these are seen, at best, as enhancing rather than displacing the consumerist lifestyle. This is a social reality that every politician knows very well.

The kind of liberal values that Rorty prizes, on the basis of which he is able to question the dominion of the physical science (1991:35 – 45), have only a secondary place for most people. In the end, these liberal values are supported and valued only so far as they are seen as either contributing to the maintenance of the consumer society or adding a humane face to it.

In this situation, the privileging of the physical sciences and mathematics is justified on the grounds of the unique contribution they

are seen as making to the maintenance of a flourishing consumer society. Other forms of knowledge may have just as much, or just as little, intrinsic value but they do not have the same practical value in achieving the desired social goals. This practical value justifies the privileging of these kinds of knowledge in society's educational institutions in a postmoderist world.

The underlying assumptions of postmodernism, in all its variants, leave no basis for challenging this situation on the ground of intrinsic epistemological value. If there is to be any successful challenge it can only be made either on the grounds of a fundamental inconsistency internal to the relevant belief system or by demonstrating convincingly that the knowledge in question does not make the supposed unique contribution to achieving the desired goals.

Practical Implications for Learning

If postmodernism offers no effective grounds for challenging the continued privileging of the physical sciences, it can and does insist on changes in the way science is contextualised within the curriculum. So, for example, Lovat and Smith (1995:246) argue: "it is the problematical view of science, our world, our reality, and our relationship with the cosmos, rather than merely the science of technical sureties that must inform curriculum work for the future. Science is no longer to be seen as providing answers but as informing human decision making in the context of a problematic and open-ended world.

It is in this area of the desired outcomes and processes of learning that postmodernism has had its greatest impact on education. In modernist education learning outcomes are determinate. Since the knowledge being sought is a knowledge of universal certainties it is possible to determine, on rational grounds, the appropriate outcome of any given learning task. Similarly, the processes of learning require the learner to follow determinate rules in order to achieve the desired outcome.

In postmodernist education, the outcomes are indeterminate and the process is an open-ended process that allows learners to chart their own learning course within broadly defined boundaries. A world of universal rational certainties is replaced with an indeterminate world of multiple meanings within which people are free to choose the meaning that best suits their purposes. "Meanings and answers are both infinite and particular" (Marshall, 1992:192).

As Hargreaves says (1994:56), "we are experiencing a shift from a small number of stable singularities of knowledge and belief to a fluctuating, ever changing plurality of belief systems. Confidence in universalising, all encompassing belief systems is in decline".

An important consequence of this shift is a shift in the relation between teacher and student from a master-novice relation to a collaborative partnership in learning (Smith and Lovat, 1995:240). Wren (1986:12-21) presents the relationship in terms of dialogue in which teacher and learner are "co-equal, co-investigators at every stage of learning". From the earliest age, students are to be seen as sources of knowledge that are equally as important as the teacher.

This is possible, indeed is required, by the postmodernist shift from knowledge as universal certainty to knowledge as the realisation of multiple possibilities of meaning. To make the teacher the sole, or even the primary, source of learning is to close off these multiple possibilities to the students, locking them into the one meaning that has been chosen by the teacher. On the postmodernist world view, with all its variants, good education can only be an open-ended process with indeterminate outcomes.

Yet, it is not a process that occurs altogether without guidance from the teacher. It is the role of the teacher to guide the students in the appropriate process of learning that will empower them for this open-ended learning, and to guide them away from processes that inhibit such learning. Exactly what form this takes will depend on which version of postmodernism is espoused by the teacher.

It may be a model, such as is proposed by Doll (1993:182) employing the rigour of a hermeneutic within an indeterminate world that purposely looks for "different alternatives, relations, connections" from which meaning is actualised. Or it may mean employing a framework of critical reflection leading to praxis based on the theory of Habermas, such as is advocated by Lovat and Smith (1995:248). Or it may mean adopting a constructivist approach that fits well with Rorty's type of pragmatism.

At this point, postmodernism commonly exhibits a strongly authoritarian tendency. In spite of all the talk about collaborative partnership and dialogue of equals, the particular version of postmo-dernism favoured by the teacher, or, more usually, the school leadership, is imposed on students on no other ground than social authority. I recently conducted research in a large school of more than 2,300 students, for example, where a postmodernist constructivist approach was mandated as official school policy for all teaching and learning.

No doubt it would make the educational task extremely difficult, perhaps impossibly so, if students, and/or teachers, were allowed to choose for themselves which of the various postmodernist pathways they wished to follow. Yet, the way in which the authority of the teacher and educational administrator is commonly invoked to impose a particular pathway on students without giving them opportunity to experience the alternatives undermines the postmodernist claim to have introduced a

new era of freedom in learning. No choice could be more fundamental to learning than the choice of the model of learning that is to govern the learning process.

CULTURAL POWER AND AFRICAN EDUCATION

The dominance of the modernist paradigm led the nineteenth and early twentieth century European colonisers in Africa to view Africans as uneducated savages. Because they did not meet the conditions for acquiring authentic knowledge in terms of that paradigm, African educational systems were not merely ignored; they were not even considered as candidates for an educational system. It was a view shared by colonial administrators and missionaries alike.

Indeed, for the more benevolent of the colonisers, bringing Africans the benefits of education was a major goal as a means of lifting them from savagery to "Christian civilisation". Together with modern medical science and Western political organisation, education was seen as one of the great blessings that the colonial presence brought to benighted Africa.

That African societies did provide systematic programs of education – including programs of education for the young – should by now be beyond doubt (Kenyatta, 1978:98-129; Njoroge and Bennaars, 1986:61 – 64; Olatunde and Ademola, 1985:75-78; Tiberondwa, 1978:1-23). In this connection, while there clearly were important informal elements, the description of traditional African education in general by Olatunde and Ademola as "informal" (1978:76) is misleading. Certainly it was not generally conducted by a professional class of educators and schools as distinct social institutions did not exist. Yet there were systematic programs of education, with identifiable learning processes and goals, that were deeply embedded in the African social fabric.

What was lacking were the learning goals and processes that were characteristic of the European educational tradition; learning goals and processes that, in the modernist paradigm, were essential for universally verified knowledge with the status of universal truth. Hence, for the European colonisers, African education did not merit the name "education". At best it was a primitive form of training grounded in primitive superstition that needed to be replaced by enlightened European education in the interests of the African peoples themselves. Only European education, based on the modernist paradigm, would provide Africans with access to the universal truth of verifiable knowledge.

The irony is that this traditional African education incorporated features that, in the postmodernist world, Western educators now want to incorporate in Western educational systems: communality and cooperative endeavour, learning by doing, including structured work-place

learning, the teacher as role model, education as a value-laden activity, play as a means of learning, the everyday significance of the spiritual. There was much that could have been learned by Western educators from the African educational tradition. Yet in the colonial era all this was dismissed as educationally worthless and the moral authority of missionaries joined forces with the political power of colonial administrators to introduce a modernist model of education as the only authentic education.

There need be no doubt that, in terms of theoretical (scientific) knowledge, the Western educational tradition provided something of value that was not well developed in Africa. But the wholesale displacement of the African educational tradition with modernist education, to the extent that it succeeded, had a significantly negative impact on African societies.

Firstly, by imposing an educational system that was a foreign import with no roots in the African cultural tradition, it introduced an irreconcilable conflict of values into African societies. Secondly, by emphasising the primacy of the values of scientific knowledge and technological control as the values that lie at the foundation of human development, it led to an implicit downgrading of other values that are fundamental to human development and that had a significant place in the African educational tradition.

CULTURAL POWER IN THE POSTMODERNIST WORLD

In principle, postmodernism expands the educational horizon, allowing for the validation of a wide range of educational experiences. It might be expected, therefore, that in a postmodernist world there would be a reassessing of the value of the African educational tradition and a weakening of the dominating power of Western educational models on African education. It might be thought that there would be an emergence of new African educational traditions rooted in the African cultural heritage as fully validated forms of education.

However, this overlooks the reality of cultural power and the inability of postmodernism to provide any defence against cultural domination. Modernism sanctioned the cultural domination of Africa by the Western world on the grounds of the universality of the knowledge base in which Western culture was grounded. Postmodernism tolerates the continuation of this cultural domination on the pragmatic grounds that the technological power of Western culture, founded in scientific knowledge, provides the engine that drives human development.

As we noted above in the section on "pragmatism in the post-modernist curriculum", postmodernism provides no sure basis for refuting this pragmatist argument. Any refutation must come from a shift

in values such as is advocated by the Kenyan educator, B. Wanjala Kerre (1992:376):

While Africa cannot isolate herself from the rest of modem civilizations, it is quite obvious that modern cultural values which have been borrowed from the West can no longer promise humanity a balanced and humane lifestyle. Our modem cultures are endemic to the very values that the world so much desires. These are values which in most respects were African.

Africa can therefore take a leaf from her own past and forge an identity that is comprised of:

• a moral code bound by African cultural values that will define individual and social responsibilities.

• spiritual growth that will adequately serve Africa's strong religious tendencies.

• intellectual pursuits to broaden the scope of understanding of our environment, natural laws, and principles and our human capabilities.

• socially valued knowledge, skills and attitudes that will equip an individual with vocational skills in order to be a productive member of society.

• a good sense of leisure and other avocational interests that will make life more complete.

Inherent in this domain of good life are such strong values as family, individual and social responsibilities, respect for human life, love for children, sharing, etc. The good life in the African context will therefore, be one where beside access to food, shelter, clothing and medical care, the individual will have cultivated a balanced view of self in his moral, spiritual and intellectual dimensions of life.

These considerations aside, it should be noted that postmodernism itself is a product of Western culture, deeply rooted in the history and traditions of the Western world. As surely as was modernism, it is a foreign import in Africa. The very use of postmodernist categories to define educational discourse in Africa and about Africa is itself, therefore, a continuation of cultural domination. This creates a dilemma for the postmodernist who wishes to resist postcolonialist forms of domination. However much the postmodernist may protest against such domination, postmodernism provides no defence against it.

The question is: Does either a modernist or postmodernist paradigm best serve the interest of African education? If not, what is the alternative?

A BRIEF CRITICAL REFLECTION

While there remain staunch defenders of modernism, there is no doubt that modernist beliefs are no longer the received social wisdom. Those who hold them must compete for a place with a range of postmodernist beliefs. In this fundamental sense, today's world is decisively a postmodernist world where postmodernist beliefs dominate social practice.

It is a world in which the certainties of modernism have quite decisively lost their universal authority, having the force of certainty only for the brave band of remaining modernist believers. It is a world in which a plurality of belief systems, including systems based on a confession of religious faith, are admitted into public discourse. It is a world in which diverse forms of knowledge and diverse ways of learning can be recognised and the active role of the learner can be acknowledged.

In each of these respects, it seems to me that the postmodernist world is to be welcomed. The certainties of modernism lacked any sure foundation, being founded on nothing better than a blind faith in an autonomous human reason as a universal authority. The exclusion of belief plurality, and especially the exclusion of religious faith, from public discourse served only to truncate public discourse, creating a false facade of social unity that disguised fundamental differences. And modernism's monolithic image of knowledge and learning, with the learner cast in an essentially passive role, not only left many learners without an adequate recognition of their gifts but robbed society of rich human resources.

Yet, while I see no reason to lament the demise of modernism, and rejoice in much of the postmodernist critique, I am not persuaded that postmodernism offers a more satisfactory alternative. There are four respects, in particular, in which it seems to me that postmodernism fails:

1. It provides no effective basis for testing knowledge claims other than the historical consciousness of a human community. Modernism was certainly mistaken in supposing that there is a class of knowledge claims that can be accorded the status of universal certainty. And postmodernism is right in asserting a greater role for our belief systems in shaping our experiences than modernism allowed. Nevertheless, it seems to me that all humans do have meaningful contact with a common reality that provides the basis for an effective, and universal, check on knowledge claims.

2. It provides inadequate grounds for dialogue between different historical and cultural communities. There is no doubt that such factors as historical and cultural context do affect the way we experience the world so that people in different communities do experience the world in significantly different ways. Drawing attention to this is one of the more

valuable contributions of postmodernism. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the common ground on which people from widely divergent historical and cultural communities are able to engage in meaningful dialogue is much greater and more important than postmodernism allows.

3. It generates an uncritical dogmatism with oppressive social consequences, despite all intentions to the contrary. There is no doubt that the intention of many postmodernists is to encourage critical thinking and a context of open, free inquiry in which dogmatism has no place. Yet the absence of any external basis for the critical testing of beliefs inevitably means that this critical thinking and openness only occurs within the framework of a belief system that is not itself open to critical testing. Its correctness can only be asserted by those who hold this system of beliefs.

Yet, because people do believe that their own belief system is right, or at least the best there is, they will use social power to shape social practice in accordance with that belief system. Critical thinking and openness then occur only within the framework of the belief system of those who have the relevant social power, with a consequent disempowering of those who dissent from this belief system. In many cases, this disempowering includes active sanctions against those who dissent from the prevailing belief system.

4. It fails to recognise its own religious roots and, in consequence, generates only a superficial discussion of matters of religious faith. While postmodernism has made it acceptable to introduce matters of religious faith into public discourse, there is no recognition that the whole postmodernist enterprise itself depends on beliefs of a religious nature. As Wentz (1987) has pointed out, the religiousness of humans is not exclusively, or even most fundamentally, identified with formal statements of religious faith framed in the 'language' of the cult. In its most fundamental character it is identified with a belief in a source of order and meaning for human life, whether or not this belief is expressed in traditionally religious terms. On these terms, postmodernism clearly does have religious roots and the recognition of them is vital to a critical evaluation of postmodernism. It is vital also to an effective and fruitful public discussion of the fundamental issues of religious faith.

TAKING OUR BEARINGS

Neither modernism nor postmodernism provides a satisfying account of the human situation at the beginning of 21st century. Modernism's claim to a privileged category of knowledge claims that take precedence over all other claims because of their unique, universally verified status can no longer be sustained. People may, and do, continue to believe in modernism's claim as a normative claim about what ought

to be. However, the very rise of postmodernism as a major intellectual and cultural force means that this belief can no longer be sustained on the basis of rational necessity that compels the assent of all rational persons. It can he sustained only as a dogmatic belief along with the other dogmatic beliefs that are a necessary component of all human belief systems.

Even taken on these more modest terms, modernism poses serious problems. By its requirement that all knowledge claims pass the validation tests of the formalised procedures of modern science in order to be recognised as valid knowledge, it places an impoverishing limitation on knowledge that rests on nothing but modernist dogma.

Does not the artisan, through the skillful shaping of materials, gain a knowledge of these materials that is neither reducible to the categories of science nor in need of validation by the rules of science? Do I not, through the intimacy of our personal relationship, gain a knowledge of my wife that is beyond the reach of science and its validating procedures and yet is as valid as the knowledge gained through science? Is there any reason, other than the dogmas of a modernist world view, why the insight that is encoded in a work of art should not be recognised as a unique insight into the reality of our world of a different kind but having validity equal to that of the formulas of modern science? Is the widespread human experience of the spiritual as a reality distinct from ourselves and our own inner states to be dismissed out of hand merely because it is not permitted by modernist dogma?

To raise these questions is not to validate every knowledge claim that humans may make. Neither is it to reject as valueless the insights of modern science. It is no more than to say that they do not exhaust the possible insights that humans may gain by recognising a diversity of ways in which insight into our world may be gained. It is to say no more than that the elevation of the knowledge of modern science to the status of a privileged knowledge to which all other insights are subordinated results in the impoverishment of our understanding of the world. Once we put aside the dogmas on which the modernist enterprise rests, our human experience of the world presents us with a rich diversity that challenges the restricted modernist view of knowledge and calls us to find new ways of validate knowledge claims.

Postmodernism represents an advance in that, in principle at least, it opens the way for the recognition of a wider range of knowledge sources. Yet in doing so, it leaves us unsatisfied on other grounds.

It is one thing to say that all our knowledge is historically situated, the product of humans situated within particular historical communities. This is, it seems, a reality that modernism ignored in its quest for a universally verified knowledge transcending all historical situations. However, it is not at all obvious that we are enclosed within the histori-

cal situation as the determinant of our experience. It seems clear that we are able, if we make the effort, to engage in mutually meaningful discourse on common ground that cuts across historical and cultural boundaries.

We are able, if we have the will to do so, to find more than Rorty's splits in the enclosing cultural walls that provide toeholds of possible escape from our cultural enclosure (1991:13,14). We can find doorways that open the way to enriching interaction across cultural and historical boundaries. All too often, it is true, these doorways are boarded over by ethnocentric and ideological prejudices that try to enclose all truth within the borders of our own belief system. Yet, when we dare to tear away these prejudices in openness to others, we find the doorways of understanding are there.

Not all postmodernists subscribe to Rorty's explicit doctrine of ethnocentric enclosure. There are those who appear to recognise a need to establish a universal basis for human discourse. However, the enclosure of human experience within an historical community, that characterises all versions of postmodernism, defeats any such enterprise. A human experience enclosed within an historical community can have no ground on which any proposal can be universally validated. Any validation must depend on the belief system of the historical community within which it is formulated and will hold good only for those who share the relevant beliefs of that community.

Postmodernism founders at this point because its challenge to modernism stops short of the most fundamental issue. The most fundamental flaw in the modernist enterprise is the belief that goes back at least to Plato, that human cognition incorporates, in one way or another, the structuring principles of reality. Either human cognition conceptually replicates the structuring principles of reality or the structuring principles of reality are given in the structure of human cognition, whether as conceptual structure or as structuring process. What charact-erised modernism, in common with a long tradition of Western thought, was the belief in the universality of these structuring principles.

Postmodernism breaks with this tradition by challenging the universalist claims for human cognition but, in doing so, retains the belief that human cognition incorporates the structuring principles of reality. This inevitably means that there can be no universal structure to reality; there can only be the diverse structures incorporated in the diverse belief systems of diverse historical communities. However much we may wish otherwise, postmodernism encloses human cognition within the belief systems of these communities.

If we are to find a fruitful way forward that avoids the difficulties posed by both modernism and postmodernism we will have to break

with the belief that the structuring principles of reality are in any form incorporated in human cognition.

ABOUT UNIVERSAL CLAIMS

A respondent to this paper in its original form raised two questions about the possibility of making of universal claims, one question related to education and the other to the moral claims of Christianity. It does not seem to me to be particularly useful to ask whether universal claims can be made. Clearly they can be and are made. Science, after all, is all about making universal claims. And neither Christianity nor any other faith could be a world religion without making universal claims. The important question is the status of these claims.

In the heyday of modernism, the universal claims of science had the status of indubitable certainty. Having been established by a reason that was deemed to have an absolute, universal authority it was known with indubitable certainty that such claims would hold good everywhere and at all times. Postmodernism denies that the claims of science have any such status and, in my view, rightly so.

While not agreeing with everything he says on the subject, it seems to me that Popper is right when he argues (1983:xix – xxxix,159-189) that, while scientific claims can be tested to determine their reliability as universal claims, there is no procedure by which they can be verified to establish their universal validity with indubitable certainty. In other words, a claim that has been, and continues to be, subjected to appropriate tests can he presumed to be universally valid but that presumption is always to be regarded as provisional and fallible, subject to what may be shown by further testing.

This, it seems to me, applies to all universal claims, including claims about education. They may properly be made, and acted on, provided they are subject to appropriate tests to establish their reliability but their universal status is always provisional and fallible, subject to the results of ongoing testing.

As to the moral claims of Christianity, we need to disentangle what is all too often entangled in the pronouncements of Christians. The divine authority of the God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ needs to be disentangled from the human authority of the human community of Christ's disciples. The belief that the God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ speaks to humans with universal authority on moral issues, as well as every other issue of human life, is fundamental to Christian faith. It provides the anchor point for human judgment on all the fundamental issues of life.

The moral principles and codes that are articulated by the human community of Christ's disciples, however, like all other human claims, are, at best, fallible and provisional; they require constant testing in the context of the living community of disciples responding in faith to the authority of God revealed in Christ. This testing may, and will, on occasion show a need to review the articulation of the relevant moral principles and codes to ensure faithfulness to the divine authority to which faith ought always to be responding.

MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION AND THE PROBLEM OF POWER

In so far as it demolishes the monolithic world view of modernism, postmodernism opens the way for education that recognises the validity of multicultural diversity. However, a failure to recognise the dynamics of social power commonly results in a "multicultural" education that is little more than a facade disguising, and justifying, cultural marginalisation.

The modern society united under the political governance of a state can, and frequently does, incorporate a diversity of cultural communities. If it is a just society, free of oppression, it will provide an environment in which each of these cultural communities has equal opportunity to flourish. At the same time, social coherence can be secured only if there is a common civil culture governing the affairs of the civil community of the state.

In today's multicultural, democratic states, this civil culture most often embodies the fundamental cultural values of the cultural community that controls the centres of political power. The participation of the other cultural communities in the civil community is conditional on their acceptance of the core cultural values of this dominant cultural group; a dominance based on possession of the main instruments of social power.

The result of this embedding of the cultural values of one community in the civil culture is the marginalisation of other cultural communities. This, in turn, leads to educational marginalisation as, in the name of such ideals as patriotism and social cohesion, the values of the civil culture are adopted as the core educational values that all educational institutions are expected to uphold. In this context, "multicultural" education, can mean no more than the recognition of cultural diversity as a legitimate feature of society only so far as it is consistent with the core cultural values of the politically dominant cultural group; any cultural values of other communities that are inconsistent with these values are viewed as unacceptable.

In this situation the use of multicultural language merely gives a multicultural facade to a monocultural education with the recognition of

marginal cultural variants. This multicultural facade, in turn, justifies cultural marginalisation by creating an illusion of recognition and respect for cultural diversity.

Postmodernism, as such, provides no defence against such cultural marginalisation. Indeed, the postmodernist ethnocentrism of Richard Rorty (1991:187,188) actively supports it. Cultural marginalisation can be avoided only by a genuine sharing of political power that includes all cultural communities, on a basis of equality of status, in the formation of the civil culture of the relevant society.

TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE

There is room here only to sketch the broadest outlines of a proposed alternative to both modernism and postmodernism.

1. I propose that we recognise that we belong to a structured reality with universal characteristics. This reality is not a reality apart from us, a reality that constitutes an object pole over against ourselves as subjects. We are ourselves wholly embedded in this reality; our thinking and believing are integral components of this reality. To this extent, Rorty is right when he argues (1991:2) that there are no "skyhooks" that will lift us out of the cultural situation in which we live. We are embedded in the reality that we wish to know.

2. This reality has a structured character that is ensured by universal structuring conditions to which we, with all our actions, including our cognitive activity, are subject. This ensures as the context of human life a common reality with qualities that endure through all historical changes, providing a common reference point for human cognition across all historical communities.

3. While this reality has an enduring, structured character, it is not a closed, determinate structure. On the contrary, it is an open, dynamic structure in which change and transformation are structural features. The requirement that we develop new and inventive ways of structuring our world in order to meet new situations is itself one of the structuring conditions of the reality to which we belong.

4. Within this reality we experience objects with their own distinctive, enduring identities distinct from ourselves. While these objects are distinct from us they are not independent of us. Reality involves an intricate network of relationships apart from which nothing exists. Indeed, many of these objects are products of our constructive activity, yet, they have, nonetheless, their own distinct identity. Such objects are not to be limited to sensory objects. At the very least, they include conceptual objects but there is a case, albeit more controversial, for also including imaginative and spiritual objects.

5. Included in this picture of reality are the networks of beliefs that shape our experiences of the object world. Yet, it is a network that is, in turn, shaped by our experiences of the object world. It includes beliefs based on prejudices, preconceptions, misinformation and historically conditioned ethnocentric values as well as those based on careful attention to the character of the experienced objects and the relations between them. While this network is personal to each of us it is formed in the historical social context that has nurtured our lives and carries the indelible marks of that context, with all its prejudices.

6. Knowledge is to be regarded as a human structuring of experience that is required to fit both our network of beliefs and our experience of objects. It neither replicates nor corresponds to the structure of reality. It does not incorporate the structuring principles of reality. It is a human construction occurring within the structure of reality and subject to the twin conditions of coherence with our belief network and coherence with our experience of objects. Our network of beliefs provides the experiential structure that we bring to the object world and within which we seek to accommodate new experiences of that world wherever possible. Yet it does not determine our experiences; the structure of the object world, that is beyond our control, presents us, on occasion, with experiences that cannot be accommodated within our existing belief network. We are then compelled to make adjustments, additions and corrections to our network of beliefs in order to accommodate these new experiences.

7. No one kind of experience has a privileged role in the epistemic enterprise. The full range of human experiences is to be valued for extending our knowledge of the world, subject only to the twin tests of coherence. All sources do not make the same kind of contribution. For a particular purpose one kind will be more valuable than another. Yet there is no basis for rating some sources as having greater intrinsic value than others.

8. Our knowledge constitutes an always fallible map of reality as we have experienced it. It incorporates no infallible foundations. This does not mean, however, that knowledge is characterised by uncertainty. So far as it passes the twin tests of coherence we may use the map with confidence as a reliable and trustworthy guide to our living in the world. A recognition of its fallible character, however, means both that we recognise its limitations and that we stand always ready to make changes in the light of further experiences.

EDUCATION BEYOND MODERNISM AND POSTMODERNISM

If we accept the above broad outline, then education will encourage a recognition of the insights that come from diverse kinds of

human experience. It will not privilege one form of knowledge or one source of knowledge as intrinsically of more value than another. Yet, it will also recognise knowledge 'specialisation' and the unique value of certain kinds of knowledge for the achievement of certain ends.

It will not present any form of knowledge as though it represents governing principles of reality. It will not speak of scientific laws as "laws of nature" but as human formulations responsive to the experience of persistent regularities in a structured reality.

It will encourage students to test critically all knowledge claims for coherence both with the student's own belief network and with experiences of the object world. It will nurture in students a recognition of the fallibility and yet reliability of such critically validated knowledge.

It will lead students to recognise the role of belief networks, and the values that these embody, in shaping knowledge. It will train them to evaluate critically their own belief networks, both in terms of their inner coherence and their coherence with the experienced object world.

It will encourage students to be inventive as active constructors of knowledge. Yet, it will equally encourage them to ground their constructions in the knowledge already constructed by those who have gone before. Teaching will include the imparting of knowledge to students by the teacher as a foundation on which to build, yet within a relationship in which the student is an active and critical constructor, not a passive, unquestioning recipient.

It will foster an education that is historically situated within a particular cultural community yet is open to the insights into the common reality that come from other communities. For Western education, the major challenge is to overcome our deep-seated sense of cultural superiority in order to develop a genuine openness to insights from other cultural communities. We need more than cross-cultural studies that generate an awareness of cultural diversity. We urgently need to foster the kind of openness that learns from the insights into the common reality that come to us from other historical and cultural communities.

For African education, on the other hand, the major challenge is to break away from the colonial heritage that equates education with transplanted European structures and practices. It means developing patterns of education that are situated within the unique situation of contemporary Africa, with the complex patterns of traditional Africa and modernisation that characterise this situation. It will draw on the riches of both the traditional and the modern for the development of an education that fits African situations today as no foreign transplant can.

It is a task that can only be accomplished by African communities themselves. It cannot be accomplished by an elite within these communities, much less by an elite on the fringes of these communities. It must involve grassroots communities to ensure educational structures and

practices that, while open to the world, are situated in the communal life of today's Africa. Only such an education can serve the interests of Africa today.

Theory and practice

The educational strategy outlined above is one that I believe is theoretically sound. Equally important, however, experience in working with it in the practice of education, both as a teacher educator and as an educational consultant, satisfies me that it is both realistic and fruitful in practice.

It promotes a practical recognition of diverse student abilities, excellence as a multidimensional educational quality, critical depth and breadth in the practice of education, enabling non-achievers to achieve, and an educational environment that fosters responsible freedom in the student. In short, it contributes to the development of a practice that outfits all students to be effective yet critical participants in the contemporary world.

A CONFESSIONAL POSTSCRIPT

In the discussion to this point I have deliberately avoided the language of a particular religious faith. I have done this because I believe that dialogue between people of diverse religious faiths is both possible and desirable but that it can occur only if the dialogue does not depend on categories of discourse that are peculiar to a particular faith.

At the same time, I do not believe that such dialogue will be fruitful if the faith of the participants, and its role in shaping their views, is obscured. For this reason, and also for the sake of those who share my faith, I add this brief postscript to identify ways in which my own Christian faith has informed what I have written.

Someone, in responding to the original paper, observed that this confessional postscript explains what goes before it. I do not think it does. Neither the analysis of modernism and postmodernism, nor the alternative to both that I have proposed, is a mere construct of my own faith that can be explained by that faith. They are, I believe, both consistent with this faith and informed by it in significant ways. Yet I am ready to allow the analysis and argument to stand on their own without this postscript. I have added the postscript, neither to explain nor to justify, but in the interests of transparency in dialogue.

Basic to the faith within which I live is the confession that the whole world of human experience, including we humans, is the creation of God in Christ. As such it is a structured reality sustained by the personal governing of God in Christ. Its governing principle is not a

conceptual structure or a set of laws that can be incorporated in human knowledge. It is God himself who, while he can, and should, be acknowledged by us in our knowledge, can never be incorporated in that knowledge.

Because he governs all creation with unfailing faithfulness, all who live within this creation, whether they acknowledge him or not, experience the same world subject to the same structuring conditions. In this common experience of a common creation we can find common ground, a common reference point, with all our fellow humans. Our role in response as humans, subject like other creatures to God's governance, is to care for creation as God's stewards, working with it in inventive, constructive ways to make it a richer, more fulfilling place for all.

The Gospel of redemption in Christ does not remove us from this creation or diminish our calling to the constructive enrichment of creation. On the contrary, by reconciling all things to himself in the cross, God in Christ has reaffirmed, sanctified and guaranteed the fulfillment of our calling as his stewards in this creation, a calling that is not for our own sakes alone but for the sake our fellow humans and of all creation.

I hope it will be clear from what I have written that I do not regard my Christian faith as a wall of dogma behind which I can retreat to escape from the criticism of those who do not share this faith. On the contrary, it is basic to this faith that, since we all live in the one creation governed by the one God, I can only engage in any enterprise with integrity in open interaction with all who share an interest in that enterprise, regardless of the faith they confess. As sharers of the common reality that is creation they also will have insights into that reality from which I can, and indeed must, learn in order to proceed with integrity.

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PART III

STORYING AND RE-STORYING

CHAPTER VI

BUILDING AND REBUILDING THE INDIVIDUAL AS A TELEOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF EDUCATIONAL IMAGINARY: A STUDY OF ROMANIAN FAIRY-TALES

STEFAN A. D. POPENICI

Romania is, in this very moment, a good example of an agonizing society. The main cause of this state is represented by the compromising and falling of the individual's and society's fundamental values. It is now mandatory to find solutions for passing through the actual crisis. For the great majority of contemporary societies, the myth-based cultural productions are the keepers of the fundamental values. The fairy tale is a type of narrative with initiative scenery, which derives from its primary utility as an ancient cultural ceremony. Its teleological function overlaps with the changing of the individual's ontological condition. Therefore, the fairy tale reveals its usefulness in building narratives by which identity can be inculcated to abet the individual's rebuilding. It can establish some patterns to fulfil the necessary coordinates for the "man of the Citadel (Polis)".

From an economic point of view, Romania was the best in comparison with the other ex-communist countries. With an economic potential far better than the other communist countries, Romania did not have external debts and its foreign currency reserves were appreciable in December 1989. It was an excellent start for establishing the democracy and the market economy. What is the reason for Romania's amazing loss both economically and in its functioning as a civil society?

Leaving out of discussion the big errors of economic strategy, I will try in the first part of my study to analyze briefly the causes of this matter. Briefly, the first element which supported the failure of a country with a big potential was the fact that the communist regime used for its own legitimacy and function a number of fundamental values which were artificially but extremely efficiently linked with the communist ideology or even with the dictator himself. Therefore, the momentous events of '1989' were not only the end of the dictatorship and the communist regime, but also represented a total rejection of all the values connected to it. So, it is perfectly understandable why such fundamental values as "respect for the law", "citizenship", "respect for the work", "discipline" or "national identities" are unacceptable for a large part of

Romanian society nowadays. They are still perceived (understood) as communist elements and are often rejected even unconsciously.

On the other hand, the most important axiological reference points, which were not compromised or forbidden during the communist regime, were eliminated during post-communism. Before 1989, despite the policy of the communist regime there were different ways of survival of the positive values by means of so-called "cultural dissidence" represented by preservation of authentic popular creations and high-quality culture. It must be underlined that after the revolution in December the "cultural dissidence" was replaced by a big production of "*kitsch* culture".

The most important institutions of the Romanian society were strongly affected by the phenomena we are talking about. The Family was and is still not only under great economic and social pressure, but is also affected by the lack of opportunities concerning education. The Educational System would have been expected to replace the failure of the Family in educating the young generations as individuals and citizens, but it is confronted not only with an economic blockade but also with major problems in the mentality of its own actors.

The reform of the Romanian educational system is already under-way for 9 years and still has not achieved even the minimum expected results. The lack of training and the irresponsibility of the Romanian political leadership class represent another important cause of the functional incapacity of the educational system.

The Church is not at this moment able to provide the standard of stability needed by the Romanian society. This is the result of both the attacks against it from the different religious parties because of its collaborationism with the communist regime, and also because of the Orthodox Church's own policy of isolation.

The consequences of our agitated history are still undermining the axiological basis and, of course, the cultural potential of Romania. The communist totalitarianism with its disastrous social and individual effects had struggled constantly against all the values not supportive of the communist ideology. The chaos and the lack of principles during the post-communist period are a direct consequence of this long period of militant atheism and indoctrination. The occult interests of a part of the Romanian political leading class, which is ridiculously imitating the dictatorial and attitudinal model of the fallen communist leaders, is worsening the situation. Actually, ex-activists from the lower and therefore not very well known levels of the Communist Party form a big part of our political class.

Being one of the oldest nations of Europe, the Romanians are preserving, still untampered with, some 4000 years of old customs. Due to its strong culture, and its outstanding figures – Eminescu, Brancusi,

Eliade, Eugene Ionesco, Cioran and many others which are, unfortunately, less known in the Western world because of a lack in our cultural policy – Romania is still a country with a big potential. Mircea Eliade wrote in 1953:

> Being a part of Europe in body and in spirit, can we still be sacrificed without this sacrifice to endanger the spiritual existence and integrity of Europe itself? On the answer History will give to this question depends not only our survival as a nation, but also the survival of the Western world.

Even if Romania has a remarkable cultural tradition it is still an agonizing country, which suffers from both the cultural and the economic points of view. The new generations have lost their family education and lack high-quality schools (the schools are compromised by the very low professional level and the questionable morality of some teachers). In comparison with the period between the two World Wars, when the Romanian schools gave birth to exceptional generations and outstanding figures of the Romanian and Western cultures, we can say the break is complete. Unable to deny these objective facts, the decision makers of our educational system have tried to avoid admitting their own incapacity.

Jean Piaget made a fundamental distinction between two types of functional utilities (primary and secondary) which are, in fact, values. The secondary utilities lead to the values of efficiency, while the primary utilities lead to the values of finality. The values of efficiency relate to the economic field and determine the functional energetics of the system. The values of finality are the ideal values, individual and collective as points of reference in defining the fundamental concepts (which depend on the judgments of value). The values of finality and efficiency even if separated, are both of a vital importance in the functioning of the system.

Unfortunately, Romania is now a case study for the effects of replacing the values of finality and efficiency with non-values or even with negative values on the scale of a whole society. Despite its traditions, the Romanian school suppresses the initiatives, the creativity, and the freedom of thinking. By its whole attitude, the Romanian educational system annuls personality, stimulating a false spirit of competition centered on an exaggerated ego.

Instead of creating capacities, the system is obviously based on memorizing. Instead of cultivating citizenship, it replaces national identity with an exaggerated cosmopolitanism or extreme nationalism. The first attempts of remediating these disastrous situations have been

undertaken only since 1998 but they have been blocked for various reasons: lack of money, wrong ideas or political incompetence (unfortunately our political leaders are not used to requesting evidence and testimony as should be normal).

An emergency intervention is obviously needed at this moment to prevent the point at which nothing is any longer possible. A profound analysis of communism in Romania has not been made till now and there are no reasons to believe it will be made soon. Neither has there been any analysis of the post-communist disaster. That is why the rare attempts to change this situation were not directed to profound matters, but centered mainly on economic problems, which are not always of first importance.

So, the beginning of 'reform' was, in a way, unnatural because it tried to change mentalities instead of explaining the new values meant to replace what needed to be replaced. Using a metaphor, Romania was in the position of a sick person which goes to the doctor and, instead of a diagnostic and a proper treatment, gets a pain killer and is sent to die at home. The rebuilding of economy and of Romanian society, of Polis and of the individual, must have as a starting point the revitalization of the values of finality. These structures are the basis for rebuilding the individual and any contemporary democratic society.

The values cannot becomes functional only by their enunciation. As John Dewey noted: "All reforms based only on a text of law or on threat with legal penalties or on changes in mechanical or external arrangements are transitory and sterile" (Dewey, 1991). Even if in Romania's legislative field there may appear some values of finality and efficiency, they still have not impacted everyday reality because they are only vaguely enunciated in the legislature with no patterns created to apply them effectively.

Programs and deadlines do not support them. Marcuse said that values *become*, not that they are. Even if values are about an ideal, they refer to a future possible, reachable purpose. Therefore, the simple enunciation of some values is not enough; specific pattern is needed to *make* them real.

Another characteristic of values is that they can't be imposed. Imposing a set of values leads either to their rejection by an individual-/group of people or to a mimed assimilation and functioning. Values can only be proposed, and in a very serious and direct way. They can be discussed, proved and adopted. There are in every culture sources for values of efficiency and values of finality.

Due to certain conditions (part of which were explained above) in Romania there are still some possible centers or axiological points of reference. Good examples for these are the Romanian fairy-tales. The fairy tale belongs generally to collective imaginary and particularly to

the educational imaginary. It represents a narrative pathway of great axiological importance. The popular fairy tale is a synthetic epic that adopts and includes images, motifs and symbols common to all folklore George Calinescu noted: "The fairy tale is a vast epic genre far vaster than the novel, being at the same time mythology, ethics, science, moral observation, etc." (Calinescu, 1968).

Marie Louise von Franz continues this idea: "Fairy tales are the purest and simplest expression of collective unconscious psychic processes. They represent the archetypes in their simplest, barest and most concise form" (Franz, 1970, p. 1). In an article published in *The European Journal of Philosophy*, Mark Colby noted: "Human actions are generally objective stories, all socialized human beings are co-authors to stories in which they are in unique-reflexive relationships" (Colby, 1995, p. 134). With a well-known initiatic role, this type of popular narratives subtly and efficiently propose the change of the individual ontological condition. This matter was noticed, but unfortu-nately was not analyzed. Mircea Eliade noted in one of his famous papers "Myth and Reality":

"The fairy tale repeats the 'initiation' to the imaginary level. It constitutes entertainment or an evasion only for the trivial conscious-ness; and especially for modern people's consciousness while in the soul's deep regions, initiatic sceneries keep their one gravity and continue to send their message, to operate their changes. Without realizing and thinking it only an amusement or an escape, the man living in modern society benefits from this magic initiation given by the fairy tale" (Eliade, 1978, p. 189).

Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre underlined the fact that identity is not ontological pre-offered, – it is a result of actions (narra-tives) which are interrelated. In these "stories" by which identity is inculcated the individual is at the same time co-author and character. This certain way of regarding ontological reality comes close to under-standing the importance of these stories' 'imaginary' as visualized by the individual. If they fulfill certain conditions, these stories inculcate surprisingly forceful identity, sometimes even stronger than the real stories.

A delimitation of the fantastic semantic is compulsory. Hegel considered fantastic symbolism to be a result of the relationship and difference between its meaning and its representation. In Hegel's work, the fantastic is seen as a premise to artistic and religious representations. A definition more close to our interests is offered by Roger Caillois in 'Au coeur du fantastique': "Any type of fantastic is a damage to the recognized order, an overflowing of the inadmissible in the income-pliantly daily absoluteness".

Defining the fantastic and its characteristics is very important for the understanding of the imaginary's educational force T. Todorov noted

in *Introduction a la litterature fantastique* that ambiguity is what gives life to the fantastic. This derives from the fact that the reader can explain the events presented to him either by a causal or by a supernatural explanation: "The possibility to hesitate between these two types creates the fantastic effect, – 'I am tempted to believe' is the expression, which resumes the spirit of fantastic. The absolute trust as well as the total distrust, takes us away from the borders of fantastic. Fantastic implies rather the reader's integration into the characters' world." (Todorov, 1970, pp. 30-35).

By involving the reader in the fantastic story he is given a path-way that will become his *own* story. The fairy tale improves this attribute with magic-ritual formulas with initiatic character. Their role is to destructure the conscious psychic from the borders of the real to allow "living" the story. The reader is co-participant in the story and his integration in the new space is a sine-qua-non condition for the progress of the story. The Romanian fairy tale has both universal motives and themes and specific elements, which are very important.

Obviously, the Romanian fairy tales have an initiatic formative structure. Even the introductory standard wording has these charac-teristics. The introductory, medium, and endings institute oppositions of real/unreal, affirmative/negative type. Their purpose is to destructure the psyche to allow a movement in a different reality of the story. This type of opposition subtly underlines the fantastic's character for the reader to reach that "I am tempted to believe" (Todorov). We can analyze one example:

"(1) It happened once (or Once upon a time) /, (2) as never/, (3) if it didn't happen, it would not have been told/, (4) since the poplar has had pears and the osier has had flowering ends..." (this is the most frequent initial formula in Romanian fairy tales!).

It happened once (Once upon a time) – is the announcement for a story. We are told that something happened once, and the action is settled in the real world. As never – formula settled apparently in the imaginary world. It gives the sentence a new meaning. This wording built on real/unreal structure announces that something unrepeatable has happened.

"Once" is canceled by "never" and this fact places the action from the very beginning in fantastic space. The ambiguity is the result of surely choosing just one of the interpretations. If it didn't happen, it would not have been told – this sentence asserts surely the existence of the facts which are about to be told. The argument is interesting: it happens because it is told.

The wording is synonymous with existing, the word being the proof of existence. The existence is put under the sign of probability (it might be) since the poplar has had pears and the osier has had flowering

ends – after settling the real by wording, these formulas reestablish ambiguity.

Diagrammatically, we can present the whole structure:

UNREAL	TRUTHFUL	ABSURD

As we said, this type of formula is supposed to prepare the access in the fantastic universe. This is necessary for the reader to follow the narrative pathway. As Mircea Eliade noted, the fairy tale imagines the structure of a very serious and responsible adventure, which comes, in fact, to scenery of initiation: we always find the proofs of initiation. "The essence of the fairy tales refers to a very serious reality: initiation which is the passage through a symbolic death and resurrection, a passage from ignorance and innocence to the adult's spiritual age" (Eliade, 1978, p. 188).

The analysis of the main characters in Romanian fairy tales, seems to be the most proper way of revealing the fairy tale's initiatic character. Meanwhile, the analysis at this level has the great advantage of revealing the axiological structure, which marks the narrative pathway.

FAT-FRUMOS/PRINCE HANDSOME

The main male character is the heroic archetype in the Romanian fairy tale. His main features are honesty, virtue, bravery, intelligence, knowledge and some supernatural attributes. He impersonates the ontological and axiological status of humanity. Using John Campbell's expression, he is the prototype of humanity's cultural heroism. On the character drawing, one can notice easily a concentration upon internal beauty and ethical appearance. In many fairy tales there is a tendency to hide this physical, moral and intellectual feature under a mask of incompetence, stupidity and laziness.

The purpose is to underline the idea that the individual's value, intelligence and genius are hidden attributes, expressed in the things realized. The difficulties in life show the real individual value. "For a very long time, Prâslea's obedience remains hidden and dissimulated under a rejecting appearance; but when the critical moment arrives, he drops the pretended idiocy and repugnant image and he becomes a splendid Prince Handsome" (Saineanu, 1978, p. 357).

Petrea Fat Frumos (Prince Handsome) was "uncanny and brave, but nobody, on the whole earth, knew that he is brave" (*Petrea Fat Frumos*). The attribute in his name – Handsome – not only that doesn't refer to his physical part (as it looks), but is missing in the majority of

fairy tales. He gains his beauty by his cleverness or even by cheating his competitors, from whom he steals magic things. Prince Handsome is a complex model, a building of personality. He appears in the story as a character supposed to reestablish the cosmic and human equilibrium mined by his traditional competitors: stealing of the sun/moon, of a beautiful girl, of a fairy, of some magic things. He will always return in the community of origin as an expert, after he passes the difficulties.

The heroic return is the symbolic reply of the educational pathway, which can be found in any formal/unformal institute of education. Any taught lesson has as final objective the educated man's return as an expert in his original community. Prince Handsome always does essential facts, ideal acts because he is a human archetype. In this way he provides the access to paradigms exceeding the immanent or transcendent, being in the totality of the human condition.

The French philosopher Georges Gusdorf was right under this aspect when he noted: "The Romanian myths offer descriptions of the real man which are more accurate than those of the professional thinkers" (Gusdorf, 1996, 260).

We can schematize the narrative pathway of the Romanian fairy tale, which gravitates around Prince Handsome, the prototype hero: The reader's integration in the fantastic space. The integration in the narrative universe resonates individually, being made by the introductory wording. The following of the whole prototype hero's pathway by the reader.

They both follow an initiatic pathway, taking part in many difficulties of this kind.

– The symbolic, initiatic death and resurrection. This episode has not been a part of all the texts, but it is a widely represented motif. It symbolizes the evolution from "nature" to "culture"; "resurrection" means the arrival to a new ontological level.

– The return in the community of origin (the myth of eternal return). It is a rule always followed, provided that the hero's return means the fulfillment of the difficulties and the restoration of the cosmic equilibrium.

The myth of eternal return symbolizes the periodical regeneration of the world and remembers the fact that people have to join this futures and in this way people will be able to integrate in the universe to which they belong. Prince Handsome is returned in the same place follows the same pathway. He reestablishes the previous order by returning in the point of his departure. But his ontological condition is not the same anymore; he is on superior level, he is an "expert. He becomes a reversed model.

– The end of the narrative route – the emergence from fantastic. It is a stage realized by using final wordings. The reader returns in the

point of departure, exactly like Prince Charming, but he is "different" as well. He recognized his independence in a different ontological horizon.

The actor Prince Handsome is not characterized by individualism. He always accomplishes his mission getting help from auxiliary heroes. He brings them to his side because of his moral qualities (most often), by chance or because of his capacity to understand some texts or messages. The main character doesn't solve his problems alone, he is always surrounded by his friends and they all form a team. His weapons and his friends seem to be the crucial elements for his success. His horse, which is usually a good speaker, is devoted, wise and has magic powers. It is a very good teacher and it trains Prince Handsome (Fat Frumos) as did the centaur Chiron. In the same way like Prince Handsome it has wonderful attributes hidden under a rejecting mask. It reveals its powers only after it is discovered by the hero and taken care of for 3, 7 or 9 (magic numbers) days.

The weapons are also chosen from those, which are the rustiest, and less interesting. But they have magic attributes, sometimes by contagion. Only weapons discovered and cleaned by Prince Handsome have these attributes. Insects (bees, ants, fish or birds) which he saves from death help him. In the difficult moments these representatives of nature get magic powers and make success possible. Some authors classified entire series of fairy tales in vast cycles of grateful animals (*Saineanu*). The community's 'regaining' is proposed in a double direction. The story brings subtle but strong arguments for the community spirit by this beneficial gathering of the hero with auxiliary characters. On the other hand the action has direct effects on the community, being reflected straight into it.

Prince Handsome's enemies are different. The *kites* (*Zmeii*) are giant humanoids and they are traditional enemies for the fairy tale's hero. They are mortals but they have magic features and fabulous powers. They even have the capacity to change their appearance. Having a low intelligence they are still very shrewd. The kites have the customs and organization of people; they have houses, palaces, kids, and parents. They want to marry princesses and sometimes they have extraordinary beautiful daughters. Being very similar to people, they are always placed "on the other land". This space doesn't look like the Christian "hell" and is sometimes more beautiful than the earth.

All the positive hero's ethical attributes are underlined by the kites' negative character presentation. Even if one can't see in the fairy tales any kind of understanding for these characters because they are negative by definition, they still have accents of humanity. The kites have some primary qualities – hypertrophied (force, for example) – but they have lost the human superior qualities. The kites are an example of

losing harmony because of unilaterality and of the violence gained by unilateraltiy.

Even if the kite looks like reply of Prince Handsome, his negative features are reasonably presented. They subtly summarize the maximum limits of the disgraced category.

The Dragons are fabulous monsters, which belong to a different species. They have extraordinary size, being the main representation of malefic forces. They embody the profound evil, symbolizing the complete separation from humanity. The dragons are man-eating creatures and this attribute underlines their opposition to man.

In fairy tales this negative characters represent a very serious warning. As Mircea Vulcanescu (a great Romanian philosopher killed at a young age in a communist prison) said, the dragon and kite cross our way only in fairy tales. But this happens only because: "We are used to give the dragons a material face. But if we refer forward to its ancestral meaning of evil spirit, we can feel nowadays both its blaze and its evil" (Vulcanescu, 1991, p. 52).

The fairy tale represents a very interesting form of Utopia. More accurately, it is a complex form of "Utopian past". By mistake, Utopia was always considered to be in relationship with the future. This is true only to a certain extent. To clear this, we can use the definition offered by Krishan Kumar in "Utopianism": "Utopia describes an impossible perfection which still, in a certain meaning, does not exceed what is feasible in the human condition" (Kumar, 1998, p.31).

The past can play the same role which Utopia traditionally used to play: to transcend reality in order to propose a new, ideal reality. Transposed in the fantastic attraction to a reality that is probably superior to the present one, this force of Utopia is found in history. *Paideia* is basically a Utopia of the Greek antique culture. The Polis is a Utopia – we can ignore the term's derogatory connotations – so that it reveals its force of attraction. We can give many examples. The societies, the citadels, the buildings and the ideal characters seem to be more frequent in the past than in the future. Anyway, they have a greater force of attraction. They were "fulfilled" once. They are desirable.

The fairy tale is a story that "happened once". It proposes very seriously an ethical, ecologic, totally human "modus vivendi". Its 'wording' proves the existence of the fact as we said before. From this point to Gadamer's famous remark – "The Existence (*Dasein*), which can be understood, is Language" – is only one step. But if Gadamer, by this remark, was building the foundation for an ontology of Hermeneutics, the Romanian fairy tale by a narrative route moves the accent proposing to the reader a Hermeneutics of ontology. The fairy tale's metaphysical conscience exceeds and synthesizes fundamental polarities which, during postmodernism are reconsidered by philosophy: the world

"over here" with the world "beyond", the "beauty" with the "ugly", the "ideal" with the "purpose", the "immanent " with the "transcendental", the "essence" with the "phenomenon", the "good " with the "evil", the "individual" with the "community" etc.

The individual's rebuilding appears for contemporary society to be the obvious condition of passing through actual crisis. The educational project for a free conscience that is aware of its own freedom has, as any project, a utopian foundation. The project is basically the summation of wishes and aspirations oriented to building a desired future. The educational 'imaginary' is the most proper way of non-aggressively establishing the desired moral and civic values. As a form of educational 'imaginary', the fairy tale obviously proposes a narrative initiatic route that aspires to project the individual (reader) into a new ontological reality.

Prince Handsome is a good example of utopian past embodiment which, being possibly human, is told on the purpose of founding a future human history. The Romanian peasant doesn't overlap the Beauty (attached to the hero's name – Prince Handsome) with the Good. But Good is not complete without beauty. The popular fairy tale hero will end by a compulsory possession of both these attributes. There are exceptions to this rule in any popular Romanian fairy tales. The fairy tale reestablishes by chance the actuality of *kalos kagatos*. Prince Handsome is exactly the man Socrates desired: the man gifted both with external and internal beauty. The Athenian educational ideal appears to be transposed onto the "project" proposed by the folklore fantastic narrative. This is very important: after 2000 years of misapprehension postmodern philosophy announces a redefining of the Aristotelian conception of "man" and "Polis" and the sentence that establishes "man" as *zoon politikon* becomes "Polis". It is established (Pagano, 1988, Holt) that "man" must be understood as a (complex) "human being" which becomes Polis, but the Polis is dependent on the axiological-ontologic level of the human being to be – as postmodernists say – "Ecopolis". This change determines also a new definition of *kalos kagatos*. A very good specialist said that in Romanian fairy tales "it is not only the fact that Good always wins, but it also has a kind of priority related to the beauty of attitude" (Mehedinti, 1995, p. 139).

In Romanian folklore there is also a priority for moral beauty. When Prince Handsome from Tear goes to save Genar's daughter he meets close to the forest a mosquito agonizing on the hot sand." Prince Handsome, the mosquito said, take me to the forest?" The hero stops and saves the small creature. Following his way, he finds a crab so much burnt by the sun it doesn't have the power to reach the water. Prince Handsome stops again and takes the crab to the sea. Even if he is late, the wanderer stops to help small creatures because there is not in

nature's harmony permission to destroy life when it is so easy to save it. If he would have passed by he would have been 'on time', but he would have done an "*ugly*" thing. Prince Handsome has what we call nowadays an ecologic conscience. He does not only reestablish the cosmic equilibrium as a hero, but he also maintains it with unselfishness. The explanation for Prince Handsome behavior comes also from the Romanian peasant's understanding of what chief Seattle is said to have written wrote to the President of the United States: "All the things are interconnected. Everything that happens to the Earth happens also to its sons."

It is obvious that the space where this research has been acted out allows only a brief sketch of possible solutions offered by the educative 'imaginary' of the Romanian fairy tale. But some arguments are presented in favor of the idea that it can be a possible foundation for building man's "future histories"

On the other hand, perhaps this paper does supply some effective arguments for a Cartesian use of the "Utopian past" in building the desired future. The fairy tale's narrative route both exceeds and brings into the 'same' place two points of reference: "the nostalgia for origins" and "the attraction of the future."

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CHAPTER VII

RE-STORYING OF THE RE-STORYING OF THE STORY OF BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT

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NARRATIVE AND STORY OF BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT

The Buddha's Enlightenment has been transmitted to us in the form of narrative text in the Tipitaka, the Buddhist Scriptures. Behind these texts lies the Story of Buddha's Enlightenment, and from these texts several stories can be derived. Behind these stories lie fabulae, events, agents, actors and writers. Before proposing some prospective contribution of the Story of Buddha's Enlightenment to Civil Society, it is opportune to clear up the basic concepts around this topic, so that we may easily share the same or closely the same understanding.

The definition of Narratology by Mieke Bal reads: "Narratology is the theory of narrative texts". According to this theory, a narrative text or simply narrative can belong to various genres as novel, novella, short story, fairy tale, newspaper article, biography, myth, religious topic or comic strip (this last genre is objectionable) (see Bal, 1992, p. 4). The essential element of a narrative is that it is a set of language signs that tells a story. Not all the texts or sets of language signs are narratives, because some of them may not tell a story at all, as jokes, nonsense talks, scoldings and some comic strips seem to represent no story.

Narratives of Buddha's Enlightenment are a collection of texts found in the primary Scriptures of Buddhism called the Tipitaka or the Three Baskets. The Tipitaka as a whole is a long narrative text about Buddha's life and teaching, compiled in a non-systematic whole. It is an accumulation of narrative texts transcribing a lot of stories concerning episodes of life and pieces of teaching, some long, some short and some of middle length. There are even short formulae and schematic short notes.

The Enlightenment Narratives are dispersed in many places of different genres and styles. To have an understanding there is a need of re-storying. It is not surprising in such a condition that several stories can be retrieved according to the paradigms and level of knowledge in each paradigm. We call these retrieved stories the re-stories or simply stories of stories; and the act of such retrieving the 're-storying'. According to Narratology, behind all these re-stories, there is an Original Story which all Enlightenment Narratives in the Tipitaka

transcribe or tell, because a narrative is not any text, but a text that tells a story as in Bal's words: "A narrative text is a text in which a narrative agent tells a story" (Bal, 1992, p. 119).

Before going further, let us first inquire what a story is. Bal says: "A story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner (Bal, 1992, p. 5). To save the situation, let us inquire immediately what a fabula is and Bal again offers the answer: "A fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors" (Bal, 1992, p. 5). Two more concepts are implied here: "event" and "actor." An actor is a performer of actions by causing or experiencing an event, which is the transition from one state of affairs to another.

It is time now to apply all the above to our case of Narrative Enlightenment, as follows:

There are many narrative texts about Buddha's Enlightenment dispersed in the Tipitaka. The liaison that systematizes all these narratives together is a story – the Story of Buddha's Enlightenment – hidden actively behind all these texts, and this story is the concretization of a fabula that preceded it. The fabula in our case is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by Buddha and his entourage.

It would be too long to collect here all the narratives of Buddha's Enlightenment, and it is not necessary for our actual purpose. We know that they are over there in the Tipitaka. The Original Story is hidden there invisible but active to generate indefinite re-stories. Hence more and more new stories are possible, and in fact there are many of them already in existence. I shall expose here one which seems to be the most common among the Buddha's followers of our time.

POPULAR STORY OF BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT

Each story which is retrieved from the Tipitaka narrative is a re-storying and becomes the story of the teller or tellers. As mentioned above, there are indefinite possibilities, and in reality there are many stories. For the purpose of our actual consideration, I shall relate the story popular in Thailand as an example.

The Buddha is the honorific name, given to him by his followers after his enlightenment, in the same manner as Jesus is honored as the Christ by the Christians. His original name is Siddhattha and Gotama is his family name. He was born as the crown prince to the Sakya Kingdom which is actually in Nepal close to the border of India. He was perfect in all respects: physically, morally and intellectually. In his youth he had the chance to learn all the knowledge available in his kingdom and his father, King Suddhodana, hoped that he would be his glorious successor on the throne of Kapilavastu. However at the age of twenty-

nine, he had the visions of an old man, a sick man, a corpse, and a hermit. He left his palace surreptitiously with a lofty determination to understand the meaning of life, so as to find the way out of suffering. He sought knowledge from all the well-known gurus of his time as Alara the hermit, Uddaka the son of Rama, but he still felt unsatisfied. As no more gurus were available to approach for the further test, he decided to launch his own experiments, first by a kind of the strictest asceticism. He took the forest of Uruvela for this exceptional experimentation. He resolved to strive for overcoming attachment to sensual pleasures by intense effort, trying to dominate all tendencies by the force of his will. He practiced non-breathing meditations, though they produced fierce headaches, abdomenal pains, and burning heat all over his body. He reduced his food to a few drops of bean soup per day, until he became so weak and boney that he could hardly stand and his body hair fell out. At this point, he felt that it was not possible for a human being to go further in such asceticism and still live on. He realized that though he had developed clarity of mind and energy, his body and mind were pained and untranquil, so that he could not carry on with his quest for truth. He decided to abandon the experiments of all kinds of harsh asceticism which had taken him the last six years.

At this point, Siddhattha felt for a moment helpless and hopeless, but suddenly a flash came to his mind that there was another path to experiment: it is the Middle Way between his luxurious life in the palace and the strict ascetic life in the forest. He then remembered a meditative state that he had once spontaneously experienced while in his childhood, attending the plough ceremony of his royal father, he concentrated on the earth being cut by the plough and went into a trance or *jnana* which was a status of deep calm, blissful joy and tranquil happiness. He decided to resume food to have energy for the new experiments. He had to overcome hesitations represented in the form of Mara the Tempter and his legion, but Siddhattha was determined and sure in his path now. Finally the earth goddess appeared to confirm his right path and helped scatter away Mara together with his legion. Now Siddhattha overcoming all obstacles, in calm atmosphere, internally and externally, after seating himself under a bo tree, gradually developed his meditation from the first to the fourth *jnana*, a state of great equanimity, mental brightness and purity. In that same moonlit night, he could further his meditation to the threefold knowledge of the Enlightenment: firstly the memory of all his own previous life; secondly the rebirths of others according to their karma and the destruction of spiritual faults which fetter their mind and keep it ignorantly unenlightened; thirdly the omniscience which is the perfect Enlightenment. At that moment he became the new Buddha at the dawn of that full-moon of Visakha month when he was 35 years old.

He stood and walked there around the bo tree to enjoy his Enlightenment for 4 weeks, as all the new Buddhas in the past had the custom to do. After reflecting on what he knew from his Enlightenment, he realized that the Dhamma that he had discovered was too profound, subtle and beyond the sphere of human reason to catch. Then a god named Brahma Sahampati approached him and implored him to share by *metta* his precious wisdom to gods and men. The Buddha then used his mind-reading powers to survey humanity and saw that some would be disposed to gain profit from his teaching. So he decided to share his Enlightenment. At that moment he changed his status from Pacceka-Buddha to become Sammasam-Buddha, that is the Buddha who teaches others.

To support this main story, the Tipitaka also provides a supporting story to explain why Siddhattha (before the Enlightenment) could survive extraordinary asceticism and not succumb to failure. It runs as follows according to the popular story:

In one of his innumerable previous lives, about a hundred thousand eons ago, as an ascetic named Sumedha, he met and became disciple of the Buddha of the time named Dipankara Buddha. He resolved to strive for Buddhahood, knowing that he had to accumulate more and more merits in his numerous lives to come until he would be ready in his last life, and he accomplished it in the life as Siddhattha.

This is the Popular Re-storying of the Original Story of the Tipitaka Narrative that has influenced the lives of the Thai people and all the peoples of Theravada tradition for centuries. Lately there came a man named Nguam Panich who was not satisfied with that popular story, thinking that it does not comply with the intention of the Buddha, or in the words of our terminology, it is too far away from the Original Story. He re-storied and made another story according to what he thought should be, and he lived strictly by it. He is known now to the World as the famous Buddhadasa Bhikku.

LIFE AND WORK OF BUDDHADASA

Nguam Panich was born on May 21, 1906 and grew up in Chaiya of Surat-thani province in the Southern part of Thailand, a son of a middle class local merchant of Chinese ancestors. From an early age, he was devoted to Buddha's life and teaching according to the popular story. He became a monk and went to Bangkok to get a formal education in Buddhism, but he was not so successful with the traditional instructtion: he failed in the 4th grade of Pali Examination which has altogether 9 grades. He returned to his native province and revived an abandoned temple in the deep forest. There he lived alone at first, meditating and learning according to his own intuition. Little by little he re-storied

Buddha' Story of Enlightenment and systematized all into a new story and put it into a narrative by preaching and publishing. He gained more and more disciples, especially among the foreigners who visited him, learned from him, practiced under him and propagated his new interpretation of Buddhism. In Thailand he could attract only a few disciples, but a huge number of lay followers and a lot of controversies on the part of the traditional scholars. He became well known because of his peculiar teaching and most of the ordinary people liked it because of its peculiarity. Only a few took it seriously as their own story. His influence is more sensible among the lay intellectuals, especially foreignners, because his interpretations sound something like Postmo-dernism. Many of his books are translated and published in English and many other languages, e.g., *Toward Truth*, *Handbook for Mankind*, *Everyday Language and Dhamma Language*, *No Religion*!, *Nibbhana Exists in Samsara*, *Looking Within*, *Me and Mine*, *Conditioned Genesis*, *Buddhism in Brief*, etc.

BUDDHADASA'S RE-STORYING

Buddhadasa Bhikku is a scholar but not an academic. He is a scholar because his thought is of academic interest and the scholars accept it into scholarly discussion whether accepting or rejecting his thoughts; but he is not an academic, because he did not have an academic formation. He did not finish even the high school of the common education. As for the Buddhist studies, he passed the exam of the 3 fundamental courses and failed in the 4th Pali academic curriculum which has 9 grades recognized as on a par with the Bachelor Degree of Arts. He is a scholar through self-teaching and self-practice.

He realized by his own intuition that the Tipitaka is not the direct record of Buddha's teaching, but a record through interpretation, that is the Buddha's story in the Tipitaka is the story of the narrators about Buddha. He said one day that more than two thirds of the content of the Tipitaka should be crossed out as inauthentic teaching of Buddha, which challenged so much the traditional belief.

If only a third at most of the Tipitaka is authentic teaching of Buddha, how can we know which parts are. So he returned to 'practice' as justification in the tone of the Westerners' saying: "I understand so that I may believe" not "I believe so that I may understand," implying that the traditional scholars hold the opposite principle: "I believe so that I may understand," which was absolutely shunned and categorically rejected by the traditionalists, because they strongly hold that they accept the Tipitaka's authority because they have reason to do so. By this way we say he re-storied the traditional story of the Buddha, because he believed that he did not believe the texts in order to

understand, but he understood the texts to believe their authenticity, and in so doing he was convinced that he did it in contrast to the traditional interpretation. By and large, he checked the texts by his *own experience* of Dhamma. He always said that Dhamma is the natural Law, Dhamma is your God, Dhamma is your Creator, Dhamma is your Provider, that is Dhamma is anything that is good and the most respectful of your hearts. So any narrative of Tipitaka that is confirmed by the practice to be spiritually beneficient, can be believed to be authentic teaching of Buddha; others are redundant and it is to be suspected that Buddha ever taught them. So his story of Buddha's Enlightenment is very simple. It is limited to only the detachment from Me and Mine. This is the discovery of the Enlightenment and only this is the status of Nibbana, immediate Nibbana, here and now. There is no need to wait until the next life. Any attachment is, therefore, outside of Enlightenment, whether it is the attachment to the system, to the belief, to the Creator, to the helper, to one own self, to the teaching and the teacher, even to the Buddha Himself.

Surely, such a re-storying shocked the holders of the traditional story, but it did not affect much the devotion of the Thai ordinary people to him, because the Thai ordinary people have an additional story that guides their religious devotion. Though they have the traditional story of Buddha's Enlightenment in their mind, the same as that of the Thai scholars, they don't care if a different story is presented to them by a monk who leads a pure monastic life, even though they don't believe his story, because for them to have devotion to a monk of holy life assures them fortune for their living and merits for the life to come. For them, therefore, Buddhadasa is a holy man of purity in his monastic life, because no one could ever blame him in any way.

Re-storying Buddhadasa's Story

Our role now is to think how to re-story Buddhadasa's story to be more academic, so that it may be acceptable to the Buddhist scholars and the Buddhist people at the same time, and in so doing we may hope to see the maximum contribution of Buddha's Story of Enlightenment to the Civil Society of the World.

To be more academic, we should first of all recur to the Historical Buddha. Buddha's birth place was close to the Himalayan range which at that time was not the center of Aryan influence. It is more believable that the people over there were not aryans, but the originally local people who were influenced very little by the Aryan invasion of India.

So the scholarly re-storying of Buddha's Enlightenment might run as follows:

Buddha was born in the Sakya Himalayan tribe of the Gotama clan and received the personal name at his birth as Siddhattha. It is a non-brahman tribe, therefore there was no cast system among them and the Ambattha Sutta says that they had no respect for the brahmins, and consequently no discrimination to the outcasts. It is not surprising that in Buddha's Sangha there is no discrimination of casts. However this does not mean that here were no slaves of wars like in other races of that time, but slaves are not outcast, because some of their nobles take slaves as their minor wives.

Suddhodana, father of the Buddha, was the king of the Shakyan democratic republic, with Kapilavastu as its capital. It was a republic ruled by the class of aristocracy or the ruling class of the tribe. The Buddhist sources mention about Santhagara-sala or the council hall which stood at the center of the capital, and where public business, administrative and judicial operations were carried out. We can think of the material comfort and well-being of a cultured upper-class townsman in such a prosperous commercial and administrative center.

Therefore it is unlikely that Siddhattha was educated in the brahmin tradition. Kapilavastu was the site of Sankhya school of Indian philosophy. It hardly belongs to the brahmin tradition, because of its atheistic doctrine. Most probably Kapila its founder was not a brahmin, but a sage who developed his philosophy from the local belief which later was included into the six schools of Indian Philosophy. Siddhattha would have learned that philosophy in his youth that formed in him an analytical mind. Since the Sankhya school of philosophy was undoubtedly much older than the rise of Buddhism we are left with the strong presumption that at least the Buddha was directly indebted for his initial concept of Atheism to the Sankhya, though he evidently differed much from Kapila in his main interest. The Sankhya school of philosophy is known to be "pre-vedic, non-aryan" (Annals, 1968, p. 444).

Though the Sankhya school is atheistic, it is still a metaphysical school like the other five schools of the Indian philosophy that seeks reality and its systematic understanding. But what the Buddha proclaimed as his Enlightened Truth is the anicca (impermanence), dukha (human life is suffering) and anatta (no permanent self) which Buddha-dasa concluded into his practical formula: no-Me and no-Mine, to sum up that the essence of the Buddha's Enlightenment is the Detachment from the World, from the self and from the desire to hold back. We can see that Buddha's philosophy, in fact, rejects metaphysics and its systemization, or rather it is a negative metaphysics supporting a very positive ethics.

To re-story in the scholarly way, let us remind ourselves of the title the Buddha chose to call himself after his enlightenment and his disciples is samana, which means etymologically "the one who strives or

labors hard", which corresponds to persistent exhortation of Buddha to his disciples that they have to depend on themselves for their deliverance. Since defilement and purity depend on oneself, one cannot directly purify or defile another, saying: "You yourselves should make the exertion. The Tathagatas (Buddhas) are only teachers" (Dhammapada, 276). (It is to be noted, moreover, that though Buddha often called his disciples bhikkus and bhikkhunis, he never applied this title to himself.)

However, by such exhortation Buddha did not encourage individualism, but recommended a community life by establishing the Buddhist Community of 4 parisat: bhikkus, bhikkunis, upasakas and upasikas, to take responsibility for his doctrine corporately.

I would like to conclude the re-storying of the Buddhadasa's re-storying of the traditional story of Buddha's Enlightenment that the scholarly story about Buddha's Enlightenment should be the combination of Buddhadasa detachment with the meaning of samana given above this is to form an outline of a good life for our time by which one should practice the habit of equanimity to whatever happens to our life, at the same time one should be eager to perform one's duty of deliverance from suffering and of attaining the highest quality of life. In so doing one should also influence others to do likewise but in their own ways.

From this latest story, the contribution to Civil Society may easily follow.

Contribution to the Civil Society

1. Ashoka's Empire is not yet ideal. King Ashoka the great of the Maurya dynasty, the ruler of Magadha, converted from Brahmanism to Buddhism after the bloodshed conquering of Kalinga kingdom. He turned from the morality of duty to conquer, to the morality of peace and compromise morality. This and many aspects surely are the qualities of advancement for Civil Society. However there are some flaws in his policy that resulted from the story that he retrieved from the Tipitaka.

1.1 In his veneration of Sangha, he forgot his duty of taking care of the education of the individual samana as is observed by Trevor Ling: "Economically, the major support for the Sangha, on a day-to-day basis, would have come from the local people of the towns and cities of the Ashokan empire. Hence there was a strong economic motive for an attitude of tolerance towards popular cults and beliefs, in order not to antagonize unnecessarily those on whom the Sangha depended for their daily needs. But such an attitude had as its penalty the danger of the subversion of the Sangha by the all-pervasive popular cults of India" (Ling, 1973, p. 173).

1.2 In the Tipitaka, Buddha decided on a democratic government for the Sangha, but nothing was decided for the civil government. So King Ashoka chose his own story of an autocratic government to easily protect the Dhamma. Though he was tolerant in many other aspects, he was not tolerant to the antagonists of his promotion of Dhamma. As Ling also observes: "he would also have incurred the dislike and even enmity of any sections of the community whose interests were not compatible with the public promotion of Dhamma. Ashoka suppressed what he believed was not in accordance with Dhamma. In doing so, he drew intensified opposition to Dhamma, as well as to himself and his dynasty" (Ling, 1973, p. 172).

1.3 Dr. Raahula, a Sri-Lankan Buddhist scholar also observes: "Buddhism had by Ashoka's time, already been reduced from being a comprehensive, humanistic theory of existence, with an accompanying social and political philosophy, to being a spiritual cult, a purely personal religion, with no societal dimension at all" (Raahula, 1966, p. 55).

2. Dr. Trevor Ling opens horizons by saying:

2.1 "Buddhism, like any other living tradition, has developed and changed in the course of its history: pre-Ashokan, Ashokan" (Ling, 1973, p. 233) and "Theravada Buddhism as it actually exists today, in Ceylon and South-East Asia, is by no means identical with the Buddhism of the Ashokan period. Much has been acquired along the way since then in the form of devotional practices, institutional organization, and commentaries on the doctrine" (Ling, 1973, p. 239). This may mean several stories can be retrieved from the Tipitaka narratives, so an up-to-date story to reconstruct Civil Society is not out of reach.

2.2 "There is clearly recognizable, too, in Pali Buddhism the sense of the sacred as that which transcends all historical and empirical entities. 'There is, O bhikkhus, that which is not-born, not-become, not-made, and not-conditioned. If this not-born, not-become, not-made, and not-conditioned were not, then there would be apparent no release from that which is born, become, made and conditioned' (Udana, VIII, 3). Another name in Pali Buddhism for this absolute which transcends the empirical world is Nibbana" (Ling, 1973, p. 235). This may mean that stories can be adapted.

2.3 "Belief in the sacred does not necessarily imply theistic belief, nor are humanism and a sense of the sacred incompatible" (Ling, 1973, p. 236). This may mean that Buddha's story can share with other stories of humanism and the sacred to reconstruct the Civil Society of our time.

2.4 "In speaking of Buddhist values" (Ling, 1973, p. 235) the contemporary Buddhists surely can share and contribute to the human values together with other schools of thought and belief.

2.5 "In some Asian countries Buddhism retains a good deal of its original concern with the public dimension of life as distinct from the

private world of soul-salvation, its character as an ideology is capable of integrating a religiously and even culturally pluralistic society" (Ling, 1973, p. 239). This character is ready to contribute to the reconstruction of Civil Society of our time.

     2.6 "We may wish to prune religion of all myth but it should not be overlooked that myths represent man's attempt to express the ineffable and his attitude toward it" (Ling, 1973, pp. 239-40). This is exactly what our Narrative Philosophy says and calls for collaboration for the reconstruction of Civil Society.

     2.7 "In origin, it (Buddhism) was the ethos and the philosophy of a civilization" (Ling, 1973, p. 240). This is what the Civil Society welcomes and asks for.

     2.8 "Buddha was an analyst, not a propounder of dogmatic truth" (Ling, 1973, p. 240). This is what the Civil Society needs.

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CHAPTER VIII

CLASH OF CIVILIZATIONS OR RE-STORYING HUMANKIND?

YURIY POCHTA

For many years I've been interested in Islamic society, its religion, culture and civilization – from their origin up to the present state. While studying the works of the Western scholars on this subject I was struck by some evident distorted representation of this society which had even a long tradition. I tried to explain it first to myself and then to others. It was necessary to find out why intentions and words of those scholars differed so much, why terms they were using betrayed them, why they were so intolerant. For this purpose I used deconstruction as a mode of philosophizing. Of course at that time (late 1970s) I knew nothing about the Postmodern philosophy and called my attitude to the writings of the outstanding thinkers a critical methodological analysis. But that does not imply that the technique of deconstruction is of no interest to me now; quite the contrary, it is a pity that I could not use it in its contemporary well-defined form at that time for that would have saved a great deal of time and energy. Nevertheless it can be very useful for me now. Moreover the great achievement of Postmodern philosophy is that deconstruction is supplemented by reconstruction. The latter, as I see it, has positive, constructive meaning, so important in the contemporary world.

The purpose of this paper is to show: 1) achievements in deconstructive analysis of the Western scientific stories about Islamic society; 2) possible directions for reconstruction of these stories.

DECONSTRUCTION OF THE WESTERN SCIENTIFIC STORIES ABOUT ISLAMIC SOCIETY

There is a long-standing tradition of radical distortion of Islamic society in the Western culture and science whose main reason is the Christian basis of the Western culture. The most complete fulfillment of this influence had was in the Christian Providentialism of the Middle Ages. It held that there could be only one true revealed religion in the world and, correspondingly, only one society, based on it. From this point of view Islam, which appeared in the Christian world several ages later, had been understood as something antichristian, or at least as a providentially created tool to secure transition of pagans to Christianity.

Accordingly, the Muslim society was interpreted as wrong, and paganism as an empire of evil. This Christian attitude to the Muslim society then influenced the civilizational analysis, which was developed in the European philosophy of history in the 18th century. Even the Marxist explanation of the Islamic society based on the social-economic formation theory contained this influence implicitly. This religious influence on the scientific mind is described as contexts within contexts, the Christian interpretation of the Islamic world became the Original story in the Western society.

Eurocentrism is one of the important a priori principles of civilizational analysis. It implies the overwhelming superiority of the European civilization over any other, including the Islamic. This principle develops the traditional Christian attitude towards the Islamic society but in a transformed, rational form. Eurocentrism represents in a disguised form the confessional position of the Western thinkers, but this time on the level of social Christianity. It implies that the Christian society overrides the Muslim one as much as civilization overrides barbarism. But in this situation the idea about Christianity's superiority over Islam is expressed implicitly and evidence of the Muslim society's barbaric character are taken from history, with reference to the laws governing the development of a society and such notions as historicism, progress, freedom, democracy.

Civilizational meta-narrative of the Muslim society's history contains two contradictory variants: one related to the philosophy of history and the second to the philosophy of religion. In most cases the later (in its pantheistic or deistic forms) determines the first. In the writings of a concrete Western thinkers these variants are often mixed and at the same time lead to opposite evaluations of the Islamic civilization (Leibniz), and few thinkers can interconnect them (Hegel). At the brink of the 18-19th centuries European Romanticists (F. Schlegel, Chateaubriand, Carlisle) put forward an idea about Christianity's civilizing role in the world. They came to the conclusion that only through the Western intrusion could the Muslim world receive a real civilization. This idea was supported by Positivists (E. Renan). They were trying to prove an ontological inadequacy and foreignness of the barbaric Muslim east to the Western society.

Here in connection with Positivism's ideas about the Muslim society we can discuss the notion of the so-called 'Islamic fundamentalism'. Its origin and existence can be explained as a painful ideological and political response of the Muslim society, being subjugated to force Westernization. This was in reaction to attempts to make the Muslin narrative subordinate to the stories of Western modernity, to remove the lived experience of the Muslim peoples out of the contemporary dominant stories. This phenomenon is an example of the conflict of

civilizations in which the Muslim side comprehended itself as a victim. We completely agree with this idea and are going to find out if it is possible to blame the Western scholars for aggressive non-tolerant stories about the Muslim society.

But first it is necessary to explain that historical context in which Positivism was formed. At that time the real Western world-wide superiorrity supplanted by its active colonization of the Muslim countries was increasing Eurocentric tendencies in the Western islamology. Former naïve rational-universal Enlightenment attitudes towards the non-European societies had been changed by another extreme of cultural-historical or race-anthropological plurality, which admitted the European type of social development as the only form of universalism. Positivists supposed that while sociology would bring them reliable knowledge about society they could reform it. They were interested in the Muslim east as a part of the world in which they could apply their reformatory activities. In writings of E. Renan and G. Lebon we find many ideas elaborated by Enlightenment and Romantic thinkers, but these are integrated by a theory of race inequality. Positivist sociology aspired to discover race as the true substance of social life and civilization. In this sociological explanation we can discern two different attitudes to society: its own naturalistic as well as the rational attitude, inherited from the Enlightenment. Positivist sociology was transformed these two attitudes into opposites of each other, irrational and rational interpretations of the reasons of society's development. Depending on the inclination to one of these interpretations, scholars solving the problem of the world unity, choose either an idea of unity or plurality of the historical process. Positivistic philosophy of history concerned with fate of its society and civilization, express both optimistic hope for the scientific study and reformation of society (E. Renan), and pessimistic apprehension that the far-reaching intentions of the scientific trans-formation of society can undermine its natural foundations (G. Lebon).

The Positivists are confident that exact knowledge permits them not only to explain society but also to transform it. As only the Western society possesses such knowledge, its activity in social transformation becomes inevitably worldwide. According to the Positivists, Western civilization has potentially worldwide importance, but its mission is endangered by internal and external barbarity which they have to get rid of very actively without waiting for its natural historical disappearance.

Renan makes the claim that Muslim society fully represents external barbarity so humankind must get rid of it by cultural and political means. Only when the Western society can remove such major components of the Islamic civilization as the Islamic religion and the Arabic language can it fruitfully use the human and natural resources of Eastern society on behalf of humankind.

Lebon's irrational and pessimistic apprehension of the world's development is also concerned with the fate of the Muslim society. But because he doubts the possibility of scientifically proved transformation of society, he does not look at the Muslim society as an object of European influence. He takes it as an example of inevitable action of the law of natural inequality of races and individuals. According to Lebon, this law has already caused the death of the Muslim civilization and threatens the Western one.

It is quite obvious that in general Positivism is following Hegel's historicism with its opposition of the European and the Eastern principles of social development. Positivism produces additional reasons for the 18th century's Eurocentric idea that the Western civilization will be able to become worldwide only when it subjects Muslim society to theoretical and practical negation.

I do not want to state that the Positivists as well as some other Western thinkers are directly responsible for creation of Islamic fundamentalism. But they encouraged creation of such radical reaction of the Muslim society under the Western influence in 19-20th centuries. The Western positivist narrative of the Islamic history indeed has produced these ideological and political consequences.

The previous material relates predominantly to the linear, one-dimensional understanding of the civilizational development, the best-elaborated form of which was represented by Hegel. But a pluralistic, cyclical interpretation of the civilizational development seems to have the same Eurocentric character. According to this interpretation, there are many civilizations in the world that have natural limits for their existence. There is only one exemption: the Western civilization can avoid that cyclical natural fatalism because it is based on Christianity (O. Spengler, A. Toynbee).

In Russia a narrative of the Muslim society's history was created in a different social context. In the early Middle Ages in the Russian culture there appeared ideas, based on the universalistic Christian outlook, about Islam as a phenomenon which had no ontological foundation and which could exist only in relation with Christianity as a self-sufficient unity. Such explanation of the Islamic society was taking place amidst attempts of cultural self-identification of the Russian society, which had begun in the 17th century. In world history, Russia's story was placed between the two civilizational entities: the West and the Islamic east. The West was understood as a very dynamic society but nonetheless moving along the wrong direction of progressive development. It was recognized that the Muslim society had glorious medieval past but at the present it was out of the process of historical development. The history of the Islamic society was predominantly narrated in Russia in the context of world history interpreted as the process of formation of

the Christian God-mankind. Russian thinkers (P. Chaadaev, A. Khomia-kov, and V. Soloviev) believed that the latter would overcome the Western civilization, which was the most developed but which had outlived itself.

The Marxist meta-narrative of the Muslim society's history, being a product of the European culture, necessarily implied the idea of the linear direction of historical development and the principle of Eurocentrism. Karl Marx created his understanding of the world history confident of the inevitable impending destruction of Western civilization, as the latest historical stage of the European Christian society, and in its formation instead as a post-civilizational communist society. In this context the Muslim society could be understood as a relic of the eastern pre-capitalist society and the semi-colonial rear of the world capitalism. This narrative was easily transformed in Soviet Russia in 1920s. The communists decided that in the situation when they came to power in Russia but the revolutionary upheaval in the West was delayed, the Muslim east suddenly became a reserve of the world proletarian revolution. In any case such an interpretation of the Muslim society's story was temporal and provisional.

It is remarkable that the European civilizational and the Marxist socio-economic formation narratives of the Muslim society's history have many common features. Both of them are Eurocentric because they are the products of the European culture. Both of them treat the Islamic civilization as some waste of the world history (as Hegel understood it), and comprehend the Western mission in the Muslim East whether as imperialist-colonial or Marxist revolutionary-proletarian, as progressive and liberational. They unanimously reject any possibility of recognition of a uniqueness or ontological equality of Western and Islamic civilizations. Both of these narratives promote a missionary attitude towards the Muslim society, and an inclination for large-scale experiments upon it.

Every civilization has its religious foundation. As we have shown, this basis is evident in the stories that European science tells us about the Muslim society, implicitly in the form of the religious providentialism or explicitly in a rational-philosophical form. This circumstance means that there are certain limits for the universal, objective and scientific character of the Islamic society's narrative, created by the European philosophical imagination. In other words the truth and meaning of this narrative are context-bound. Basically the Christian character of the European culture and science does not cancel the necessity and possibility of a dialogue between the Western and the Islamic societies.

RECONSTRUCTION OF WESTERN SCIENTIFIC STORIES ABOUT THE ISLAMIC SOCIETY

At present there are two extremes in the Western historical narrative that we should avoid. The first implies that after the end of the Cold War the West will see its values expand all over the world. Francis Fukuyama has given this story about "The End of the History." The second supposes that the end of the Cold War will inevitably cause a "clash of civilizations," according to Samuel Huntington's vision. Both of these stories are of Modernist origin, the first is optimistic – about the final worldwide victory of the Western civilization, and the second is pessimistic – about the gradual decline of the West. Neither of these points of view can be accepted if we are trying to *re-story* the world history and avoid fatalism. The Modernist language cannot help us in this situation because we live in the world becoming more and more postmodern. According to Michael White and David Epston, Postmodernism does not devastate all the previous languages. Instead, it allows us to understand none of them as being fixed or final. Or as Efran Lukens says, none of today's constructions, which are our only means of portraying reality, are perfect and none of them are final. Whatever exists can be reconstructed.

There are several possible conditions for re-storying the positive Western comprehension of the Muslim society's history, using the narrative methodology of the Post-modern philosophy. It is possible to externalize the dominant negative narratives and to look for alternative positive ones. We can retrieve such stories, and follow the example of some Western scholars who have already started this process (M. Hodgson, E. Said, A. Toynbee, B. Turner, and A. Hourani). In the contemporary world the importance of this task cannot be overestimated because if it is not fulfilled we shall have to recognize the main ideas of S. Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. I would fully agree with him in the case that we would not be able to change our dominant and pessimistic narrative about the Islamic civilization's history. Thus it is *necessary* to:

A. Overcome Eurocentrism and the linear, one-dimensional understanding of the civilizational development, i.e., recognize that there are *several* centers in the world, each with its *own* narrative about its role in the history of humankind. Such features of the modern Western society as democracy, free-market capitalism and individualism are manifestations of its unique civilizational identity and they are based on the Western lived experience, but they are *not* universal and appropriate for *all* the peoples. The Grant Narrative of the Western modernity that dominated other civilizations' stories for the last three centuries no

longer appears adequate. It is necessary to rebuild humanity, to make it more just and free, based on worldwide civic values as well as on the civic values of each civilization, preserving the identity of both.

B. Recognize the ontological uniqueness of the Islamic civilization as one of several different civilizations existing in the world.

C. Recognize equal rights of Islam to have its place in the human society along with Christianity (according to Kant's ideas about the history of religions).

D. Avoid any kind of missionary or civilizing attitude towards the Muslim society, i.e., to exclude attempts to impose the Western narrative upon the Islamic one.

The Russian historical experience in the 20th century shows that the Muslim problem has not been solved there. Recent Russian reformers are again confronted with this problem. But they do not notice it and do not take into consideration the experience of their predecessors. The main question, concerning the Russia's future, is whether Russia will secure its present social multinational integrity and not disintegrate into several pieces with Christian and Muslim populations. It is necessary to avoid a Eurocentric and instrumental attitude towards Islam in internal and foreign Russian policy. One of preliminary steps for solution of this problem is to recognize a diverse character of the contemporary mankind, which includes apart from the Western, the Islamic as well as the Russian civilizations.

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PART IV

STORYING CIVIL SOCIETY

CHAPTER IX

THE PLACE OF ECOLOGICAL CULTURE IN CIVIL SOCIETY

VICTORIYA LEVINSKAYA

ECOLOGICAL PROBLEMS IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Relations between human society and nature has some problems, contradictions and developmental perspectives. Humankind and nature are subject to common laws and their violation sooner or later can lead to manmade ecological disasters. Even now we recognize that our misuse of natural resources results in changes of climate and desertification. Mother Earth thus takes revenge against exhaustion of the soil by humankind.

Ecological culture is one of the fundamental aspects of the modern global problems. It is now international in character and influences all spheres of vital activity of humankind. The primitive human's life was strongly dependent upon nature. And at that time the first appearance of ecological culture was in idolizing natural events, the first mythological world outlook. Primitive cultures and that of ancient civilizations have many examples of ecological relations to the processes of nature.

The idea of unity between that of human's being and nature has ancient traditions. According to the ancient Chinese treatise of "Guan-Chze" (XII C. before C.E.) water is the blood and the living energy of earth: and it is clean, soft, humane and modest. The author of this treatise attributed to water the best ethical qualities, such as honest, justice, nobility and so on.

In ancient eastern civilizations this system of values remained invariable for a long time, as they undertook to worship nature. It was also an object of aesthetics and here for the first time in history laws for the protection of animals and plants were developed. For example, the Mongols turned up the toes of their shoes to keep from damaging the grass cover. The ancient eastern civilizations were the first ecological civilizations in history.

In the Indian philosophical tradition there was a conception of noninterference with the development of natural processes. The basis of these traditions was deep thought about the reincarnation of everything in Earth and also in the Universe. According to the principles of Indian

philosophy, the human is just one section of transformation from one form of life to another, for which reason in Indian philosophy all manifestations of life must be preserved.

The Muslim culture retained the ancient eastern relation. The famous Iranian scholar A. Nasr wrote: "Nature in the Islamic countries is considered as one's own house where one must live, and not like an enemy country that must be conquered."

A special place in the history of attention to the natural forces and society is held by Russian philosophical thought of the end of the XIX century and first years of the 20th century. The 20th century brought great changes in cultural orientations. Russian philosophers for the first time in philosophical history saw humankind from space. Such philosophers as V. Soloviev, P. Florenskiy, N. Rerich, K. Ciolkovskiy, N. Fedorov, and V. Vernadskiy created new philosophical principles of the relations to nature according to this view from space. This point of view was very original for that time especially for Russia, and it became well known in Europe. Each philosopher of the Russian Religious School had his special theory for the necessity of overcoming tensions between nature and society, but all the theories had common ideas, for example, the idea of "universal ethics" or "space mentality". The Russian religious philosophers had used the terms of the Orthodox Church's as "Unity of the Universe" and "micro and macrospace".

Nature as the result of God's creation and the incarnation of harmony has the greatest value, and demands from people the best treatment. This was the main principle of the Russian religious philosophical school was that earth nature is the part of space, and that its reflection is one step in development of the Universe. Human beings are the best part of nature because they have a likeness to God. The human being is responsible for the order of space and for the unity of all humankind. Therefore, the human, as on the one hand bearing a likeness to God, and on the other being a part of nature, is the key to the "unity of the Universe". Humans are not values in themselves, but are complete only when integrated into their surroundings.

The deepest ethical problems of Russian space philosophy are found in the works of Vladimir Soloviev. According to V. Soloviev, ideas and ideals acquire great significance for humankind. Hence, the point of his interests was personality which is the source ('egg') of the harmony of space. Therefore, a human is little dependent upon the Universe but he is responsible for the world's fate because he or she is a spiritual-moral substance. Moral existence and the improvement of personality is a basis for the improvement of the world.

Ethical rules must create the future culture. The main aim of the new type of culture is an aspiration for space even beyond the world. Because in space, as in the body of God, which is united, spiritual-moral

humankind, the humankind will relate to nature as a living substance and to the human as an inimitable being. The highest ethical category is Goodness, which must be realized through the category of beauty to save nature from death. Humankind must save itself from moral death. Moral law and order regulate all spheres of human being. Moral laws must decide even economic questions. The ideal is for economic progress to enter into moral progress. Nature has the same roots as man. Nature is the result of creation and is connected with the Absolute through the human's relations. Humankind and the world must have a spirit. The task is to create moral relations where ethics is a means for separating God's order from chaos.

Very close to Soloviev's conception is the ethical conception of Nikolay Fedorov. In his literary works the Russian writer, N.I. Dostoyevsky, used and illustrated the ideas of the Russian religious philosopher, N. Fedorov. The subjects of his interests is humankind and moral premeditation. The improvement of humankind is moral improve-ment on the basis of an evolutionary changed space. This process will be possible only when humankind transcends the Earth. The intellect of humankind must spread into space, keeping and improving science, philosophy, culture and religion. It must begin to transform space as the environment for future generations; to protect the spiritual-moral potential of humankind will be impossible without acknowledgement of objective and necessary connections between humankind and space. Humankind must become a force in space. Reasonable assimilation of nature is a necessary condition of philosophy as a "common enterprise". The philosophy of the "common enterprise" is a main subject of Fedorov's conception. He understands it as unity of moral practice, duty and response past and future. Ecological culture has gone out from the biosphere of Earth and has become a global space problem. The main goal of humankind must be to change the world according to moral laws and this process is to "give us a basis for decision to spread human's intellect on the sun and other star's systems for control of these systems by the human brain". Fedorov suggested space travels from one star to another and after him K. Ciolkovskiy "the pioneer of the new space era" suggested the principles of building jet rocket engines.

The ideas of the Russian philosopher and scholar, V. Vernadskiy, are most important for the modern ecological situation. He suggested a new sphere of human life – this sphere was called by him the "noosphere". This term was suggested, for the first time, by the French philosopher Teilhard de Chardin. Vladimir Vernadskiy had met with him at the scientific conference in the 1920s and he took this idea. The main book of Vernadskiy is "The Living Substance". In this he described all the spheres of the Earth, such as atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, biosphere and described the evolution of these spheres.

According to V. Vernadskiy the biosphere is just a cradle of human society. One-day humanity will have to leave its cradle. The noosphere is a process of the conscious human's transformation of the natural environment. The noosphere is not just a new state of biosphere: it is not a surrounding, but a scientific transformation of nature. The human is a "part of biosphere and he is a product of evolution but he is the main and the basic factor of the biosphere's development". Noosphere is the most difficult conception. The evolution of the matter has two levels: the first level is a geological evolution and the second level is a space evolution.

The evolution of inanimate substance and their unity has formed a biosphere and created a new quality of living substance. It is a human social society; the next step in the evolution of living substances must be a new state of biosphere, the "noosphere". Vernadskiy studied not only objective conditions of the formation of noosphere, but also the subjective conditions of this process. According to Vernadskiy humankind has to understand its place in the evolutionary process in order to understand itself as a new geological force and after that as a new space power of unity.

Of course, we have a lot of causes, which make this process most difficult and probably our civilization is dying. But V. Vernadskiy thought that we have a chance to decide these problems: "The process, which had been developing during billions years, could not be stopped. That's why the biosphere must transfer, now or later, into the noosphere".

This thought is illustrated by idea of the aphtotrophical substance of humankind. The aphtotrophical substance is a part of living nature, the existence of which depends from inanimate substance. The greatest parts of aphtotrophical substance are plants. The higher forms of life are dependent on lower forms, but not otherwise. This is the evolutionary order. Vernadskiy thought that one of the characteristics of the noosphere is a transformation of humankind from geteratrophical substance to aphtotrophical existence. Humankind must be free from its dependence upon lowers forms of life and the noosphere must force out into the biosphere: this will be possible if humankind is creating new artificial food products, operating biological processes and so on. The resolution of these problems will ensure the future of humankind. For Vernadskiy, humanity is not standing "out" or "above" the biosphere, it is a part of it, and man is a product of evolution and the main factor in its development. The scientific thought of humankind is working in the biosphere and is transforming it into the noosphere.

Noosphere has a very complicated structure, which includes a unity of the material and ideal components, work and brain of humankind and the most important part of the noosphere is the highest level of

social consciousness, – scientific thoughts and conscious activity of people who are transforming the world.

However, the activity of the mind does not mean intellectual activity. The modern ecological situation corroborates this thesis. Ecological culture is the most important component of the noosphere. Ecological culture has a specific activity; it is a measure of consciousness of the noosphere because in culture humans are able to show their value as ecologically creative.

Ecological creativity has taken place on every level of social life. On the social levels ecological culture operates by the processes of the noosphere's creativity. On the level of personality noosphere is created by "internal" noosphere, according to a unity of natural and social laws. Ecological culture helps to ensure the humanistic essence of humanity, which is changing its quality and improving not just its relations to nature but also its social relations.

Ecological culture is a new and prospective part of humanistic culture. All dimensions of nature are connected; ecological culture is a synthesis in itself of different levels of their development. Interaction between ecological culture and civil society has two aspects. The first, ecological culture as a whole is a new cultural phenomenon reflecting the ecological situation and an indicator of the value dynamic of modern civilizations. Second, ecological culture stipulates the direction of the development of the material and spiritual culture and determines the formation of the quality of the new values, goals and ideals of humankind. Nature and culture are two opposites, interconnected and interacting upon each other. The "world of nature" and "world of culture" suffer separately, nature from the ecological crises, culture from a spiritual crisis.

AESTHETIC APPROACH OF ECOLOGICAL CULTURE

The development of ecological culture is impossible without its connection with aesthetics, that is to say, the realization of nature as a special spiritual-aesthetical value. Humanity is a need of nature, as aesthetic value is a part of spiritual culture. At present the so-called "natural" conception of beauty aesthetics is very popular. The essence of its variations lie in the aesthetical characteristic of nature. Therefore, nature together with its physical, biological and other characteristics also has an "esthetic" character founded on such natural objective laws as: harmony, rhythm, proportion, measure. The beauty of nature has the same level as other of its characteristics. In the creations of nature, humans discover its beauty.

Analysis of the results of research on the reflection of nature in art leads to an understanding of nature where nature appears as an aesthetic

value. These analyses show that the beauty, for example, of a picturesque landscape, is connected first of all with its expressiveness. In the landscapes of Turner, Resdale, Backhausen, van der Neer, Claude Monet, van Gogh, Ayvazovsky, Rerich and other artists of different countries, periods and nations appear before us: not just pictures of the woods, fields, mountains, steeps, seas and so on, but types of exalted, inspired nature. Sometimes it is "enraged", "somber", "depressing", sometimes "reconciled", "agitated", "joyful"; sometimes "triumphant", "majestic". So our apperception of nature is connected very closely with our emotional conditions, with our vision of the world. Wavy, angular, softly bent or straight line of limbs, roads, fields, forms of stones and lakes are manifestations of nature. The interactions of the elements of a landscape evoke impressions which render the intellectual activity of a person, and are formed by his or her emotional conditions. Art by its essence is a means of harmonization of different processes of human life, which is able to balance the relationship of the human with his environment. That is why art has close relations and interactions with ecological culture.

There are interesting connections between ecological culture and architecture which is one of the forms of the "second nature". Architecture means the "first creation" (translation from Greek) and as such is an unachieved synthesis of different kinds of art and culture, science and technique. Architecture is a prototype of the harmony between the human and the world, because it is a harmony of different branches of art and culture. It impressed a spirit (or "in-spirits") on a stone. The stone is the symbol of architecture and we can analyze past epochs through the monuments of those epochs.

Penetration of ecologization into art and architecture creates a good foundation for the approach of esthetics and ecological culture. Dostoyevsky wrote that beauty saves the world. Nockolay Rerikh added just one word – The *realization* of the beauty saves the world. The ecological interpretation of this expression is that "the creation of the beauty saves the world," because the creation of beauty is very closely connected with goodness, love of humans for the world and affirmations of the harmony between personality and nature. The ideal of humanity is the whole and the harmoniously developing personality is included as cultural as well as ecological fact. This ideal is achieved only if the society has a high ecological culture in all spheres of material and spiritual activity.

Another concept which unites ecological culture and aesthetics is the ecology of culture. The Russian Academician D.S. Likhachev suggested the term Ecology of Culture for the first time in 1988. In that year he wrote: "The ecology of culture is to withdraw into tasks of preservation of biological surroundings. The human lives not only in a

biological environment, but also in an environment that was created by one's ancestors and by oneself. Preservation of the cultural environment is also as important a task as is the preservation of nature, because nature is necessary for people for their biological life, but culture is necessary for their spiritual moral life." According to D.S. Likhachev, the patrimony of the cultural environment is very limited, and sometimes restorers, working according to their own unreliable views or the modern understanding of beauty become destroyers of the monuments.

Therefore, ecological content has two sections: biological and cultural. These two sections unite, because we could not draw an exact border between culture and nature. It is impossible to save the original beauty of an architectural masterpiece without the original landscape; that is why it is necessary to keep a monument and its landscape together. To keep a cultural object in the natural environment, and to keep both of them in the soul.

ECOLOGICAL CULTURE AND THE MODERN ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

Technocratic and ecological culture are not just two different approaches to the task of developing relations between culture and society: they are two different ways of realizing these relations, two different kinds of reflection and self-awareness of culture. Technocratic culture has a high transformation potential, but low reflection for its relationships to values. The value orientations to a technocratic mentality lead to anti-ecological relations to the biosphere, to crisis for nature due to the orientation of humans and of society. Today a material industry and ecological culture are incompatible, but society depends on economic and industrial culture. Without economic consciousness and culture an ecological culture is impossible. The social culture of labor, industry, exchange, distribution and consumption compose a social-economic basis for the formation and development of ecological culture. Its level and character is dependent upon the quality of the process of production and from the economic relations in society. This means that the development of the techniques and technology of industry and economic laws must be compared and combined with natural laws, with natural characteristics and qualities.

However, such recreation zones as the castles of Amudaria, Cirdaria, the Lake of Issic-cul, Gurtulin reservoir, the eastern seaboard of the Caspean Sea and also the suburbs of the big cities are being intensively polluted. All Central Asian rivers are polluted by chemical and organic fertilizers, city sewerage, and the refuse of industry; only artesian water remains drinkable.

Recently our region has many different ecological problems, such as the drying up of the Aral Sea. The high level of solar radiation, the impact of summer heat impacts and poor annual precipitation characterize the Central Asian climate. During the past 10-15 years, the rising temperatures in this region are striking. The warming is caused by the global temperature circulation, global rise of air temperatures accompanied by the increase of CO_2 concentration and other greenhouse effects and by local human factors. The main consumer of water resources originating in the Central Asian Mountains is agricultural irrigation. During the past 25 years, the irrigation area increased by 15 times. Irretrievable consumption of water for irrigation has caused a substantial reduction of the flow into the Aral Sea and the lowering of the sea level, a decrease of surface water in this area and an increase in the salinity of the water. The rapid recession of the Sea and the parching of large areas contributed to the climatic changes in the territory adjacent to the Aral Sea. An additional rise of temperatures (by 1.5 degrees by C) owing to desertification has been observed within 100 to 150 kilometers around the Sea. The relative humidity decreased by 5 to 10%. No records were made regarding any changes in amounts of precipitation, since more than 90% of the annual total consists of atmospheric moisture.

The total mineral concentration is considerably higher in the territory adjacent to the Aral Sea. The main effect upon the environment caused by the Sea's recession consists in the movement of sand. Repeated dust storms and the amount of dry precipitation increased during the period of the Sea's intensive recession. Several protective measures for the dry surface and reduced wind speeds during the past years have slightly diminished this development.

The fate of Aral has concerned many international organizations, such as the United Nations, where Uzbek President I.A. Karimov said that the downfall of the Aral Sea is one of the greatest disasters of the 20th century and requires the collaboration of many countries and organizations.

In spite of different conditions in the different countries, the social-ecological results of the scientific-technical revolution are common for all countries. As with other forms of politics, ecological politics must serve social progress. The Government of Uzbekistan declared years of Ecology and Health and developed a big program for the protection of nature. The role of ecological culture is to work out criteria and rules for such programs.

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CHAPTER X

HEIDEGGER ON TECHNOLOGY, ALIENATION AND DESTINY

YU XUANMENG

In his later thinking Heidegger wrote as one who knew destiny. He expresses himself freely on whatever he treats, as if he has been beyond the everyday secular world and enjoys broad perspectives. This reaches not only from West to East, but from ancient times to the present, so as to seize the real through the eyes of his mind. This can be seen in his philosophizing about the essence of modern technology. Wherever technology holds sway in modern society and people strive to engage in technological pursuit, he finds the phenomenon of alienation. He tries also to pursue world destiny or providence through technology and maintains that man needs to keep observing destiny. This sounds like an old principle of the Chinese philosophy: through technique to Tao. This paper will provide a brief review of his view about technology, alienation and destiny.

TECHNOLOGY AS STANDING IN RESERVE

Heidegger searches deeply into this problem, questioning even the essence of essence. When talking about essence (*Wesen*), he maintains that: "The noun is derived from the verb *wesen* and is the same as to last or endure (*wahren*)."[1] With the prefix *an*, *anwesen* means "to come to presence." In short, for Heidegger essence means enduring or being present. Thus, he could say, to question the essence of technology is to question how technology as a phenomenon is enduring and present. In his "The Question Concerning Technology," sometimes Heidegger uses the word *an-wesen* to denote essence.[2] As originally, there was no hyphen between the prefix *an* (to, at, toward) and the root *wesen*, by using the hyphen he intends to emphasize the meaning of "coming to presence".

Though Heidegger is often criticized as playing word tricks, here we shall not comment on whether this is legitimate or whether there are philological grounds for so tracing the meaning of essence. At any rate,

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[1] M. Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, trans. by William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) (abbreviated as *QT* below), p. 30.

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

it is obvious that his point is to focus not upon "what technology is", but rather to think how the phenomenon of technology comes to presence and endures, which is to grasp the essence of technology by its origin and procedure, i.e., a genetic approach.

Heidegger had developed this way of thinking much earlier in *Being and Time* where he points out that even in ontology which has universal beings or categories as its objects one should raise first of all the question of the meaning of Being. This is the so-called "ontological priority of the question of Being".[3] There Heidegger brought out the primordial meaning of Being, which long had been forgotten. To deal with beings on this ground is to uncover the various ways in which the beings reveal Being. Hence, Heidegger's discussion of the essence of technology is a concrete use of "the ontological priority of the question of Being". Here the particular being is technology and to work out the essence of technology is to uncover the way in which technology reveals being.

Heidegger finds a support for his point of view from the origin of Greek culture. He writes that the Greek term for technology is *technē*, "the term not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman, but also for the fine arts. *Technē* is a matter of bringing-forth, *poiesis*; it is something poietic."[4] "From earliest times until Plato, the word *technē* was linked with the term *epistéme*: both being names for knowing in the broadest sense: to be entirely at home in something, to understand and be expert in it. Such knowing provides an opening, and as such is a revealing."[5] "Thus what is decisive in *technē* does not lie at all in making and manipulating, nor in using means, but rather in the aforementioned revealing. As revealing, not as manufacturing, *technē* is a bringing-forth."[6]

The problem then is in what way modern technology is revealing? In response Heidegger distinguishes different levels to reach his conclusion step by step.

First, "the revealing that rules in modern technology is a challenging (*Herausfordern*)".[7] *Herausfordern* is formed by the verb root *fordern* (which means to summon, to demand, to challenge) and two adverbial prefixes: *her*-(hither) and *aus*-(out). No single element can be omitted if we are to grasp the full meaning. Thus, according to Heidegger, as a mode of revealing, challenging means "to come forth by

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[3] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 31 (abbreviated as *BT* below).

[4] *QT*, p. 13.

[5] *Ibid*.

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] *Ibid*., p. 14.

challenge or demand"; this is a matter of putting to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored.[8] This contrasts sharply with that of nature whose revealing is *physis*. "*Physis* is also the arising of something from itself, a bringing-forth or *poiesis*,"[9] as with the blossoming or fading of a flower according to the season. But in contrast, if a flower is cultivated and preserved in a greenhouse artificially, this is an excessive demand upon nature, hence, is revealing by challenge. The revealing of the ancient technology is basically within the realm of natural presenting, as for instance, the energy of the wind is revealed by an old windmill which is left entirely to the wind and does not unlock energy from the wind in order to store it. In modern technology, however, a tract of land is challenged to bring forth coal and ore, which in turn is to yield energy. Even agriculture today is a mechanized food industry; the field has come under another kind of ordering.

Second, Heidegger points out, this challenging that brings forth the energy of nature is an expediting.[10] That is, what is revealed is directed towards something else, i.e., toward the maximum yield at the minimum expense. For instance, digging coal is not only for uncovering it but for using the energy, which is challenged to turn the wheels that keep a factory running. This determines the basic characteristic of the things revealed in modern technology: "Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately at hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing, namely standing in reserve (*Bestand*)."[11]

Standing in reserve is a different kind of being from that of object. Where an object is revealed mainly in human knowing what is standing in reserve is called to come forth in challenging and expediting. Its determination is according to its being a key link in the interlocking beings revealed in modern technology. In the age of modern technology, almost everything is standing in reserve which is a more essential determination than that of object. An airliner standing on the runway when seen as a sheer object conceals what and how it is; only when it is put into the air is it revealed as an airliner. In this way every one of its constituent parts is standing-reserve; they are on call and ready to take off. Heidegger maintains further that in the age of modern technology not only artificial products stand in reserve, but even nature changes and is no longer an object as before.

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[8] *Ibid.*
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 10.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 15.
[11] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

For example, to build a hydropower station on the Rhine River is much different than building a wooden bridge there. In the former case, the Rhine River is put into the interlocking process of modern technology as a waterpower resource.

The difference is obvious if compared with the poem of Holdering entitled "The Rhine River". The Rhine River as natural landscape may be unchangeable, but in what sense is it now a landscape when it is on call for inspection by a tour group sent there by the vacation industry?

Heidegger concludes: "Whatever stands by in the sense of standing in reserve no longer stands over against us as object;"[12] "the object disappears into the objectlessness of standing in reserve."[13]

On the one hand, everything in the context of the interlocking of modern technology comes forth as standing in reserve. On the other hand, modern technology is a process in which everything is ordered, set into the interlocking context as a key link. Just as from the unfolding of the mountains we can see a mountain range or chain (*Gebirg*) and from a person's feeling, style etc., his disposition (*gemut*), so from the context of interlocking shown by standing-reserve we can see its direction or trend, called by Heidegger "Enframing" (*Ge-stell*). Enframing describes the mode of revealing which challenges orders determining the standing in reserve: "The essence of modern technology lies in Enframing."[14] To understand this seemingly strange statement, we should recall that by "the essence of technology", he is concerned not with "what modern technology is," but with a process or phenomenon.

THE HUMAN SITUATION: STANDING IN RESERVE AS ALIENATION

What is the situation of man in the age of modern technology. Generally speaking, the theory of alienation discloses a situation in which man betrays his own essence. Hegel takes man as a link in the absolute spirit so that the alienation of the man is the alienation of self-consciousness.[15] As Marxism grasps the essence of human being in the light of its social relationship, the alienation of man lies in productive activity giving birth to the theory of alienated labor.[16] As man's essence lies in its 'to be', in *Being and Time* alienation is seen as forgetting one's own Being. Later when he philosophizes on the problem of technology, he maintains that man's standing in reserve is the essence of modern

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[12] *Ibid.*

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

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[15] See Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

[16] K. Marx, *Paris Manuscripts* (1944).

technology. This theory of alienation might be called alienated technology, though he never mentions the word alienation here.[17]

Being and Time sees man as distinctive in that the human understands its own Being. This makes man a *Dasein* in which both man and the entities encountered in the world are revealed. As man's distinctive Being is called existence, man's essence "lies in his existence."[18]

This means that man is essentially his own possibility or ability to exist. Without such ability, one would no longer be human. Its loss means death: "Death, as possibility, leaves *Dasein* nothing to be 'actualized'."[19] Hence alienation is not the thorough loss of possibility in death, but the phenomenon or existential reality called facticity.

This is the realization of possibility in daily life. As representing the essence of man, the possibility is called authenticity. It entails realization as facticity but possibility is more than facticity: With possibility there is room for man to choose this or that way to live; it inclines one to realize oneself in some facticity. *Dasein*, however, already has been thrown into the world so that possibility as realized in some facticity is itself concealed. As a result, in daily life one is judged as who he or she is mainly by his position, achievement, etc.

Heidegger sees man as being for the most part in his inauthenticity, not only because he already is his facticity in the world, but also because for the most part he would choose his way "to be" not according to his own possibilities, but as merely following others. As each one lives in the world together with the others, in choosing one's way one cannot but care about others or the mode of Being-with. Fearing being isolated, one chooses a way of existence like that of the others; the popular way of existence is a strong temptation in which each one would tranquilize himself. In this way the human becomes "They", but in so acting loses his or her own possibility to be. This is a universal phenomenon in daily life and one can hardly transcend this existentiality even when one thinks one is pursuing a character or personality of his own. Such unauthentic existentiality conceals *Dasein's* possibility or essence. "When *Dasein* is tranquillized and 'understands' everything, it compares itself with everything, and drifts towards alienation (*Entfrem-dung*) in which its own most proper potentiality-for-Being is hidden. Falling into Being-in-the-world is not only tempting and tranquilizing, but at the same time alienating."[20]

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[17] *BT*, p. 67.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid*., p. 307.
[20] *Ibid*., p. 222.

In these terms in the age of modern technology man obviously is in the situation of alienation for he does not decide the goal of modern technology. Superficially, man conceives, designs and expedites the development of modern technology, but more basically the essence of modern technology lies in a mode of revealing as Enframing; modern technology develops according to its own ordering or challenging. As Heidegger writes: "Man can indeed conceive, fashion, and carry through this or that in one way or another. But man does not control the unconcealment itself in which at any given time the real shows itself or withdraws."[21] As we will see later this "unconcealment" is destiny.

More importantly not only can one not control the way of revealing, but is oneself the standing in reserve in the context of interlocking modern technology. It seems that the human begins the process of technology, but actually he is challenged or ordered to exploit the energies of nature from the very beginning. "If man is challenged, ordered to do this, then does not man himself belong even more originally than nature to the standing in reserve?"[22] Heidegger points out that the current talk about human resources or the supply of patients for a clinic is evidence of this. Another example is that while the forester who measures a field of timber to all appearances walks the same forest path in the same way as did his grandfather, today he is driven by the profit-making of the lumber industry. He is subordinated to the necessity for cellulose, which in turn is challenged by the need for paper to be delivered to newspapers and magazines. The latter set public opinion, so that a set configuration of opinion becomes available on demand.[23] This case shows how today even people in a traditional way of life are put into the context of modern technology, not to mention people now entering new professions of modern technology.

Of course, there is some difference between man and other entities in this interlocking context. Man is standing in reserve, but not sheerly so, for man is the first to be challenged in the ordering of technology and indeed is also "a way of revealing". But again, "the unconcealment itself within which the order unfolds is never a human handwork."[24]

As we have mentioned, according to Heidegger's *Being and Time* alienation is a situation in which man forgets his own possibility to be, and tarries and dwells in his inauthenticity. And, since in modern technology man is standing in reserve he must be in a situation of alienation.

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[21] *QT*, p. 18.
[22] *Ibid*.
[23] *Ibid*.
[24] *Ibid*.

It is no exaggeration to say that in modern technology man is in a situation of alienation. In modern technology, man does find many advantages. It is a means to improve the living standard; it strengthens the power to control nature; and it is taken even as a way to freedom. But as Heidegger indicates, as man behaves according to the way which modern technology reveals, he blocks other possible ways of existence. Before man grasps technology, he already has been grasped by it. Can man be said to be free fully when he enters the essence of modern technology? Indeed the more modern technology develops, the more difficult it becomes for individuals to live an average life without technological means for lack of the necessary training. Is not then the individual's existence threatened in an age when modern technology holds sway? The average age when individuals begin their technological training is moved ever earlier, due to the ever more complex context of technology. Even the creating of fine arts could be substituted by technological practice; the slogan that the school should let the students develop in all dimensions reflects some degree of awareness of the prevalence of technology in modern society. However, when technology holds sway and the other possible ways of revealing are concealed we can hardly conceive what the other *ways are.*

TECHNOLOGY AND DESTINY: THE PROBLEM

People might look back to the past, but this obviously is unrealistic. What then can we do? Let us look further into Heidegger's theory. Heidegger does not mention the word alienation in his dealing with the essence of modern technology, for through modern technology he wants to trace something beyond human existence, namely, world destiny or providence.

It is surprising that a contemporary philosopher would talk about this, for usually one finds such a theme only in the ancient Eastern philosophies. However, Heidegger does talk about destiny in his later philosophy, since *The Letter on Humanism* (1945). The theme is his supreme aim appearing not only in his papers on technology, but also in those on art, language, poetry, thinking and so on. He sees revealing as the basic meaning or feature for both Being and destiny. As these can be substituted one for another, formally he treats the Western philosophical tradition and can say that he never changed the theme of his philosophy. Further, his understanding of truth is based on the Greek word *aletheia*, which means unconceal or unconcealment so that for Heidegger truth is on the same level as Being and destiny.

Even though the essence of modern technology lies in Enframing or revealing as challenging and ordering, till now we have not asked what is revealing. In fact, it is Being or destiny, but he never indicates

that these are a subject; rather they are presented as the process of revealing as such. "As a challenging-forth into ordering, Enframing is a way of revealing. Like every way of revealing it is an ordaining of destiny. Bringing-forth, *poiesis*, is also a destiny in this sense."[25]

Further, since the essence of modern technology is from destiny, Heidegger sees not first of all alienated man, but a danger within destiny itself. Man's situation can be uncovered only by working out the above danger. Unfortunately, destiny, like revealing as such, is not something revealed, but conceals itself even while unconcealing. We cannot describe destiny as easily as we describe something revealed, for it is rather mystical. However, destiny reveals itself in various ways, as does Being. When the essence of modern technology holds sway, it blocks other ways of revealing as challenging to ordering; it even conceals technology as a way of revealing, because here everything seems to be revealed not by some mystic power, but in being challenged-forth by a certain order. Thus, "Where Enframing holds sway, the regulating and securing of standing in reserve marks all. They no longer even allow their own fundamental characteristic of revealing to appear." "Thus the challenging Enframing conceals not only a former way of revealing or bringing-forth, but it conceals itself and with it that wherein unconcealment, e.g., truth, comes to pass."[26] One might question this as we are getting more and more knowledge by means of technology, but Heidegger distinguishes 'correct' from 'true', maintaining that in technology "nature presents itself as a calculable complex of the effects of forces" which "can indeed permit correct determinations", but "in the midst of all that is correct the true will withdraw."[27]

Based on the above consideration, Heidegger concludes "The destiny of revealing is in itself not just any danger, but danger as such."[28] "Thus, where Enframing reigns, there is danger in the highest sense."[29]

Since technology has a relation with destiny, we must consider the situation of man in the age of technology. First of all, regarding the relationship between man and destiny Heidegger says that "Man is rather 'thrown' from Being itself into the truth of Being, so that existing in this fashion he might guard the truth of Being, in order that beings might appear in the light of Being as the beings they are….Man is the

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[25] *QT*, pp. 24-25.
[26] *Ibid*., p. 27.
[27] *Ibid*., p. 26.
[28] *Ibid*.
[29] *Ibid*., p. 28.

shepherd of Being."[30] Further, he maintains that "Man becomes truly free only insofar as he belongs to the realm of destiny and so becomes one who listens and hears (*Horender*), and not one who is simply constrained to obey."[31] Freedom means openness in which the unconcealing happens; when man listens and hears in the realm of destiny, he is in openness.

Because Enframing, which is the essence of modern technology, lies in destiny, everything seems to be all right for man in the age of modern technology, for there man is in destiny. However, as challenging and ordering, Enframing blocks the other possible ways of revealing, especially when it holds sway; otherwise, as the guard of destiny, "man might be admitted more, sooner and ever more primally to the essence of that which is unconcealed and to its unconcealment, in order to experience as his essence his need of belonging to revealing."[32] Furthermore, when Enframing reigns, it blocks revealing as such, and hence does serious harm to man's freedom.

In the light of the relationship between man and destiny, Heidegger points out another phenomenon which is also a danger to man, namely, that it is of the essence of modern technology that man seems to become the lord of the earth because here the revealing as such is blocked. As a result, man no longer holds that destiny is the source of the beings being unconcealed, but on the contrary the impression prevails that everything man encounters exists only as his own construct. This leads to a final delusion: "It seems as though man everywhere and always encounters only himself."[33] This is taken as a disadvantage by Heidegger for the true "advent of beings lies in the destiny of Being."[34]

TECHNOLOGY AND DESTINY: THE RESPONSE

People usually think it not bad for man to be the lord of the earth. Man is supposed to be the center of the world; if he be subjected to nature he is alienated or reified. Although people have seen from man's controlling nature some unexpected results, such as pollution of the environment, loss of ecological balance, and so on, usually they think that these unexpected problems resulting from technology can also be resolved by means of technology. But, will rectified nature be the same one in which human beings and other living things primordially came to

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[30] M. Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. by D.F. Krell (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 210.

[31] *QT*, p. 25.

[32] *Ibid*., p. 26.

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

[34] *Basic Writings*, p. 210.

be? If not, why in practice could man not prevent those results before-hand; perhaps man is driven by some unknown force.

If a disadvantage is caused by man's fault, such as alienation, it could be corrected or remedied by man's own effort. But when a danger comes from destiny it could not be avoided merely by man. What man could do is not to give up technology, but to "keep watch over the unconcealment – and with it, from the first, the concealment – of all coming to presence in the earth."[35] That is to say, man should take tech-nology not only as an instrument at hand, but as a way of revealing. It is a way for human beings to recover their own dignity: man is the shepherd of the destiny of Being.

The above ideas of Heidegger seem full of enigmas. It must be asked, first of all, whether there is something like destiny and what is meant by keeping watch over it. If we follow the logical way of thinking, we cannot verify its existence. It is very difficult to understand Heidegger's idea here against the background of traditional Western philosophy.

Fortunately, as far I can see, it is easier to understand Heidegger's thinking on destiny in relation to the traditional Chinese philosophy. If compared to Tao in Chinese philosophy,[36] although Tao is not known by seeing or touching, nor can it even be named, most Chinese philosophers have thought Tao to be both nature and human society. They maintain that one can experience the Tao through everything and every event, despite differing in details as to which is the correct way to reach the Tao. We can read from Yi Jing: "That which goes ascending is what is called Tao. That which goes descending is what is called a 'vessel'"[37] Thus, as Chinese philosophers understand, Tao is in the metaphysical realm; Tao is the supreme aim of doing philosophy.

That does not mean that one should do nothing but philosophy, but since Tao pervades the world one can reach or experience the Tao through action in the world. The man who has reached or experienced Tao is called a saint or a sage. Throughout the long history, Chinese intellectuals looked down upon technology, so the word technique should replace technology. But they did not deny that doing technique is also a way to experience the Tao. So, they maintain, "Go through techni-

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[35] *QT*, p. 32.

[36] Heidegger highly appreciated Lao Tzu's Tao; see *On the Way to Language*, trans. by Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 92; *Heidegger and Asian Thought*, ed. by Graham Parkes (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1987); and my book *Transcendental Thinking in the Contemporary West – Heidegger's Philosophy* (1989, in Chinese).

[37] *Yi Jing*, *Great Commentary*, section one (my translation).

que to the Tao".[38] This has the same meaning as Heidegger's saying "To keep watch over the destiny of Being" is the essence of modern technology.

The comparison between the two philosophies helps us to understand Heidegger's philosophy on the problem of technology. Much can be said on this comparison, but is beyond the purpose of this paper.

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[38] See Zhuang Tzu.

CHAPTER XI

SAME METHODS, DIFFERENT GOALS: RE-STORYING CHUANG TZU AND THE CH'AN SCHOOL

GAN CHUNSONG

When postmodernism was introduced into China, many Chinese thinkers felt excited. There are two basic reasons to explain this. One is, some thinkers saw postmodernism as a weapon to deconstruct the thought monopoly in China, The second is that some thinkers believed they could find a lot of similar items between postmodernism and Chinese philosophy. Depending on realistic need, and affinity in thought, recently postmodernism has become the most popular topic in the Chinese thought realm.

What is postmodernism? It is a very complex question. There are two kinds or two-dimensional descriptions. Some argue that postmodernism emerged in a new age contrasting to the pre-modern and modern. Some see postmodernism as a different thinking method from "modern" thinking methods, such as those of the Enlightenment and scientific establishment built in Europe after the Renaissance. Each of these definitions has its own grounds. It is not necessary and impossible for me to discuss their differences or how they can function in these two dimensions in detail. What I can do is adopt the second viewpoint, this is, I see postmodernism as a new thinking method. Then I will look into the ancient Chinese philosophy, trying to find the same thoughts as Western postmodernism.

To my knowledge, the core of the postmodernism thinking method is to stress the limitation of language and the place of individual experience in the process of the cognitive. As Walter Truett Anderson said: postmodernism is "a seed of discontent," and what gives, discontent it is the "belief systems that gave form to the modern world", remnants of many of the belief systems of pre-modern societies" ("Reality isn't what it used to be"). In their eyes, these belief systems are "scientific method," and "the universalism and essentialism of the Enlightenment" (Thomas Bridges, 1997).

After Wittgenstein, more and more philosophers began studying the relationship between language and reality, which is called the "linguistic turn in philosophy." As a result, more and more people doubted that language can "convey" truth, "mirror" the subject: these doubts have become the hallmark of postmodernism:

Let us pause to reconsider the duties traditionally assigned to language. Can language bear the ponderous response-bility of "depicting" or "mirror" what is the case? Can we be certain that language is the sort of vehicle that can "convey" truth to others? And when it is stamped into print, can we properly anticipate that it will "store" the truth for the future generations? On what grounds do we rest such belief?" (Gergen, 1989)

To postmodernism, the answer is obviously "no," the answer based on their articulation of individual experience in contrast to knowledge. Michael White said:

In the social sciences at least, it is now generally recognized that it is not possible for persons to have a direct knowledge of the world, that an objective description of the world is not available to us, and that no-one has a privileged access to the naming of reality, whatever the reality is.

And it is generally accepted that what we know of the world, we know only through our experience of it; our experience of the world is all that we have, and this is all that we can know. We cannot even know another person's experience of the world. The best that we can do is to interpret the experience of others; that is the expression of their experience as they go about the business of interpreting it for themselves (White, 1989-1990).

To postmodernism, what we know is dependent on everybody's receiving pattern [fore-structure], and this is no doubt the essential theme of the postmodernist philosophy. Indeed, I think it is exactly the common ground for it and traditional Chinese philosophy. Now, I would like to trace back the Chinese philosophical thought in this sense. In general, there are different aspects in Chinese philosophy compared with those in the Western philosophy. In ancient China, there were no professional philosophers. Most thinkers were officials: they paid more attention to politics and ethical issues rather than philosophy itself. Consequently, they did not have interest in building a system of concepts or categories like Aristotle did in ancient Greece. This is why Hegel said there is no philosophy in ancient China, only a set of moral doctrines. Secondly, ancient Chinese people had a special sense of nature. For them, everything in the world was connected to each other. Everything was only a part of the whole. If everything abides the law of nature (Dao), the world would be in harmony. Otherwise the world would be in

chaos. There were three propositions in ancient China: the unity of heaven and man, the unity of knowledge and action, and the unity of sentiment and scenery. It is said that Old Chinese philosophers were not engaging in investigating the external world but in pursuing internal human values. They saw the heaven and man as a unity, and there was a highest law. What is this law? The schools did not have a clear answer. They insisted that it would be impossible to describe the law (Dao) clearly, because it depended on different situations. For example, Lao Tzu argued that the Dao was unspeakable. He tried to use many different adjectives to modify it. Lao Tzu said: The thing that is called Dao is elusive and vague, deep and obscure, soundless and formless. Therefore, it cannot be seen or be touched, it isn't related to anything, it doesn't desire to do anything, and it is so huge that nothing cannot but be included; yet it is so tiny that it can squeeze. With this kind of perspective is encountered, viz., something which basically can-not be described by language, we have to name it Dao (inadequately).

Indeed Lao Tzu found the limitation of language: he realized that the language of human could not describe the nature's law, so when they try to express their opinions of the world, they are "accustomed to express themselves in the form of aphorisms, apothegms or allusions, and illustrations (Feng Youlan, 1946)

To some extent, the way of Chinese philosophers' presentation can be called "narrative," or at least can be called quasi-narrative. If you read Chuang Tzu's work, you would note this. Chuang Tzu knew the limitation of language deeply, also he knew the cause of limitation of language was the differences among individual's varied experiences. Therefore, we may see Chuang Tzu as one of the predecessors and "sponsors" of postmodernism.

Chuang Tzu (between 395B.C? and 295 B.C) is even considered the most important philosopher and literary figure in modern china, because most questions which he discussed surpassed his time. In order to describe his "nature" vision, he found that language almost can't respond to the fact: he said language is quiet and stable, but the object which the language wants to describe is always changing. How can we use unchanging thing to depict the changing thing? In his work "Chi Wu Lun," he began with a description of the wind, "the sound of earth", but in addition there are other sounds, of man, so these two sounds together constitute "the sound of heaven".

He said the sound of man consist of word (*Yen*):

For speech is not merely the blowing of breath. The speaker has something to say, but what he says is not final. Has something been said? Or something not been said? It may

be different from the chirping of chickens. But is there really any difference? Or is there no difference?

> There is nothing that is not "that" and there is nothing that is "this." Things do not know that they are the "that" and there is nothing that is not "this". They only know what they themselves know. Therefore I say that the "that" is produced by the "this" and the "this" is also caused by the "that". This is the theory of mutual production (*A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 182-183).

The words of speech represent human ideas: they represent affirmations and denials and the opinions that are made by each individual from his own particular finite point of view. Being thus finite, these opinions are necessarily one-sided, yet most men not knowing that their opinions are based on one finite point of view, always believe that they are right and others are wrong. However, even if what a man says is right in Dao, the difference between right and wrong is relative, because each one's view is only based on his own experience. Chuang Tzu said:

> Suppose you and I argue. If you beat me instead of my beating you, are you really right and am I really wrong? If I beating you instead of your beating me, am I really right and are you really wrong? Or are we both partly right and partly wrong? Or are we both wholly right and wholly wrong? Since between us neither you nor I know which is right, others are naturally in the dark. Whom shall we ask to arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with you, since he has already agreed with you, how can he arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with me, since he has already agreed with me, how can he arbitrate? If we ask someone who disagreed with both you and me to arbitrate, since he already disagreed with you and me, how can he arbitrate? If we ask someone who agrees with both you and me, since he already agrees with both you and me, how can he arbitrate? Thus among you, me, and others, none knows which is right. Shall we wait for still others? The great variety of sounds are relative to each other just as much as they are not relative to each other.(*A source book of Chinese philosophy*, pp.189-190).

I think Chuang Tzu knew the difference of the world of word and the world of "fact", because he understood that the way we describe is always dependent on our language, and perhaps we don't know what is the real world:

> When people said "all right", then things are all right. When people say, "not all right", the things are not all right. A road becomes so when people walk on it. All things become so-and-so to people because people call them so-and-so. How have they become so? They have become so because people say they are so. How have they become not so? – it is because people say they are not so (*A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy*, p, 209).

In a fascinating conversation with his friend Hui Shi, Chuang Tzu said that the core of individual experience was an obstacle to knowing each other. Comparing the viewpoints of White and Gergen above, we can easily find the common point between them.

> Chuang Tzu and Hui Tzu were talking a leisurely walk along the dam of the Hao River, and Chuang Tzu said: "The white fish are swimming at ease, This is the happiness of the fish."
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> "You are not the fish", said Hui Tzu "how do you know its happiness?"
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> "You are not I" said Chuang Tzu. "How can you know that I don't know the happiness of the fish?"
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> Hui Tzu said, "of course I don't know, since I am not you. But you are not the fish, and it is perfectly clear that you do not know the happiness of the fish".
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> "Let us get at the bottom of the matter," said Chuang Tzu. "When you asked how I knew the happiness of the fish, you already knew that I knew the happiness of the fish but you asked anyhow, – you asked how I knew it, along the river" (*A Source Book of Chinese Philosophy*, pp. 209-210).

After Chuang Tzu, some thinkers in the Wei Jing Dynasty (about 300 A.D) also discuss the question of language and reality: there are many fascinating view points, but the most interesting viewpoint was given by the Ch'an School. The Ch'an School is considered as the most 'Chinese-style' Buddhism. It is obvious that Ch'an School was influenced by Chuang Tzu, especially on the limitation of language. The Ch'an School denied the possibility to decipher Buddha truth through word. We can know the School held this, through Hui Neng's verse (Hui Neng was considered the 'sponsor' of Chinese Ch'an). He said, "Buddha-nature is forever clear and pure, so where is the dust?" This means that all Buddhist cultivation is unnecessary. In contrast, traditional Buddhism insisted that the cultivation is necessary, because everyone' heart would

be otherwise polluted by a veil, and just like the mirror is polluted by dust, you should clean it often. Hui Neng argued everyone has the possibility to become Buddha and everyone can become Buddha through *Duan Wu.* This can be called the Ch'anist revolution in Buddhism.

The most interesting and most misunderstood teaching tool of Ch'an is the Koan. In general Koan meanins the "matter of law." Here this term means the records of how each Ch'an Master made use of any story, problem, or situation to teach his pupil to know that the truth is mysterious and irrational so that only an illogical answer can reveal it.

For example, Ma Tzu (?-778), a disciple of the disciple of Hui Neng, was once asked: "What kind of man cannot be linked to all things?" The answer is: "Wait until in one gulp you can drink up all the water in the West River, and then I will tell you".

The most puzzling technique the Ch'an School used is that of shouting and beating. When a student asked about the fundamental principles of Buddhism, he would often be given a beating by his master, or some irrelevant answer, to make his disciple realize that conceptualization can never discover what the Buddha is and that he should return to his spontaneous mental faculty to look for the answer himself.

The Ch'an School realized the limitation of language even though the disciples still used language to record their conversations: the standard saying of the school are – "Point directly to the human mind" and "See one's nature and become a Buddha". Everything other than the cultivation of the mind, such as reading scriptures, making offerings to the Buddha, reciting His name, joining the monastic order, are regarded as unnecessary. Ch'an argues for the importance of the individual experience, so we cannot find a way which fits everyone. The Masters said spiritual cultivation must depend on everyone's situation, because different men have different senses of the same thing, just like "when a man drinks water, only he himself knows the sense of its warmth or cold." So to Ch'an, the method of cultivation is no-cultivation. It is said that Ma Tzu, before he became a disciple of Hui Jang (died 774), lived on the Heng Shan mountain (locality in middle China). There he practiced meditation. One day Hui-Jang began to grind some bricks in front of him; when Ma Tzu saw it, he asked Hui Jang what he was doing, and he replied that he was planning to make a mirror. Ma Tzu said "How can grinding bricks make a mirror?" Hui Jang said: "If grinding bricks cannot make a mirror, how can meditation make a Buddha?" By this answer, Ma Tzu was enlightened and became the disciple of Hui-Jang.

Conclusion

From the above, we can know Chang Tzu's and the Ch'an School's view: they all argue for the limitation of language and the influence of individual experience on human knowledge, ideas which are similar to the themes of postmodernism. However we cannot say Chang Tzu and the Ch'an School *are* postmodern. For they have difference goals. In order to transcend this limitation of language, Chang Tzu and Ch'an School admit respectively the high truth of "Dao" and "Buddha"; to Chang Tzu, the goal is to get "great knowledge" and "great virtue", and to become a pure man. To the Ch'an School, there is only the intuitive and direct way to Nirvana. In contrast, postmodernism argues that the limitations of language and individual experience show that there is no "truth", no "fact", so nobody can "transcend." Postmodernists argue that we abandon the illusion of getting "truth" and transcending individual experience. So I conclude that both postmo-dernism and Chinese ancient philosophy use the same method to reach differing goals.

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CHAPTER XXII

ON LEIBNIZ'S DOCTRINE OF THE HARMONY OF AUTONOMY AND GRACE AND ITS CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE

DUAN DEZHI

The principle of harmony is the highest principle of Leibniz's system of philosophy/theology. Leibniz successively put forward the parallelism, "the hypothesis of concomitance" and "the hypothesis of pre-established harmony" on the foundation of critically examining the theories of relation of mind (soul) and body of Descartes and Malebranche. However, the doctrine of pre-established harmony of Leibniz is not limited to the relation of mind and body of human being, but is applicable to the relations of bare monads, of soul and body in general, and of nature and grace. Leibniz emphasized the duality and unity of harmony, thinking that the harmony always has a kind of duality, being both of autonomy and of Grace, the two levels of which always penetrating each other and unifying. Leibniz laid the foundation of his doctrine of pre-established harmony on his monadology and some related doctrines. We may well understand the autonomy and Grace of harmony and their unity in terms of his theories of relation, moral necessity and the pre-establishment of harmony. Such kind of harmonizing doctrine of Leibniz and its meliorism not only has important significances in the history of philosophy and theology, but also has important practical significances for us to cure some of the spiritual diseases of contemporary human beings, such as the individualism without moderation, the extreme anthropocentrism and the world-weary pessimism. The harmony doctrine of Leibniz is not out-of-date doctrine, but so far still full of vitality.

The question of harmony is the highest question of Leibniz's system of philosophy-theology. The principle of harmony is the highest principle of Leibniz's system of philosophy-theology.[1] The radical aim of Leibniz's doctrine of harmony consists in expounding and stressing the duality of harmony, namely the autonomy of harmony and the Grace of harmony. To study such a doctrine is of great significances for us to understand the ideal relations between I-self and other-self, nature and society. In this paper, I will begin with introducing the process of the

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[1] Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (London, George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1937), sec.79.

doctrine, then interpret the universality, layers and duality of the harmony, finally illustrate briefly the contemporary significances of the doctrine.

THE FERMENTATION PROCESS OF THE DOCTRINE OF PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY

Universal harmony is one of the most important theoretical and practical questions which Leibniz concerned himself with for his whole life, but he began with systematically thinking it out from the position of philosophy and theology after he had finished the invention of infinitesimal calculus. And the primitive motive of his doing such a thing was to resolve the question of the relations of mind (soul) and body which was one of the most disputed questions in his time. In *Dis-course on Metaphysics* Leibniz had declared that the question of the relation or the union of mind (soul) and body is a "great mystery", and we may say it is one of the most important and direct aims of his doctrine of harmony to expose or reveal "the great mystery".[2]

Leibniz not only repeatedly inquired into and interpreted "the great mystery" in his works and papers, such as *First Truth* (about 1680-84), *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), *A New System* (1695), *Reply to the Thoughts on the System of Pre-established Harmony* (1702), *New Essays on Human Understanding* (1705), *Theodicy* (1710), *The Principle of Nature and of Grace, Based on Reason* (1714)*, The Monadology* (1714), but also took great pains to discuss and explain it in his correspondences with A. Arnauld (1686-90), S. Foucher (1686), Basagne (1696-1706), and S. Clarke (1715-16). In these works, papers and letters, Leibniz successively put forward the parallelism, "the hypothesis of concomitance or agreement", and "the hypothesis of pre-established harmony" on the foundation of critically examining the theories of relations of mind (soul) and body of Descartes and Malebranche.

The parallelism is an early statement which Leibniz used about the relation of mind (soul) and body. He first used the statement in his an early work *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686).[3] Afterwards he occasionally still used the statement even after he had invented new statements of the hypothesis of concomitance and the hypothesis of pre-established harmony. The parallelism aimed at stressing the point that mind (soul) and body act according to their own laws respectively, the former follows the laws of the final causes, whereas the latter follows the laws of motion in nature and the laws of the efficient causes. They act in parallel and without interference from each other. It is because of

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[2] Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, sec. 33.

[3] *Ibid.*

this that he concentrated his critical work on the doctrine of *fluxus physicus* or the natural influence when he interpreted his doctrine of parallelism. The doctrine of natural influence or interaction of mind (soul) and body is a traditional doctrine which was used to explain the union relation between mind (soul) and body. According to the doctrine, mind (soul) and body may interact: mind (soul) may influence body and body may also influence mind (soul). In modern times, the traditional point of view had become suspect by more and more people with the establishment of the modern point of view of the essence of matter being extension, but it still kept some influence. Even if Descartes was the father of modern philosophy, he again and again stressed that mind (soul) may act on body when he interpreted his dualist system. According to Descartes, mind (soul) cannot change the quantity of the motion of matter, but can change its direction. Leibniz had repeatedly criticized Descartes by name in a series of his works, including *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), *A New System* (1695), *Theodicy* (1910), *The Monadology* (1714) and some letters to A. Arnauld (1687).[4] The weapon which Leibniz used to criticize Descartes is the conservation of momentum which Leibniz thought of as one of his most important scientific discoveries. According to the law, not only the total quantity of motion (force) is constant, but also the force in any direction is constant, by which Leibniz radically removed the possibility of mind's (soul's) action on body. No matter whether the law of the conservation of momentum of which Leibniz was proud is of value in the history of physics or not, its philosophical and theological significance is evident: Leibniz might use it to radically remove the possibility of interaction between mind (soul) and body, so that he could defend the doctrine of parallelism.

In his early period Leibniz preferred to use the statement of the hypothesis of the concomitance or agreement to express his understanding of the relation of mind (soul) and body. He repeatedly used the statement in his correspondence with Arnauld and Hessen-Rheinfels during the period from 1686 to 1690.[5] Leibniz replaced the parallelism with the hypothesis of concomitance of mind (soul) and body, not only because the parallelism originally was a statement of Spinoza, but also because Leibniz wanted to use it to express his further understanding of the relation: mind (soul) and body act not only inde-pendently and without interference with each other, but concomitantly, concordantly, agreeably and corresponding with each other. In his letter to Arnould in

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[4] Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics*, sec.17*; A New System*, sec. 12; *Theodicy*, sec. 60-61; *The Monadology,* sec. 80.

[5] Cf. L.E. Loemker*, Leibniz, Philosophical Papers and Letters* (Amsterdam: Reidel, 1970), p. 338.

1687 he had compared such a concomitant relation of mind (soul) and body to a band, in which the bandsmen separately took up their parts and placed them in such a way that they neither see nor hear one another, though they nevertheless agree perfectly in following their notes, each one his own, in such a way that he who hears the whole finds a wonderful harmony much more surprising than if there were a connection between the performers.

At last Leibniz put forward "the hypothesis of pre-established harmony" on the foundation of his further consideration of the relation of mind (soul) and body. According to Leibniz it utterly depends on their own nature respectively, mind (soul) and body can act interconcomitantly and interconcordantly when they act according to their own laws respectively. So that he put forward the question of pre-establishment, as the harmony of a band comes from the music score which is written by someone beforehand, so the harmony of mind (soul) and body comes from the pre-establishment when God makes creation. Since God can foresee the whole developing process of soul and body before he creates, he beforehand endowed them with the nature which ensures them acting concordantly with the opposite side respectively. Then mind (soul) and body may act on their own laws, but act interconcomitantly and intercomcordantly. Leibniz first put forward and demonstrated the hypothesis in *A New System* (1695).[6] Afterwards he systematically and detailedly interpreted and demonstrated the hypothesis in his *Theodicy* (1710), *The Principle of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason* (1714) and *The Monadology* (1714).

Leibniz always both constructed something and destroyed something. As he concentrated on criticizing the theories of motion of Descartes when he interpreted his hypothesis of parallelism, so he concentrated on criticizing the occasionalism of mind (soul) and body and the hypothesis of pre-established harmony. Although Malebranche (1638-1715) was a disciple of Descartes, he thought that the harmony of mind (soul) and body could not been realized by the mind's (soul's) action on body, but by God's continuous or perpetual adjustment. Malebranche put forward and demonstrated the theory of the relation of mind (soul) and body in *De la Recherche de la Verite* (1674-1675). He also put forward and demonstrated his famous point of view – we see everything in God, when he interpreted and demonstrated his occasionalism. Leibniz thought there were two defects in the occasionalism of Malebranche: one is that it destroyed or denied the law or regularity of the actions of mind (soul) and body, and denied and disintegrated the autonomy of their activity; the other is that it radically destroyed the image of omniscience and omnipotence of God. Because according to

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[6] Leibniz, *A New System*, sec. 15.

occasionalism God became an unskillful watch-maker, a "Deux ex machina" who tired himself with constantly adjusting the relation of mind (soul) and body. According to Leibniz, the advantages of his hypothesis of pre-established harmony not only lies in its replacing a series of perpetual or continual miracles of occasionalism with a miracle at the time of God's creation, but also because of this on the one hand it can ensure the autonomy and regularity of the development of mind (soul) and body, while on the other hand it can fully embody the omni-science and omnipotence of God, so that it realizes or attains the natural and organic unity between the autonomy and the Grace of the harmony of mind (soul) and body.

Leibniz was very self-confident with his hypothesis of pre-established harmony, and considered it as the best management and explanation to the problem of the relation of mind (soul) and body. He had repeatedly emphasized that there were three possible ways to conceive the union of mind (soul) and body as two clocks: the first is the way of natural influence, which was put forward and advocated by scholastic philosophers, Huygens and Descartes; the second is occasion-alism, the hypothesis of which was put forward and demonstrated by Malebranche, the third is the hypothesis of pre-established harmony, which is put forward and demonstrated by Leibniz himself. Among them only his hypothesis is "intelligible and natural", and also is "the most beautiful and the most worthy of God".[7] Here Leibniz finds it hard to avoid suspicion of praising himself, but his doctrine of pre-established harmony undoubtedly is more successful in stressing the autonomy and the Grace of the harmony of mind (soul) and body.

THE UNIVERSALITY AND LAYERS OF PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY

Although the doctrine of pre-established harmony of Leibniz as stated above, gradually fermented and formed from his probing into the relation of mind (soul) and body, it is not limited to the relation of mind and body, but has evident universality or universal applicability: it not only is applicable to the relation of soul and body in general, but also is applicable to the relation of bare monads and the relation of the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of Grace. Indeed, the univer-sality or the universal applicability is embodied through these three layers. Now we will examine in order the three layers or links of the system of pre-established harmony of Leibniz.

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[7] Cf. Leibniz, to Basagne (1696, 1706); see Nicholas Rescher, *G.W. Leibniz's Monadology* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), p. 258.

Let us first examine the universal harmony of monads. By the universal harmony of monads, I mean that all monads, even bare monads, or monads which only have minute perception, act according to their own laws, but there is always a kind of universal harmony among them. Such a kind of universal harmony among monads is the fundamental link of the system of pre-established harmony of Leibniz. Because according to Leibniz, monads are the ultimate units or "true atoms" which constitute all things in the world, therefore the world, in the final analysis, is a world of monads, the so-called universal harmony; first or finally, is the universal harmony of monads.

However, the problem consists in how there could be such a kind of harmonious relation among the monads which act according to their own laws respectively. As far as we know, the radical characteristic of monads consists in that they are "without parts", or without extension, and without windows or "windowless", so that there is no possibility of direct interaction among them. Moreover, according to the law of continuity, all monads in the world, from bare monads to God of omniscience and omnipotence, constitute a single and orderly chain according to the degrees of clearness of their perceptions. So if monads act according to their own laws, and if one of them develops and changes a little, then would the continuity of the whole chain or series of all monads have been destroyed?

But since monads are the ultimate reality in the world, and the actual world is essentially a world of monads, then we will only look for the origination or rootedness of the universal harmony among monads from the nature of monads, and the deep definitions of monads. That monads are "without parts", as stated above, is an essential definition of monads, but belongs to a kind of negative definition: The more positive definition of monads lies in that they have the ability of perception. Monads not only can reflect the world around themselves, but also can reflect the whole world which consists of the created monads, so that they are mirrors of the universe. The degrees of clearness of reflecting the world of monads are different because of the difference of their ability of perception, but after all they reflect one and the same universe. This provides the possibility of the universal harmony among them. Moreover, according to *The Monadology*, a monad first is a kind of "simple substance". This means not only that " all natural changes" of a monad come from "an internal principle", but also that all kinds of plurality, all kinds of properties and relations, including all kinds of its relation with all other monads which the monad reveals in its latter endless activities, are potentially contained in such a "simplicity" and "unity".[8] In other words, the universal harmony originally is contained in

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[8] Leibniz, *The Monadology*, sec. 13-14.

the nature of each monad. That is to say, the harmony of one monad with all other monads is always one which is defined and determined by its own nature, and in the final analysis, a kind of "autonomous harmony".

The universal harmony of monads not only is a kind of "autonomous harmony", but also is a kind of "harmony of Grace". This is because every monad contains its harmony with all other monads; its nature is not contingent, but is pre-established by God when he made creation. Being omniscient, God can foresee all the changes of a monad in its whole development process; being omnipotent, God can make a monad keep its harmonious relations with all other monads in its endless developments and changes when he created it. Without the pre-establishment of God, the universal harmony of monads is not conceivable. Moreover, the "Graceness" of the universal harmony also is not avoidable. Since, stated as above, the essential definition of the monad lies in its "simplicity", or its being "without parts," then it neither can come into being naturally nor can end naturally, and can come into being only by God's creation.[9] This shows that the universal harmony of monads not only is a kind of harmony of autonomy and Grace, but also must be a kind of harmony of autonomy and Grace.

The second is the harmony of soul and body. In contrast with the universal harmony of (bare) monads, the harmony between soul and body is a kind of higher degree harmony. According to Leibniz, monads can be divided into three different degrees or classes according to the degree of clearness of their perception. Among the hierarchy of monads, the bare monads belong to the lowest degree. Because the bare monads (also called forms or entelechies) only have a minimum of perception and desire, they have something analogous to souls, but nothing that could strictly be called a soul. Soul belongs to a higher degree monad, because it has clearer perceptions, has memory, feelings and attention. Moreover the harmony of soul and body not only contains the harmony of the soul of animal and its body, but also contains the harmony of human soul (mind) and its body. Because man ("Homo sapiens") after all is an amphibian – a kind of creature of two realms,[10] he belongs to both the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of Grace. Man as an embodied spirit, occupies the lowest place in the kingdom of Grace, but occupies the highest place in the kingdom of nature. The relation of human soul (mind) and body and the relation of the soul and body of animals, are different in the modes of their manifestations, but as far as their essence is concerned, they belong to one and the same type.

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[9] Leibniz, *The Monadology*, sec.4-6.
[10] Cf. Nicholas Rescher, *G.W. Leibniz's Monadology*, p. 289.

The harmony of soul and body not only is a higher degree harmony, but also is a kind of harmony which is directly related to the relation of monad and matter. This is another important cause why the harmony takes an especially important status in the whole system of harmony of Leibniz. According to Leibniz, by the harmony of soul and body is meant nothing except that soul and body act according to their own laws on the one hand, and they act concordantly on the other hand. That soul, as a kind of monad of higher degree and transits from the state of less clear perception to the state of clearer perception, is promoted by its inherent appetition, so that it always acts according to the laws of final causes. Whereas since body is a kind of physical phenomenon, it always acts according to the laws of efficient causes which inhere in the physical phenomena. Leibniz emphasized repeatedly that "soul's act according to the laws of final causes, through appetition, ends, and means. Bodies act according to the laws of efficient causes or of motions. And the two realms, that of efficient causes and that of final causes, are harmonious with one another."[11] As a result, bodies act as though there were no souls at all, and souls act as though there were no bodies at all. If we observe the world only from the level of body, we may become a great Epicurus, and if we observe the world only from the level of soul, we may become a great Plato. Epicurus is the greatest materialist, Plato is the greatest idealist. So the doctrine of the pre-established harmony of Leibniz may be regarded as a marvelous combination of the greatest materialism and the greatest idealism.[12]

Here the problem lies in how soul and body, the laws of final causes and the laws of efficient causes, materialism (of Epicurus) and idealism (of Plato) are united together in the system of Leibniz's philosophy and theology. In order to resolve the problem, we have to introduce the doctrine of matter of Leibniz and the doctrine of the dominant monads of Leibniz. Leibniz had defined matter (body) as a kind of phenomenon with well-shaped foundation, the foundation of which is within the monad, and is the primitive passive force or "Materia Prima" which is within monad as a kind of fundamental element. The "materia secunda" (body), as a physical mass, is nothing but a kind of manifestation of the primitive passive force or "Materia Prima" of the Monad. It is true that the organic body as the body of man consists of aggregates of numerous monads, but there is a dominant monad within it. And the body should be spoken of the external appearance of the dominant monad within his body, and the activities of the body naturally is a kind of external appearance of the activities of the dominant monad

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[11] Leibniz, *The Monadology*, sec. 79.

[12] Cf. Reply to the Thoughts on the System of Pre-established Harmony, see Loemker, Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters,* p. 559.

(mind) within his body. Undoubtedly the relation between the activities of human's body and the activities of human's dominant monad (mind) is not a kind of causality, but a kind of natural parallel and harmonious relation. It is evident that the creator of such a relation still is God who creates all monads.

The third is the harmony of nature and Grace. The harmony of nature and Grace is the highest degree harmony in the harmony system of Leibniz. One reason is that the harmony is a kind of harmony which is related to spirits. And the spirits belong to the highest degree of the hierarchy of monads. The other reason is that the relation of God with spirits is specially close or intimate. According to the law of continuity and the hierarchy of monads in the philosophy-theology of Leibniz, spirits or rational souls, belong to the highest degree of the created monads. The superiority of spirits over ordinary souls lies in that the ordinary souls, as mirrors of the universe, only reflect the universe which consists of created monads, whereas being of reason, spirits can be further able to reflect God himself who has created all monads. Spirits themselves as images of God, not only can reflect God and the universe which God had created, but also can create things according to their own will just like God. Therefore the spirits are a kind of minute divine, or "little god", in their finite realm.[13] It is because of this that the relation of God with spirits is closest and the most intimate.

The relation of God with nature is the relation of the inventor (engineer) with machine, whereas the relation of God with spirits is a kind of social relation of relatives between prince and subject, even between father and son. It is also because of this that Leibniz called the social community which consists of spirits as the moral kingdom of Grace, or "the city of God". Besides, the harmony of nature and Grace is a kind of harmony the content of which is most extensive in the harmonious system of Leibniz, because it not only is related to the whole physical kingdom of nature and the whole moral kingdom of Grace, but also is related to God himself. Leibniz had called the harmony as "the greatest or utmost harmony".[14] Perhaps it is because of this that Leibniz also called his system of monadology "the principles of nature and of Grace".

The fundamental question of the harmony between the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of Grace consists in that the physical kingdom of nature satisfies the principle of justice or the fair principle not in a miraculous way but in the natural way. It is true that as far as the highest duty is concerned, the fundamental task of God is to

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[13] Cf. Leibniz, *The Monadology*, sec. 83; *The Principles of Nature and Grace*, *Based on Reason*, sec. 14; *Theodicy,* sec. 147.

[14] Cf. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, sec. 118.

make the existence of the physical kingdom of nature as perfect as possible, and ensure for the habitants of the moral kingdom of Grace their greatest possible felicity. Thus if we may consider the highest perfection as the first principle of the existence of the physical kingdom of nature, we also may call ensuring the habitants to get their greatest possible felicity the first principle of the moral kingdom of Grace.[15] But if we consider the question from the position of the management of the city of God, the principle of justice or the fair principle should be considered as the first principle. And according to the principle, God must strictly carry out the principle of justice of the reward of the good and the punishment of the evil when God contributes happiness, and the radical target of the harmony of nature and Grace lies in carrying out and fulfilling the principle in a completely natural way.

As the universal harmony of monads and the harmony between soul and body must be realized by God, so the harmony of nature and Grace is also realized through God. Thus on the one hand God is an inventor, a designer, and an engineer, as far as the relation of God with the physical kingdom of nature is concerned; on the other hand he is a benevolent prince and a father, as far as the relation of God with the moral kingdom of Grace is concerned. So the harmony of nature and Grace essentially is a kind of the harmony between God as the engineer of the physical kingdom of nature and God as the prince of the moral kingdom of Grace, a kind of internal harmony and self-harmony within God. We may not only regard this as the great mystery of the harmony of nature and Grace, but also regard this as the great mystery of the whole doctrine of harmony of Leibniz.

THE DUALITY AND UNITY OF THE PRE-ESTABLISHED HARMONY AND THEIR THEORETICAL GROUNDS

In the system of harmony of Leibniz, harmony has a kind of duality, namely it is both of autonomy and of Grace. And such a kind of duality, essentially, is unitized. That is to say, the autonomy of harmony embodies the Grace of harmony, similarly the Grace of harmony manifests itself only through the autonomy of harmony. Without the autonomy of harmony, the Grace of harmony could not really exist by itself; similarly without the Grace of harmony, the autonomy of harmony also could not take place. Such a kind of duality and unity of harmony not only "embodies" the harmony of nature and Grace and the Harmony of soul and body, but also "embodies" the universal harmony of monads. However, such a kind of duality and unity of the harmony is not contingent, but has its own deeply theoretical grounds in the whole

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[15] Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics,* sec. 36.

system of Leibniz's philosophy and theology. Now we will discuss such a kind of duality and unity from the theories of relation, the moral necessity and the pre-establishment of harmony of Leibniz.

First we shall examine the autonomy of harmony in the perspective of the theory of relation. By the autonomy of harmony, is meant that either in the harmony of a monad with other monads and the harmony between soul and body, or in the harmony of the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of Grace, any side being in the relation of harmony is not heteronomous and purely passive but autonomous and active, and in the final analysis, is determined by respective nature and "the internal principle." Such a kind of definition of the autonomy of harmony in Leibniz's philosophy is evidently inseparable from his theory of relation.

The theory of relation of Leibniz mainly includes the following contents: (1) the metaphysical theory of real existence. According to the theory only substances and their properties are real. Other things – preeminently including relations between substances – are merely "things of the mind" (*entia rationis*), belonging to the realm of phenomenal appearance rather than of existential reality. (2) The ideality of relation: the relation is neither a substance, even nor an accident of a substance, but a merely ideal thing. (3) Relation is a kind of phenomena which is "well-founded". Relation itself is without original reality, but has a solid foundation in the properties of the substances. (4) The reducibility of relations: all relations could be reducible to the properties of a substance, so that it hasn't any original reality, but still contains a kind of dependent reality. (5) The relational statement is not meaningless: the relations of substances are undeniable, but the relations between substances must be inherent in their properties or their predicates.

According to such theory of relation, the autonomy of harmony is self-evident. Because since relations only have a kind of dependent or subordinate reality, since all relations may be reduced to the relative terms, then the harmonious relations of a monad with another monad, the harmonious relations of soul and body and the harmonious relations between the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of Grace all may be reduced into substances and their properties. That is to say, such kind of marvelous harmonious relations is nothing but the concrete historical appearance or manifestation of substances and their nature or their properties.

As we may well understand the autonomy of harmony in the perspective of the theory of relation, so we may also well understand the Grace of harmony in the perspective of the theory of moral necessity. According to Leibniz, there are three kinds of necessity altogether. The first is metaphysical or geometrical necessity, which is strictly called necessity, the opposite of which is self-contradictory. The second is

hypothetical necessity, where a consequence follows with metaphysical necessity from a contingent premise. For example, the motions of matter have hypothetical necessity, since they are necessary consequences of the laws of motion, while these are themselves contingent. The third is the moral necessity, which is the necessity by which God and the angels and the perfect sage choose the good. God just uses the third necessity to choose the best world among the numerous possible worlds and to create it.

It is true that, as far as his existence and nature are concerned, God undoubtedly is a necessary Being, but as far as his creation activities are involved, he has some kind of contingency, or moral necessity. That is to say, God, like men, also has a kind of duality, namely on the one hand he is necessary, on the other hand he is free. Because God is omnipotent, he can make his choice among the numerous possible worlds, and can create any one of them. But the moral perfection of God makes him determined to choose the actual world according to the principle of perfection or the principle of the best, namely choose such a best world among the numerous possible worlds. By "the best" of "the principle of the best," nothing is meant but the following two meanings: one signifies the infinite variety of things, the other signifies the universal harmony. Here it is necessary to distinguish harmony from compossibility. The harmonious must be compossible, but the compossible is not necessarily harmonious. Just as the actual world must first be a possible world, a possible world is not necessarily an actual world, and indeed most of them must not be an actual world because there must only be one actual world. That is to say, compossibility belongs to possible worlds, and has a kind of logic or metaphysical necessity. Whereas harmony belongs to the actual world, and has a kind of moral certainty. Our universally harmonious world is the result of the free choice of the benevolent God, it fully embodies the moral perfection of God. Without the benevolence or moral perfection of God, the universal harmony of our world is not conceivable. It is just because of this that we may best understand the Grace of harmony in the perspective of the moral necessity of God's creation.

At last we examine the unitization of the autonomy of harmony and the Grace of harmony in the perspective of the pre-establishment of harmony. We have considered the autonomy of harmony and the Grace of harmony in the perspective of the theories of relation and the moral necessity. In one sense we can regard them as two fundamental levels of the doctrine of harmony of Leibniz. But stated as above, in Leibniz's system of harmony, the autonomy of harmony and the Grace of harmony logically have their own independent contents respectively. Essentially however they are one and the same thing, and have evident unity and unitization. The foundation of the unity of the autonomy of harmony and

the Grace of harmony is nothing but the pre-establishment of harmony. Here, 'pre-establishment' radically signifies God's creation as his free choice. Evidently it is such a kind of creation of God what ensures the autonomy of harmony and embodies the Grace of harmony.

As we have stated above, according to the theory of relation of Leibniz, the relations of the universal harmony are rooted in the relative terms as substances, and in the substances as the relative terms. But being without parts, substance cannot come into being by itself through combination or composition, but through creation, and through God's creation activities. Therefore without the creation activities of God, there could not be any substance, and there could not be any kind of harmony. So the creation activities of God, or the pre-establishment of the nature of substance of God, is the radical guarantee of the autonomy of harmony.

Moreover, the Grace of harmony also embodies itself only through the creation activities of God. It is true that God, as far as his nature is concerned, is omniscient, omnipotent and all good. But if God did not make his free choice, make his creation, create a world with infinite variety and universal harmony, make the habitants who live in the city of God to obtain the greatest possible felicity, then the good will of God is purely a kind of the good will. So there would not be any kind of Grace of harmony.

Thus the pre-establishment of harmony or the creation activity of God really is the radical foundation of the harmony doctrine of Leibniz. It not only establishes the two fundamental levels of the harmony doctrine of Leibniz, namely the autonomy of harmony and the Grace of harmony, but these creative activities themselves are the carriers of both the autonomy of harmony and the Grace of harmony. Such a carrier is like a coin, we can see the autonomy of harmony from its one side, and can see the Grace of harmony from its other side. The harmony of Leibniz forever is a kind of harmony of "pre-establishment". We may regard this as the final answer to the riddle of the harmony doctrine of Leibniz.

THE CONTEMPORARY SIGNIFICANCE OF LEIBNIZ'S DOCTRINE OF HARMONY

The harmony doctrine of Leibniz, like his whole system of philosophy and theology, possesses both a supercilious transcendental metaphysical quality, and a distinctive secular quality and a motive of saving society. Leibniz is a typical public intellectual. Perhaps it is because of this that his harmony doctrine not only has important theoretical significances in the history of philosophy and theology, but also has important practical significances for us to understand and deal

with some contemporary problems. The contemporary era is an era for human beings to develop forward unprecedentedly, and an era for human beings to encounter unprecedented crisis. If we reflect the human being in the perspectives of spiritual level, we will find that the present day human being at least suffers from the following three kinds of disease: (1) individualism without moderation in the relation of ego-self and other-self; (2) extreme anthropocentrism in the relation of human being and nature; and (3) world-weary pessimism (and the world-despising cynicism) in the social-psychology.

Individualism had been an important spiritual weapon for human beings to struggle against the feudal monarchy and scholasticism during the Renaissance, and it had played an important spiritual role in promoting the process of civilization of human being. But afterwards it gradually became a kind of self-centralism and exclusivism at least among a large part of human beings, and gradually became an important source for producing social conflicts. In the present day, more and more people use the statement "the polarization of individualism and central-ism" to describe contemporary society. But the centralism, essentially, is a kind of individualism without moderation, a kind of individualism which regards others as someone's own tools. The centralism has brought numerous disasters and tragedies to human being.

Contemporary humanist philosophers have realized the serious harm of the extreme individualism, especially centralism, and have made great efforts in order to eliminate the harm, but they have not had any evident effects. Husserl puts forward the theory of intersubjectivity, but under the frame of transcendental phenomenology can never give the other-self a due position. Heidegger speaks of "co-existence" or "men", but he always understands them as "inauthentic existence". Sartre attempts to surmount the obstacle of solipsism, and to acknowledge the existence of others and the existence of us as a wholeness doing common activities, but at last he has no alternative to express the view of the "other is a hell". These further show that it is impossible to appro-priately deal with the relation between "I-self" and "other-self", "Dasein" and "co-existence", and "being-for-itself" and "being-in-itself", from the perspective of individualism.

We have no need for reticence that such a kind of understanding of extreme individualism easily attracts some reproach. Because to pay equal attention to Sartre's philosophy of anti-fascism and the fascism as a typical kind of centralism, is easy to make people feel absurd. But this fact which seems absurd for us reveals an important truth: without the religious level of personality, without the universal sacred ideal of human being, in a Chinese maxim, without "human nature" which is imparted by "Heaven", the problems of human being and the problems of society concerned cannot be resolved properly, the harmony of human

being and society cannot be really established forever. This may be regarded as the most important revelation of Leibniz's harmony doctrine which not only emphasizes the autonomy of harmony, but also emphasizes the Grace of autonomy and the religious level of personality.

The second disease of contemporary humanity is the extreme anthropocentrism in the relation of human being and nature. Another important actual problem which the contemporary human beings encounter is the increased worsening of the existential surroundings of human being, which situation is caused in a large scale by the overflow [excess] of 'anthropocentrism'. According to the law of continuity of Leibniz, human being with spirits or rational souls is only a link of a series of infinite monads. It is true that Leibniz certainly emphasized the priority of spirits, the greatest possible felicity of human beings with spirits or rational souls was the principal aim, and a fundamental content of the harmony of nature and Grace was to satisfy the perfection and the felicity of human beings in the natural way. But it does not, in the slightest degree, mean that he was propagandizing for anthropocentrism. This is not only because in Leibniz's opinion, the habitants of the city of God are not limited to human being, but also because Leibniz always insisted that the physical kingdom of nature always acts independently according to its own laws, not only having its own laws of efficient causes, but also its own laws of final causes. As a matter of fact, the emphasis of Leibniz on the harmony of nature and Grace not only does not mean to affirm the limitless conquest and plundering of nature, but on the contrary premises affirmation of the autonomy and independence of nature. Because, stated as above, the principle of infinite variety always is a fundamental principle which God followed when he made his free choice in his creation. Perhaps it is because of this that Leibniz repeatedly emphasized: "I grant that the happiness of intelligent creatures is the principal part of God's design, for they are most like him; but nevertheless I do not see how one can prove that to be his sole aim. It is true that the realm of nature must serve the realm of Grace: but since all is connected in God's great design, we must believe that the realm of Grace is also in some way adapted to that of nature, so that nature preserves the utmost order and beauty, to render the combination of the two the most perfect that can be." He also further emphasized: "It is certain God sets greater store by a man than a lion; nevertheless it can hardly be said with certainty that God prefers a single man in all respects to the whole of lion-kind." "This opinion would be a remnant of the old and somewhat discredited maxim, that all is made solely for man."[16] He even condemned the assertion that God only concerned himself with the felicity of human being, saying this is a kind of "plausible" absurdness,

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[16] Leibniz, *Theodicy,* sec. 118.

and he pointed out: "The felicity of all rational creatures is one of the aims he has in view; but it is not his whole aim, nor even his final aim."[17] To actively carry out dialogue with Leibniz, it is very important and instructive for us to reconstruct the harmony of nature and Grace, the harmony of human being and nature, and to do away with anthropocentrism; and to improve the relation of human being and nature and the existential situation of human being.

The third disease of contemporary human being is the world-weary pessimism (and the world-despising cynicism involved) in the socio-psychology. Pessimism has been enveloping the minds of the modern and contemporary human being since the beginning of the nineteen century. In the twentieth century, along with the breaking out of two world wars, the atmosphere of pessimism is much heavier than before. Jehovah's Witness in America, the United Church in Korea and the 'Assembly of God to Save the Earth' in Taiwan and so on, all propagandize the end-time of the world and the second coming of Christ. These undoubtedly are important manifestations of the atmosphere of pessimism. The attitude of the existential situation of human being is an important question which is related to the future and destiny of human being. It is true that in this matter, blind optimism is not desirable, but the world-weary pessimism also is not desirable, because it not only is of no help, but also may make human beings miss a variety of opportunities of improving our existential situation. In contrast with these, the soberer optimism or weak optimism of Leibniz is much more desirable. Leibniz declares that the actual world is the best possible world, but he does not think that the actual world is the acme of the perfection: he not only recognizes there are metaphysical evils (imperfections) and physical evil (sufferings), but also recognizes there is moral evil (sin). The difference between Leibniz and pessimists lies in that Leibniz holds: (1) there are some kinds of evil in the actual world, but it still is good on the whole; (2) that there are some kinds of evil in the actual world is the condition and chance by which people could improve the actual society and get the greater good; (3) melioration: the human society is a dynamic, asymptotically improving process; (4) the melioration and the felicity of human being are consistent, because human happiness lies in the anticipation of greater future goods; (5) the universal harmony is a kind of harmony which is facing towards the future, and full of hope and a process of increasingly tending towards the more perfect.[18] So Leibniz's soberer optimism and melioration may be

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[17] Leibniz, *Theodicy*, sec. 119.
[18] Cf. Leibniz, *Theodicy,* sec. 414-417; *The Principles of Nature and Grace, Based on Reason*, sec.17-18.

regarded as a kind of medicine which may be used to cure the world-weary disease of pessimism of contemporary human beings.

In short, an important merit of Leibniz's harmony doctrine lies in that it not only pays attention to and emphasizes the natural level and the moral level of the existence of human being, but also pays special attention to and emphasizes the religious level of the existence of human being. It emphasizes that human being should continuously realize self-transcendence over the individual ego, even human being itself facing a kind of sacred and ideal personality, and demands of us – in the sacred self-transcendence – to face a more perfect future and continuously realize the harmony of I-self and other-self, the harmony of the individual I-self and society, and the harmony of the physical kingdom of nature and the moral kingdom of Grace, – thus making our secular world a veritable "city of God". We may regard these as the contemporary significance of Leibniz's doctrine of 'harmony', and we may also regard these as its eternal significance. In this sense, we may say that Leibniz's doctrine of harmony is not at all an 'out-of-date' doctrine, but rather, a kind of doctrine which remains full of vitality: a kind of doctrine which is never dead.

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CHAPTER XIII

WESTERN PHILOSOPHY SPEAKS AND LISTENS ONLY TO ITSELF

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INTRODUCTION

I have always wondered why it seems difficult for an African academic philosopher to feel at home in the profession. The explanation that professional philosophy in most African countries is mostly Eurocentric has been offered. But this explanation is not adequate unless we understand the nature of this Eurocentrism. For how can Western philosophy be so closed and yet continue to attract many of those who continue to complain that their voices are excluded from it? In this paper I try to account for how academic philosophical discussions on important issues have tended to be exclusive of the experiences and orientation of people other than Westerners. This exclusivism has either been in the form of Western particularism masquerading as universal rationality or Western particularism denying all influence from other cultures.

I discuss this problem in relation to the contributions made by Thomas Bridges on the predicament of liberal values in the contemporary world. I write this paper with deep appreciation and admiration of Bridges' invaluable insights into the nature and limitations of the Enlightenment project, as well as his desire to salvage liberalism from its rationalistic universalist tendencies. Yet this paper asks whether Bridges has been able to overcome some of these limitations.

I suggest that if Bridges is to escape from the negative aspects of the Enlightenment project, he needs to take seriously the possibility of a genuine public debate on liberal values and how they have affected different peoples in the history of modernity. I do not understand 'public debate' in the sense where issues of discussion are selected and already decided upon in favor of specific cultural values. Genuine public debate means that what is accepted is worked out in the process of discussion.

WESTERN PHILOSOPHY AND THE 'REASON' OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Modern Western philosophy since Descartes has been dominated by a certain way of looking at the nature of reason, knowledge and social and cultural development. It took a rationalist, universalist and

essentialist turn which attempted to force other cultures to fit into its own mode. As a rationalist project, the modernist project presupposed the power of reason in discovering the true nature of natural, social and moral reality. It thus presupposed the possibility of possessing objective knowledge without depending on cultural context:

> Enlightenment concepts of reason and knowledge led many Europeans and Americans to believe that they could and should adopt a universalistic, culture-neutral, value-free standpoint on all cognitive, moral, and political matters. (Bridges, 1994, xi)

With the above-described presumptions, Western philosophy set out to define for all peoples and for all times, the ultimate principles of epistemology, metaphysics, morality and politics. Western society not only embarked on a mission to build itself on the basis of these principles, but it also elected itself the harbinger of these principles to other peoples. But this required the assumption that reason was immanent only to the Western culture. It declared all other civilizations primitive and sub-human. As a result Western philosophy stopped listening to these other civilizations. It could only talk at and even to them, but not listen. This can be explained by the way in which the rationalist project cast the world into a rationalist, monistic aesthetic in which Western culture not only declared itself rational, but also colonized and monopolized all morality. This point has been clearly expressed by Pierre Schlag. Referring to the enthusiasts of the modernist project as 'partisans of reason', he writes:

> The partisans of reason often recommend reason by virtue of its commendable associations. Hence, they often depict acceptance of reason as morally admirable, while depicting its rejection as morally wrong. This sort of argument, with its eminent theological pedigree, resonates deeply throughout Western culture. (Schlag, 1998, 47)

He goes on to describe how the monistic aesthetic deprives all the other cultures of all virtue and moral goodness:

> The elegant symmetry of this rhetorical economy yields undeniable advantages for its proponents. The elegant convergence of all the notable virtues on one side (the side of reason) conveniently reprieves mortals from ever having to sacrifice one virtue for the sake of others. Meanwhile, the convergence of all the notable vices (over on the other side)

> conveniently enables the thoroughgoing demonization of the opposition, removing possibility that it might have any redeeming virtues. (Schlag, 1998, 47)

Bridges argues that the modernist universalist standpoint pushed Western society into a mode which did not allow it even to listen to its own cultural traditions. (Bridges, 1994 xi) While this self-description of Western philosophy is plausible, it can be misleading. Looking at it from outside Western traditions, it appears as if the apparent rationalist rejection of Western traditions and practices by Western philosophers was not as radical as is often thought. It is clear that these philosophers were in fact working to extend and strengthen Western traditions. They were indeed searching for firm philosophical foundations for their traditions. This is clearly demonstrated by Descartes himself. While his methodical doubt masquerades as a wrecking ball threatening to demo-lish all the claims to knowledge that have come before Descartes, it turns out that once the *cogito* has been established, certain major cultural beliefs of Western philosophy are systematically allowed back, one by one, into the realm of knowledge. But this time they are assumed to be based on firm foundations of reason.

Of course the situation is more complicated than this. Descartes' philosophy is not idle speculation. It must be understood within the context of his time, which Bridges competently and graphically describes. Bridges explains that Descartes lived during a time of rapid social and political changes. In Sherover's words, "Within the space of one hundred-odd years, the Renaissance, Reformation and Counter-Reformation taken together had produced" what he quotes Toulmin as calling:

> a loss of authority on every side. All [theological] doctrines were put in doubt and became bones of contention, not just between Protestants and Catholics, but between Lutherans and Calvinists..., [as well as] Jansensists and Jesuits... (Toulmin quoted in Sherover, 1998, 24)

At this time, Europe, through "the voyages of discovery" became aware of other continents and cultures which radically changed the European conception of world geography. Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo demolished the medieval belief that the earth was at the center of the heavens. On the social scene, radical changes took place:

> The movement into cities, the emergence of a commercial middle class, the beginnings of a money economy, the invention of banks and currency exchanges, coupled with

> revolutionary changes in agriculture, joined to subvert feudal structures and their newly outmoded ways of living and thinking. (Sherover, 1998, 24)

With all these changes and more, it is clear that Descartes lived at a time when many of the cultural beliefs of Western societies could no longer be taken for granted. His philosophy, then, was to find ways of making sense of Western social experience in these troubled times. As Sherover explains, Descartes' methodological doubt was "an intellectually responsible response to the existential situation in which he found himself, a time of radical questioning." (Sherover, 1998, 25)

Most commentators have emphasized how Descartes' philosophy, and indeed how modern philosophy generally broke away from medieval philosophy. This of course is in itself interesting. But in the context of assessing the contribution of Western philosophy to world culture, it is important to work out how Western philosophers met the challenges that arose in the sixteenth century. And in doing so it is not enough to accept their self-description as radical repudiators of their own traditions. Wittgenstein has shown us how universal skepticism with regard to culture is impossible. Thinkers can reject some aspects of their own cultures only if they can stand on its other aspects or if they can retrieve and strengthen some forgotten ones. Sherover himself admits of Descartes that "Effectively, if only implicitly, he brought several strains of earlier thought together into a new outlook." (Sherover, 1998, 26)

Thus, judging from the point of view of an 'outsider', it is clear that modern philosophy generally and Descartes in particular tried to work out metaphysical and epistemological principles that would guide Western culture through its important projects that would include the colonialist and imperialist projects. While Bridges recognizes this, he however emphasizes the Western desire to survive through the civil and religious wars that were threatening to tear the continent apart as the major reason for the growth of rationalist universalist philosophy. This Western oriented focus, creates a blind spot which prevents him from pursuing some of the implications for the impact of Western culture on other cultures. This paper tries to pick out some of these implications for the discussion on the status liberal values in world cultures.

With firm convictions in its rightness and goodness, Western philosophy led Western society into believing that it could turn the whole world into its own self-image through imperialism, colonialism, modernization, and Christianity. Bridges has described this process in graphic terms:

Enlightenment concepts of reason and knowledge spoke with the same authority as Western bombs and machines. Where Western technological and military superiority made itself felt, there spread also the influence of the Enlightenment concepts of nature, freedom, and truth that defined cultural modernity. It seemed, in short, that Western concepts of cultural modernity defined advanced human civilization, as such. (Bridges. 1994, ix)

AFRICANS AND THE MODERNIST PROJECT

Described from the Western point of view, the modernist project can be constructed as a narrative full of courage, ambition, concern for the Other as well as commitment to truth and to justice. This is how the story has been told. The people who are now called Africans stood at the wrong end of the stick. They experienced Western universality as narrow-minded cultural particularism. They did not have to develop an elaborate philosophical system to understand and explain Western particularism that masqueraded as universalism. They saw it in their day-to-day experiences of Western modernity. And they indeed pointed it out to the Westerners who would not listen. The dominant Western culture refused to listen to the voices from Africa, Asia, and America which pointed out its particularity. It even refused to listen to its own internal voices of dissent that included those of the stoics in the classical period and the nominalists in the medieval period. It may be that the postmodernists will, in the contemporary world make more inroads into the Western mind. For this we will have to wait and see.

Prior to Western colonialism, Africans had mostly lived in small communo-cultural communities. (Gyekye, 1997) It is true that several very powerful kingdoms and empires had developed from time to time, but as Chimhundu points out, this was "exceptional rather than typical." (Chimhundu, 1992, 90) Thus, Africans did not call themselves Africans. They did not even see themselves as one group or race distinct from other races. Mudimbe has done an archeology of the concept of Africa as an essentially European idea. (Mudimbe, 1988) Ranger (1985), Chimhundu, (1992) and Fowler (1994) have demonstrated the "invention of tribalism" in African societies by Western modernity. Gyekye has gone even further to demonstrate convincingly that even the idea of African clans as based on blood relations is a European invention. (Gyekye, 1997)

In Chimhundu's explanation, traditional African cultures in what is now Zimbabwe were organized in the following way:

All the people were *vanhu*, and groups of *vanhu* were classified in terms of kinship and lineages, or *madzinza*. Each such group belonging to a common lineage was led by a chief, who was both the judge and spiritual leader of this relatively small but well-defined group. (Chimhundu, 1992, 90)

While Gyekye accepts that kinship and lineages were important in the making of chiefdoms, and the choosing of chiefs, he is skeptical of defining chiefdoms as made up of people with the same origin. He explains that the claim to common ancestry may be true of the "early descendants of an ancestor" (Gyekye, 1997, 97) which establish a village but not for those subsequent generations. He refers to the movements and mixing of peoples because of wars, trade and commerce, and inter-marriages. He concludes that "If all this is true, claims to belong to one ethnic group can, to say the least, be doubted for most of the part." (Gyekye, 1997, 97)

For Gyekye, ethnic communities are too large to be based entirely, or even mainly, on kinship. Hence, for him, the sense of common descent consituting members of the so-called ethnic groups, is really "a fictitious" or "invented genealogy". And he explains an African's understanding of ethnicity in the following words:

Thus, ethnic affiliation acquired through amalgamation and incorporation would not generate a simple and unique genealogical identity. What we would have would instead be a community of people bound, not by kinship or intrinsic ancestral ties, but by goals, values, sentiments, and aspirations that the members of that group would have come to share by living together. In time, they would share a common sense of history and culture, perhaps a common language, and other characteristics concomitant to a shared life in a cultural community. (Gyekye, 1997, 98)

Chimhundu himself seems to come round to accept this argument when he writes:

As the total populations expanded, the chiefdoms kept multiplying by creating new *madzinza* and moving into new territories to accommodate each other politically and socially (by distancing themselves enough to allow inter-marriage, for instance). A culture like this does not place great value on fixed boundaries or strong, centralized state

structures or large and powerful armies. (Chimhundu, 1992, 90)

Chimhundu's conclusion here is very important for it demonstrates Gyekye's point about the fluidity of cultural identity to an extent of undermining the popular view which imputes rigid 'ethnic' and 'tribal' identities in the African social and political context.

It is this fluidity and openness which Western universalism came and tried to destroy. Western modernity in all its institutional and ideological forms saw this fluidity and openness, and mistook it for lack of law and order. Hence the enthusiastic project to establish the modern nation-state, to introduce the capitalist market system, formal legal structures as well as other social and political institutions which were backed by the reinforced ideologies of Western modernity.

Western modernity introduced rigidity and fixing of borders and laws into African structures. All this was done in the name of the rule of law. Western reason's irrationality was clearer where there were any indications of possible resistance. It tried to be unyielding. In the eyes of the 'Africans', Western rationality began to look like its opposites, – tradition and dogma. The irony, however, is that Western modernity has always described itself as more dynamic than 'traditional' societies. This may have been true with traditional Western societies. But it is certainly not true with African ones.

Politically, 'Africans' did not have fixed political structures. The West created Africa and the subsequent African nation-states with fixed borders, government structures and other modern political institutions. Part of what it means to be modern, is for Africans to accept their constructed identity and to work within the institutions introduced to Africa by Western modernity. On the surface, it was like the West had recreated itself on the continent they called Africa. It looked as if the West had established its political law and order. But the success of this order depended on its ability to recruit and motivate all 'African' people into its knowledge/power structures. But Western modernity did not have either the capacity or the accumulated desire or energy to do that especially in the face of social and political opposition.

While the influence of the Western modernizing political project on 'Africans' was very deep, it was never going to be total. This is so for several reasons. First, racism intervened. While the West wanted to extend itself through the acquisition of colonies in Africa, it at the same time cringed from the idea of sharing fully the same political and civic space with the Africans. Even in the French and Portuguese empires where the idea of assimilation was muted, it was clear that Africans were not supposed to be full citizens of France or Portugal. The experience of the "negritude" movement is testimony to this point.

Secondly, parts of the empire, in spite of being overpowered in many ways, still fought back. Right from the start, there was always revolt against the insistent Western forces to categorize and order. Discursively, 'Africans' continued to transgress the Western modernizing order. Western modernity tried to criminalize most of the activities of revolt by making them illegal because they were either terrorist or uncivilized. In response, 'Africans' tactfully accepted some of the modern definitions they were given and tried to fight within the legal limits of the Western supported regimes. Thus 'African' political parties and social movements were established. They also sometimes ignored the legal and political limits that were set for them. Today, some of what in the West is identified as Third World terrorism, corruption and ignorance of the international political and market systems is really an extension of the discursive struggles against the strictures of Western modernity.

Through fighting back, 'Africans' and the rest of those referred to as the Third World, have greatly affected the West in all its institutional and ideological forms. Since slavery and colonialism, the West has never been the same. This is so, not so much because of what the West, on its own has learnt through self-reflection, but because of what the West has been forced to admit through 'Third World' struggles. American politics and the character of American modernity cannot be written without taking into account the civil rights movement of the 1960s. British politics cannot ignore the way it has been changed by the blacks in that country. In many ways, then, what started as the modernist project, with many hopes, has turned into a modernist nightmare for the West. It is therefore interesting that most Western explanations of the collapse of the modernist Enlightenment project do not seem to even mention this point. For example, a philosopher like Bridges cannot write the contemporary history of the failure of the liberal education in Western liberal states without fully honoring the black narrative. It is not just a question of allowing the blacks to tell their story. While this is essential, more needs to be done for the black experiences need to be acknowledges in the formulation of the conditions for liberal values in general and liberal education in particular.

The third reason why Western modernity did not have a total hold on the lives of 'African' peoples is the fact that the modernist project did not have the capacity to do that, nor was it aimed to do so. This means that even if it was virtually impossible for 'Africans' to disengage themselves from Western modernity, their participation in it was not all encompassing. This can be appreciated given the fact that even those people living in the West itself are not completely modernized in their modes of thought and practices.

While the modernist rationalist project gave the impression of being universalist, its institutions were never capable of encompassing everyone universally. The capitalist market for example, never pretended to want to encompass all people even in its imperialist project. It always needed the outsider, in Marx's terms, 'the army of the unemployed'. Politically and culturally, Western modernity needed the Other and that is why it created it. The concept of the other reflects Western modernity more than it does the other.

Thus, possible alternatives to the Western modern project have always existed for there has always been space that even the rigid Western reason backed by bombs and material goods, has been unable to occupy. This is important in understanding why at this juncture rather than at others, those alternatives are now being considered.

One of the philosophers who has dealt with this question in a sustained way has been Thomas Bridges. He explains that the ideas that have had influence in most Western liberal democracies are the ones that have come from such philosophers as Locke, Rousseau, Bentham, Kant and Mill. These ideas include the ideals of individual freedom and equality. The ideas have been used to "articulate the conception of political justice underlying liberal political institutions." (Bridges, 1997) He then describes how during the last fifty years, "the intelligibility and plausibility of these notions have eroded considerably and at an increasing pace." (Bridges, 1997) The question then is why such erosion has taken place. Bridges identifies four reasons and he explains the first reasons as follows:

> First, the universalism and essentialism of the Enlightenment all too often has served as a cultural license for Western imperialism. (Bridges, A13)

Why this is now a reason for skepticism is not explained. Imperialism is one of the main reasons these ideas were adopted in the first place. Why this is no longer a good reason for adopting the ideas needs to be explained. The implication seems to be that the West has now suddenly become aware of imperialism as a moral sin while it was celebrated in the modernist project as heroic and as a moral and even religious obligation. But is moral conversion a good explanation for the growth of skepticism in liberal values, or has it been demonstrated, even against the desires of the Western modernists, that they can no longer continue to hold onto their military, political, and economic domination of the world? Whatever be the answer, it is clear that Bridges wants to emphasize the internal Western self-explanation. It is therefore not clear how much Bridges himself has escaped the Western imperialist rhetoric. Perhaps the following passage may begin to shed light on his position:

> In the context of seventeenth and eighteenth century social and economic struggles, the invention of a standpoint of pure reason provided the basis for a rhetorical strategy that, from our point of view today, worked – i.e., worked to influence events and shape lives in ways that we approve of….The cultural project of the Enlightenment, after all, constituted a powerful historical form of belief that served the interests of freedom and equality for almost three hundred years (Bridges, 1997, 9/28/98).

Is Bridges here saying that the Enlightenment project really served the interests of 'freedom and equality' or is this just a rhetorical strategy? Are there suggestions of the universality of freedom and equality in this statement? This raises the question of the "we" who approve of the Enlightenment project. Obviously, the 'Africans' and 'African-Americans' are not part of the 'we'. What freedom and equality would the former slaves and colonized be talking about and approving? But of course, Bridges is not interested in the West's constructed other. After all this project is not about the other. It is about the "Enlightenment's moment of self-overcoming" (Bridges, 1997 9/28/98). Western philosophical tradition does not respond to the other for it has no ears for it. It only listens to itself.

Bridges gives us the second reason for the skepticism over modernist liberal values. He says that "the very notion that universally valid knowledge can be arrived at by the mere application of a single cognitive method now seems a vast oversimplification." (Bridges, 1997) The question, again, is why this is so. Is it because alternatives have been demonstrated, that even Westerners are experimenting with alternative cognitive methods? If so, why doesn't Bridges acknowledge this? Is there a secret fear that to acknowledge this is to somehow acknowledge that 'Africans' and other colonized peoples were right after all to consider Western values as particularistic? More importantly, it appears that once alternative viewpoints are allowed into the picture, then the idea that liberal values have served the interests of freedom and equality may begin to be challenged. Those who have experienced the violence of Western universalism will find it difficult to see it as serving the interests of 'freedom and equality'.

This point is crucial if we are to make sense of any solution to the problem. It is not clear what Bridges' solution is. On one level he seems to be suggesting that the West needs to abandon its alleged "privileged cognitive perspective" and come to realize the importance of "intercultural communication". This seems to suggest that truth is now understood as a result of collaborative intercultural communicative activities. This, of course means that on its own, the West cannot achieve truth or

meaning. Given the impact of the 'Third World' on the West, this seems to make sense. The work of George McLean of the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy is based on this assumption. In his methodology, he is not concerned with the West as a separate culture eager for separate and isolated self-reflection. Rather, he is interested in the communication of cultures.

However, on another level, Bridges seems to have a different solution which focuses on the West as a separate particularistic society:

> If liberalism is to survive the collapse of Enlightenment culture, liberals must now attempt to de-universalize or contextualize their political language, to learn to explain and advocate liberal democratic moral ideals in a vocabulary that can express the particularism of liberal political norms without thereby invalidating them. (Bridges, 1997, A22)

He calls upon the Western society to copy other cultures in being particularist. Thus the suggestion for the Western society is that it should relinquish its desire to be universalistic and begin to express itself as a culturally particular society in the way he sees the Japanese, Chinese, and African societies. The difference of course is that he thinks those other societies are not liberal societies. They are particular and communitarian. Communitarianism, for Bridges encourages closed societies which want to operate on the basis of a consensus on the conception of the good. But liberal societies do not assume any conception of the good. They leave such conception to the individuals. It is clear from his point of view that the liberal society is morally superior. The liberal values of equality and liberty are just not for discussion either within the Western societies themselves or in intercultural communication. And yet there are people living in Western societies who have experienced the wrong side of these very principles; and people in the world who have suffered at the hands of Western liberal values.

What is fascinating about Bridges' position is that it makes a number of unrealistic assumptions because of its blindness to the historical impact of Western modernity. It is idealistic in the way it identifies Western cultures and wishes to deal with them as isolated from the rest of the world.

The West cannot suddenly wake up to its cultural particularity and expect that it will simply withdraw from the world and the mess it has caused and then quietly search for some cultural self-overcoming. It cannot change the rules of the game during the process of the game. While there is a lot of talk about the collapse of universal values, it is not true that there is a general acceptance of the relativistic implications of

the alleged collapse. In fact, whereas colonized societies initially tried to school the West on cultural relativism, they abandoned the rhetorical strategy once they saw that it was not working for them. The universalist project appeared more rhetorically powerful. Hence they bought the universalist rhetoric as a strategy for pursuing their interests. It is not within the interests of 'Third World' peoples to take up the strategy of cultural relativism. Their cultures have never been the same since slavery and colonialism. Their respective homes have been exploited by Western capitalism to the point that it is not intelligent any more to be culturally provincial. Given that Rawls has turned justice into a political and not a metaphysical problem, it makes sense for the West to now turn to particularism for it justifies the use of some kind of separate development policy. And separate development works well when you have gathered most of the resources that you need and you do not want those from whom you have taken the resources to follow them into your home. But they will be stupid if they do not make efforts to follow where some of their resources went.

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CHAPTER XIV

HOMELESSNESS AND HOSPITALITY-ALIENATION AND ENCOUNTER: RHETORIC AND POETIC IN ANCIENT PARADIGMS AND THE MODERN POLIS

ROSEMARY WINSLOW

> ...now that you have come to our country, you shall not lack for clothes, or anything else which it is proper that any forlorn wanderer may have for the asking. (Nausicaa to Odysseus)

> When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who sojourns with you shall be to you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself. (Leviticus 19:33-34)

In traditional cultures, we find two overarching paradigms for human relationships of encounter and response between strangers. One positions people in conflict – the hero/villain/victim paradigm; the other positions people in hospitality – the host/guest paradigm. In ancient Greece, the Iliad models the practice of war and the Odyssey the practice of hospitality. The two often interweave: the war with the Trojans is begun after a violation of hospitality (guest Paris stole host Menelaos' wife) and ends with another violation (Odysseus' trickery with the wooden horse, that famous "gift" of the Greeks). The Odyssey opens with Telemachos' complaint to the council about the breech of hospitallity by suitors in his household, ends with a battle that rectifies the breech, and displays a range of good and bad hosting throughout.

The practice of hospitality in the ancient world, as in traditional cultures that survive today, was based on the moral action of neighborly gift-exchange. Inside the polis, its open-handedness distributed goods, occasioned virtuous action, and signaled (and remembered) reliance of group members on one another. Between strangers, it extended these values to include outsiders temporarily, permitting non-conflictual encounters that answered the call of those who were travelling and thus in need of a safe haven, food, shelter, rest, and perhaps provisions for continuing the journey. While today rhetoric as argument ("empty" or not) is commonly understood in the metaphor of war (Sweetser, 717-9), its development in ancient Greece emerged from the practice of hos-

pitality within the polis. As a sub-art of politics, rhetoric excluded strangers (also women and slaves), and that is one reason the ancient art is often dismissed as irrelevant to our contemporary situation. Because rhetorical arguments have been conceived as needing a ground in values held in common by discourse, because rhetoric has come to be viewed as occurring in contexts of power competition, and because people have become acutely aware of identity rights and problematics, rhetorical theory is caught in a paradox of needing shared identity while desiring to leave people's identity intact. I want to suggest that at least part of this paradox results from the loss of the hospitality tradition, which has both hampered our understanding of the ancient ground on which rhetoric was practiced and limited the retrieval of ideas which might inform cross-community and cross-cultural rhetorical theory.

In modern cultures, most extremely in the U.S., the concept and practice of hospitality has been so reduced that it is known only as a practice among friends and business associates, and with respect to strangers as the "hospitality industry" – pay-as-you-go set fees for a room. The furthest extension of this monetary exchange system has for three decades meant an increasing number of homeless people who cannot pay for shelter and food and who are relegated to the farthest margins of society. A less literal manifestation is the figurative use of "homelessness" and a related term, "alienation," for the separation of self from self, from other (and the Other), from society, and from culture. Recent efforts to theorize causes and solutions are reviving fragments of the ancient practice because they must begin with the ground of encounter between strangers. As U.S. culture has evolved toward putting a greater value on pluralism and multiculturalism and as the world continues to move toward globalization, the problematics of identity and encounter have been thrust into visibility. It has become paramount to develop a rhetoric adequate to the task of democratic and cross-cultural meeting, talking, and decision-making. The first step toward a hospitable rhetoric is a fuller understanding of hospitable encounter.

I suggest that retrieving the ancient tradition can assist this task. As a beginning, and there is only time for a very small beginning here, it can help us outline some features of hospitable encounter between strangers as a groundwork on which such a rhetorical theory might rest. Because current theoretical efforts often focus on establishing a ground of meeting that is inclusive and non-coercive, I want to explore how this ground was constituted in the foregrounds of Western culture, and then permit these foregrounds to illumine three recent efforts to theorize discourse encounter between strangers as a response to alienation.

Hospitality practice was regarded as moral/economic action framed by need and response to need. In a sense, it stripped social roles

to the ground of survival. As such, it was the forerunner of the modern socially mobile culture, in which the concept of human dignity is replacing the older value of honor (Berger). An alien traveler was helped because he was a human being, and answering the call of another's need re-membered human beings as identical in their dependence on the earth, the divine realm, and each other. Gift-exchange reciprocity among neighbors was extended to the stranger. A token gift offered by the guest signaled his willingness to abide in the code as someone who was reliable and reliant on the host's good will. If a guest had no token to offer, he was still hosted, as Odysseus was when he landed on the Phaiacian's shore without so much as clothes on his body. Mutual trust and respect versus mutual understanding (in the modern sense) under-pinned relations: uniqueness, unknowability, and respect for the other as a concrete individual and as an outsider prevented coercive tendencies such as appropriation and assimilation.[1] Encounter was temporary, and neighborly relations were expected, with an extra measure above the everyday.

Perhaps honoring of each party by the other was so crucial because the encounter was stripped of the individuals' fuller social roles for the immediate purpose of survival. The ground on which hospitality takes place is inherently unstable: two worlds meet and anything can happen. There is the danger of violation of the code, but there is the potential for a shift in roles: the guest might bring a greater gift than the host, who would then become the guest as recipient. In hospitality narratives, hosts sometimes discover their guests are gods or divine messengers in disguise. This potential added another layer of fear and promise onto the fear and promise of encountering human strangers, but a key aspect of moral virtue in acts of hospitality was overcoming fear of danger with trust, faith, and courage.

The Greek language indicates this meeting of two unknowns in unstable but similar roles. The term for host was the same one used for guest – *hostes*. (Interestingly, it is very close to *hostis*, the word for "enemy.") The word thus calls forth the inherent role reciprocity, the joint participation of two aliens in acts of gift-exchange and reliance (which Alasdair MacIntyre explains is what courage meant, 116). The advance of a plea for aid (such as Odysseus made to Nausicaa) or the offering of a material token gift by a guest signaled that one was a person in need who could be trusted; it was properly answered with acts of giving food, shelter, rest, clothing, and perhaps provisions. Identifica-tion of the guest beyond human need was not required; that is, personal

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[1] See Wolfgang Iser's summary of results of a five-year seminar "on the secondary other" for a list and discussion of kinds of coercive encounter, especially page 298.

identity did not have to be revealed. When Odysseus is hosted by the Phaiacians, they tell long stories of who they are as a people, and he can respond if he chooses (which he does – hence ensues the narration of the hero's travels). In the Hebrew tradition's archetypal hospitality narrative, Abraham is visited by two strangers, who eventually reveal themselves as divine messengers and give the gift of a promise that he would have many descendents. And Elijah, who is unknown to a widow whom he asks for food, and she shares the last of it with him, is gifted with the miracle of her oil and flour being replenished every day as long as he sojourns in her home. He also raises her son from the dead. In one of the New Testament narratives, the stranger whom disciples meet on the road to Emmaus and invite to supper reveals himself as the risen Jesus.

The Hebrew tradition foregrounds the positive potential for inverted roles, thereby remembering the community's originary identity as outsiders, wanderers, and desert sojourners dependent on God's hospitality. However, the Greek tradition emphasizes its identity of the lawfully ordered polis as based on neighborly household economic dependence. The Odyssey foregrounds the importance of hospitality both within and outside the polis, from the opening scene's highlighting of Telemachos' complaint to the council in the agora that his household is being wasted by his mother's suitors, through the ten-year journey home of the father, who re-stores order. The benefits and dangers of violation of the hospitality code are foregrounded in the epic. The hero, lost, homeless, wandering from place to place, must rely on the hospitality of strangers. Landing on the Phaiacian's shore, Odysseus wonders, "what sort of people live in this land? Violent, savage, lawless? or kindly men who know right from wrong?" (75). The episode in the land of the Cyclopians is an inversion of the hospitality code. Homer calls the Cyclopians a "violent and lawless tribe. They trust to providence, and neither plant nor sow." They "have no parliament for debates and no laws....Each one lays down the law for wife and children, and no one cares for his neighbors" (102). Polyphemus not only does not feed the strangers, he eats them. Instead of extending trust and freedom of the place, he locks them up in his cave. And upon the strangers' escape, he curses them (due in part to Odysseus' giving his name instead of remaining unknown), setting in motion the nine-year delay to returning home. The Cyclopians are outside the law, thus outside political relations, because they had no agriculture, and thus no agora, and thus no need for exchange of goods or for the council to meet to make decisions. Indeed, there was no intercourse between the Cyclopians. Without contact, the virtues cannot be exercised; in fact they are unknown. The place is so primitive that the oikos has not been built – home is a "hollow cave" (*Odyssey*, 120) – so that there is no unit from which to establish neighborly relations.

These exemplary literary/religious narratives embodied social norms and values which held people together. Although contemporary cultures need to consider encounter on the level of sustained discourse versus the older need for temporary aid for physical survival, the ancient practice is relevant in pointing to areas that have remained problematic. One of these areas is the poetic ground on which rhetoric rests – such as identity and the appearances of reality formed by poetic processes that rhetoric further makes over again (re-poeticizes) for its own inventional purposes. In light of ancient practice, I want to examine two models of discourse encounter proposed as solutions to overcoming alienation and one anti-solution.

I begin with the most extensive attempt to use language encounter as the basis of participatory formation of social norms – Jürgen Habermas' theory of communicative action. Like the proponents of modernism, Habermas (1984, 1987) believes that culture is fragmented, and the source of alienation is the resulting separation of Self from Culture. Contra modernism, which thought aesthetics could effect a new coherence, binding the two back together, Habermas proposes that this separation can be repaired through reason, which can function to reconnect selves in a non-rhetorical culture through the achievement of consensus on universal norms of validity. He theorizes a process of communicative action based on communicative (vs. instrumental) reason in which participants build a shared ground of norms through the mode of everyday conversation. He regards the life-world, from which identity emerges in narrative form, as fragmented to the point of desolation.[2] His aim is to arrive at universal norms in which selves are tied through the action of participation in intersubjective perspective taking. Each person puts himself or herself into the attitude of the other, thus opening a space for reflection until mutual understanding follows by consensus is reached. This self-critical reflection on attitude then assures the development of self-identity within the universal norms that he/she is engaged in helping to build; in this way the ground is established from which new civil institutions and argumentative forms can emerge to repair and renew self and culture.

Habermas asserts that his model is non-coercive because participants have the right to say "yes" or "no" to each other's propositions. The process is undergirded by an "encounter" with the other in which each "internalizes" the attitude of the other, "view[ing] himself through the eyes of an arguing opponent" (75). Thus, the encounter with other initiates an encounter with self, assuring that freedom to choose a

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[2] Post-World War Two Germany regarded its social institutions as destroyed. Common metaphors used in the news media were "vacuum," "waiting room," and "no-man's-land." Hell 913.

yes or no response makes each morally responsible to the others through self-reflection, which effects mutual understanding. Indeed, Habermas' project rests on a norm which specifies that participants are engaged in a process of reaching an understanding with one another" rather than "having an influence upon one another". This process is proposed as preliminary to the development of "institution-alized forms of argumentative speech" by first securing agreement on the normative values on which arguments are based (II: 74, 5). Haber-mas envisions no need for rhetoric, which he thinks of as strategic conflict involving attempts to influence an opponent. Authority rests on the better argument not the most influential.

Note some similarities between Habermas' theory and the hospitality concept. (1) The encounter with the other is a meeting of strangers who are away from home, their social formations temporarily absent. (2) Nevertheless they are bound in a place of intersubjective participation governed by rules of cooperative exchange versus attempts to influence. Differences also emerge. (1) For Habermas, a self is obligated to take the perspective of another, to put himself in the other's place; this is coercive, as will become clear below. In hospitality action, exchange of places is done through giving and receiving, reciprocally but unequally. If perspectives are shared, it is through telling one's own tale. Telling and listening are offerings, and there is no obligation to reciprocate in kind, only to ask for aid and to answer need. (2) Habermas assumes that the exchange of perspectives (propositions and attitudes toward them) has a one-to-one correspondence of meaning. This mono-valent coherence is taken for granted as a norm whose development is therefore unnecessary. The rich, concrete life of narrative and embodied actual life is lost in a double disfiguration that replaces one face for another and places no value on the concrete unsayable that the face (and figure) point to. (3) He does not account for the scene or its processes emerging from, occurring in, and returning to narrative time and space. Habermas does view self-identity as emerging in narrative from an ordinary understanding of the life-world, but since the life-world is fragmented and "desolate," it is the material of the life-world that is presented for interpretation and "tested against the world" (II: 139). But identity narratives are metaphoric, and when they are translated into propositions, what is being tested is a reduced potential of the whole. (4) A communicative hospitality space would recognize that there is no attempt to achieve full understanding of other, indeed that it could not be done, but would value difference as both danger and opportunity, potential loss and potential gain. Thus a norm of recognition of the other as other would bind participants in an over-arching value on human need and response to need which is incommensurable. The recognition of difference would allow differing norms to co-exist and to be transformed

again and again through time with new encounters. "Honoring" the other as other, versus an uncom-plicated accepting or understanding of the other would support moral agency at the level of human dignity.

Thomas Farrell's view of rhetoric closes in on some of these differences. Following Aristotle, Farrell views rhetoric as a compositional aesthetics because it attempts a "plausible" world in light of an ongoing narrative. Propriety, an aesthetic virtue internal to the text, is the principal virtue of the art (134). Ethos, being constructed in the text, "mediates" social norms and values to the community through participatory reflection (153, 54). But since these are embedded in narration as figurations, they are open to polyvalence, hence to emerging new interpretations, or appearances of reality (*phainomena*) (203). The poetic is the ground and also the promise of rhetoric, allowing it to transform appearances and norms through critical reflective practice. For Farrell, alienation, or being "homeless" is the failure to participate in the appearances of one's "home" culture, either through choice or inability (168). The task of an aesthetic rhetoric is to remake the appearances via the participatory reflective practice of "creative reason." Since a decision arrived at through rhetorical process is but one episode in the ongoing life of individual and community, it is a temporary place, but one that accrues successive opportunities for concrete practice leading to the emergence of norms from the life-world, for enactment of norms, revision of appearances, and ethical development that positions the self (or a community) as concrete and unique in successive actions. Thus, because they occur in time, rhetoric and ordinary conversation both are subject to the rules of narrative implicature, that is, a part of meaning accrues through the fact of temporal flow (253). This means that norms can never be secured as universal in propositional form, for propositions in conversation are embedded in narrative time, subject to contexts, to partiality and interestedness of perspectives, to polyvalence, etc. But this is part of rhetoric's "aesthetic promise" (100) – that appearances can be, indeed must be, reformed in the concrete world by concrete persons as they encounter new situations. And because identity is always made in relation to another, by means of differentiation, the making of identity, as always and necessarily unfinished, can continue to reconfigure and create new solidarities.

Farrell thus advances a more hospitable place than Habermas – one in which encounters are episodes of reflective thought that acknowledge what cannot be grasped in words. The concrete integrity of the act, scene, and each participant is preserved. But Farrell still misses the dangers of the person's submitting to participatory reflection. In a model of literary reading as encounter between strangers, Adam Zachery Newton's theory of the narrative ethics finds an ethical contract to begin at the moment the decision is made to take up a text to read. The

reader's obligation is a self-reflective performance of "call and response" – an answer to a summons whose constitutive force is its immediacy. Like a guest, the text depends on the providence of a reader who will answer the call to the text's very presence. Newton sees a price in both summoning and answering: writer and reader are locked into certain "ethical consequences" against their wills. The writer suffers alienation from self, world, and audience once he chooses a perspective and submits to the particular story and its narrative elements. And, as reader, "one faces a text as one might face a person, having to confront the claims raised by that very immediacy, an immediacy of contact, not of meaning" (11). In acts of face-to-face encounter, in facing the text as a forced listener, he is severed from both the tale and himself. The reader undergoes an alienating violence from self and other (as did the author in constructing the narrative) that is a kind of death as he recognizes he must place the other's face above his own in order to read. Critiquing Habermas, as well as Aristotle and Kant, in which ethics flows from me to the other, Newton follows Emmanuel Levinas' view of encounter in which ethics "originates from the other to me, in the sensible presence of the 'face' that is presented." The consequence is that the "I" is "exposed as a usurper of the place of the other." Subjectivity, contra Habermas, proceeds from intersubjective encounters; instead of repairing alienation, encounter with the other initiates further alienation. (11-13).

As functional systems, theories like Habermas' and Farrell's are based on only the positive aspects of the recognition that proceed from encounter. Mutual understanding and ethical and moral development are supposed to take place from new insight. For Newton, recognition entails, and sometimes exposes, the costs of representation of self and other entailed when a "person" is made a *phainomenon* fulfilling her ethical contract as character (17, 18). The ethical consequnces incurred are that the person as real, as unique, concrete, integral, is "lost" when she is reduced through abstraction to a character and distanced through a narrative point of view that is also an abstraction as well as an abstracting force (19). What is recognized then, is the receding face of the other, the concrete person. That, and the fact that representations are constructions, not reality. This enlarged sceptical distance undercuts what faith and freedom might be thought to accrue in the construction of norms and values through utterances whose aim is consensus about validity claims. Rhetoric, for its part, has never thought to pronounce its judgments and decisions as finalizable, though it has also not been too willing to acknowledge its dependence on poetic forms and processes, nor its ethical entailments.

Newton's theory shares this with hospitality: the need of one and the obligation to respond to another; the face of the other as person, which can be disfigured through representation by a subjectivity; and

paradoxically, the emergence of subjectivity through the obligation to respond to this face to face encounter and its need to move through time in narrative performance. In these ways, Newton's theory is a partial re-emergence of the hospitality concept and practice.

But we are left with Newton's view of the interlocked forces of obligation and representation in the discourse space and its violence to the self – the negativity of recognition, which is always in the shadow of the other and its reading. A hospitable alternative to the "forcing" and "violence" Newton reads into the encounter would be to choose not only to pick up a book and read but also to recognize that positive potential may arrive out of a partial (metaphoric) death. Instead of viewing this loss as (negative) violence to the persons and as an alienating scepti-cism, we could chose to view it as an uplifting mystery of self and other, the mystery of another's and our ultimate uniqueness, ungraspability and unfinishedness, wherein new life is unfolding. This uplifting mystery could stand to counter the fear of the unknown, and its accompanying reading of danger. It could be a promise of hope chosen over fear.

For rhetoric, we might begin with relying on, believing in, and persuading (Gr. *peitheuien* includes all these senses) the possibility of new life. We might become persuaded that others' summoning of us might bear the gift of our own life by carrying us out of ourselves in order to return from our self and social alienation with a deeper personal and social integrity.

Rhetoric, as persuasive art and act, needs such a retrieval of the open hand to balance giving with receiving, to serve the social con-nectivity while maintaining individuality, as the competitive but sociable reality which the Greeks knew well. Rhetoric, as the art of successful acts of speaking to those who differ, stands between hospitality's poten-tial and violence's danger. The Renaissance still knew this, in the figure of Dame Rhetorica, who, with one hand clutched her skirt at the place of birth's possibility, and with the other hand she grasped a sword. If today we have been carried farther and farther away from ourselves, our communities, our institutions, our governing bodies, that is, if we have allowed this violence, is it possible to make a return home? At the end of his history of the demise of virtue in Western civilization, Alasdair MacIntyre asserts that a few good men have waited, like St. Benedict and his followers, in communities sustaining the traditions and values, of which hospitality to strangers was one. He writes a story of hope to counter Nietzsche's story of irretrievable fragmentation – thus of total loss of tradition. While some have seen this loss as a freedom from the bonds of the past to be celebrated, others count the difficulty of rebuilding the intricate connective tissue that held people together in bonds of friendship, bonds they, like the Greeks, saw as the opportunity to develop virtue – to fulfil what they were capable of becoming.

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CHAPTER XV

STRATEGIES IN INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING: NEW DIRECTIONS IN UNDERSTANDING MEDIA PRODUCTION VALUES ACROSS CULTURES

BRECKEN CHINN SWARTZ

This study moves beyond traditional media research to propose a set of ten strategic communication categories (aesthetics, breadth, convenience, depth, emotionality, freshness, germaneness, helpfulness, incisiveness, and justice) that allow for discussion of presentational style beyond the mere "yes/no" of story selection based on criteria of newsworthiness. It also extends the gate-keeping paradigm by comparing the complex decisions driving the production of mediated messages to the multi-faceted process of preparing food. Both food and media production are highly strategic endeavors that can profoundly affect the wellbeing of others.

Fifty Chinese and Western journalists broadcasting internationally with the Voice of America, the BBC World Service, and China's three major international media outlets (CCTV, Xinhua, and CRI) were interviewed about the strategic decisions they make in their reporting, including their criteria for story selection, their conception of the interests of their audience, and their views on the present nature of international broadcasting. At the conclusion of the interview, each journalist was asked to complete a forced-choice selection task to indicate the strategies that they felt were most important in their work. In the responses, a significant pattern appeared for Chinese journalists (both in China and in the West) to emphasize the value of justice in their responses, although data suggest that the Chinese definition of "justice" may have surprising differences from the way it is construed in the West. This study provides more fodder for the "Asian values" debate and introduces the food/media connection as a potentially rich metaphor to explore cross-culturally.

Whether we like it or not, the majority of people on our planet are tuned into media in some way – radio, television, the Internet. And just as we humans receive our physical nourishment from the foods we eat, our minds are nourished and developed by the messages we consume – our "food for thought," so to speak. It is widely known that media systems are engaged in a process of rapid globalization as we make our way into the 21st century, a dramatic development in our world's history

that will undoubtedly carry untold implications for all the residents of this planet. As strategic "battles for the hearts and minds" rage, both publicly and privately, it is time seriously to consider what we are doing to each other, and what this will mean for the ways we live together, both now and in the future. To do this, instead of just studying messages, systems, structures and functions, it may be helpful to boil things down to where they begin – with us, with people. If we can understand better what we truly hope to do, perhaps we can figure out better ways to accomplish it.

BACK TO THE BEGINNING

It is telling that the field of media studies was born under the toxic conditions of wartime. It was during the height of the global suspicion of World War II and the onset of the Cold War that the systematic study of mediated communication entered modern life, carrying with it an imperative of the greatest magnitude. International political stakes were high, lives were being lost, and the consequences of psychological warfare were very real. Hitler was one of the earliest to use media for political "propaganda" purposes, and certainly with great effect. One by one, nations of the Allied, Axis, and Communist blocs scrambled to assemble international broadcasting mechanisms so as not to be left without a voice on the world stage. Mass communication was a relatively new phenomenon, and people in power wanted to know as soon as possible what potential effects media would have on their world.

In 1948, early media scholar Harold Lasswell put forward his simple media equation: Who – Says what – To whom – In which channel – With what effect? For scholars working in the immediate post-WWII years and at the outset of the Cold War, it was imperative to begin media study right at the end of the equation, with effects research. How do media affect our attitudes and behavior? What powers and limitations do they hold? Can media make us believe or do just about anything? Unfortunately, the fruits of this early research on the effects of media were less than satisfactory, giving mixed results and raising more questions than answers.

In the late 1950s and 1960s, media theorists became fascinated with computers and their potential, shifting their focus in Lasswell's media equation back a notch to "In which channel," or medium analysis, following the thought process of McLuhan's (1964) axiom, "the medium is the message." In the 1970s and 1980s, the "me generation" came in, and media scholars took yet one more step back in the media equation, focusing on Lasswell's "To whom." Audience analysis and other consumer-centered approaches to studying media became popular, and "uses and gratifications" became the media buzz words. By the 1990s,

emphasis had again shifted a step further back in the media equation to Lasswell's "Says what," or message/content analysis, which underpins the framing and rhetorical approaches currently in vogue today.

Perhaps at the outset of the 21st century, it is time to finally come back to where the media equation began, with the "Who" itself, the people who actually craft the messages that fly across the national boundaries around our world. During the dangerous Cold War years, scholars could scarcely fathom crossing into "enemy territory" to study the people behind the media systems outside our own. But today, with the ready availability of transportation and communication tools that make our world much smaller, we can finally begin where we should have begun all along – with the people who produce the media we consume. Who are they? What makes them tick? We often paint those who create our media with broad strokes, as if they are inanimate cogs within the enormous machines of global broadcasting. But if we strip away the layers of anonymity and see the human faces of those who hold the pens and the keyboards, the microphones and the cameras of our world, we find that we cannot truly understand media without talking with those who work to create them.

BEYOND GATEKEEPING

The father of gatekeeping theory, Kurt Lewin, died before his unfinished manuscript was published in 1947, pairing the terms gate-keeping and communication for the first time (Shoemaker, 1991). As a part of his larger work in field theory defining individual life spaces as causally connected to human social action (Hample, 1997), Lewin's "theory of channels and gatekeepers," as it came to be called, was developed as a means of understanding social changes in a community through the metaphor of food choices. Lewin pointed out that food reaches a family's table through "channels," such as the garden, the grocery store, and the refrigerator. At each stage of the production process, decisions are made about harvesting, storage, preparation, etc., and at any juncture an individual item may be accepted or rejected and never make it to the dinner table. The key to Lewin's analysis was the examination of forces acting upon the selection decisions made by the gatekeepers along the way, which Lewin felt could be measured and modeled psychologically in the same way that models of physical forces were used in physics. Although a physicist by training, Lewin (1951) made the connection of this application of field theory to communication when he wrote in another posthumously published manuscript that the gatekeeping process "holds not only for food channels but also for the traveling of a news item through certain communication channels in a

group, for movement of goods, and the social locomotion of individuals in many organizations" (p. 187).

Lewin's gatekeeping theory was first notably applied in 1950 by David Manning White, who spent time with a small-city newspaper editor whom he dubbed "Mr. Gates." White examined the editor's rationale behind the decisions he made about individual news items, 90% of which were not used by the newspaper. Later gatekeeping studies, such as those by Gieber (1956), McNelly (1959), Snider (1967), Bass (1969), and McQuail and Windahl (1981), kept with White's tradition of examining the news item selection process, focusing on the simple "yes" or "no" of whether an item was accepted for publication or not and why. Although Chibnall's (1977) work did make the important theoretical leap of conceiving of news personnel as "creators" rather than mere "gatherers" of the news, gatekeeping theory still has not lived up to its potential of helping us understand the complexities of communicators' dynamic "life spaces," as proposed by Lewin. The early focus in this line of research was to conceive of psychological forces and role relationships in quantifiable, analytical terms, a tendency heavily influenced by the prevailing methodologies of the time. However, this project suggests that our work may be enhanced by a more thorough exploration of context and values guiding not only "either/or" gatekeeping choices, but also strategic decisions about how messages are crafted.

Although significant work has been done on the decisions made by message producers within media organizations (Allan, 1999; Chan, 2002; Dayan & Katz, 1992; Epstein, 1973; Fishman, 1980; Franklin & Murphy, 1998; Galtung & Ruge, 1981; Gans, 1979; Hartley & Montgomery, 1985; Hofstetter, 1976; Jacobs, 1996; Pozner, 1991; Reese, 1991; Roshco, 1975; Scott, 1994; Tuchman, 1978; Turnow, 1983; Xu, H., 2000), no studies on producer intentions appear to have been conducted cross-culturally, especially with cultures that have been distant as a result of the Cold War. We continue to operate under outdated assumptions about what others intend based on our own interpretations of their programming (content and framing analysis). Now that it is possible to communicate directly with media producers virtually the world over, it is necessary to develop tools with which we may better explore the process by which meaning is made and coded into media messages across cultures. Knowing whether a message is to be broadcast is helpful, but understanding how it is to be presented is another issue altogether.

THE INGREDIENTS IN THE DAILY FEED

Human beings are consumers; we spend significant amounts of

time, resources, and energy each day to acquire both physical food as well as mental "food for thought." Those who feed us tend to respond to our complex tastes by supplying what we want, when and where we want it, as evidenced by the tremendous proliferation of tasty convenience foods available just about anywhere in the developed (and now the developing) world. The process of feeding and being fed is, by nature, an iterative process, with a whole host of "cultural" factors catering to local traditions – tortillas in Mexico, bread in France, *gari* in Nigeria, rice in Japan, etc.

In the highly competitive world of the "daily feed," culinary metaphors already abound. Responding to the perceived needs of our modern society, journalists and other media producers strive to suit our "tastes" to get us to "consume" their messages. They often "spice up" otherwise "bland" reporting, or make efforts to add more "meat" or more "juicy tidbits" to a piece. "Sweet" stories are nice, as long as they do not become "syrupy" or "saccharine." Of course, "stale" news must be avoided, as well as topics that might cause "indigestion" for the audience. Some reporters clearly act as "short-order cooks," simply assembling details from prescribed sets of story elements, whereas other journalists style themselves more as professional "chefs," striving for the complexity and creativity that will suit the "taste" of a more elite market. Judging by our discourse, food metaphors seem to apply readily to the process by which we produce and consume media products.

Thus, as we seek to understand the dynamics of the "daily feed," we must look carefully into the intentions of those who produce and market the foods and messages we consume. Certainly there are those media outlets that deliberately produce mental "junk food" simply because it sells, whereas others consciously try to serve up a nourishing balance of information to promote both individual and societal health and wellbeing. Although the thought of having some worldwide regulatory body overseeing the "health content" of the messages we consume is rather terrifying, if media producers were individually and collectively to view themselves as feeding their audience instead of just entertaining them – merely gaining attention for the purpose of selling it to advertisers – subtle shifts might occur in our media that could lead to significant benefits over time.

FROM "NEWSWORTHINESS" TO RECIPE-BUILDING

One difficulty with Lewin's gatekeeping paradigm is that it can become cumbersome when applied to complex, multi-layered tasks. In its simplest form, Lewin describes the process by which each individual item of food makes it to a family's table. "Do I keep this item or throw it away? Do I keep that item or throw it away?" However, anyone who has

ever prepared a meal knows that cooking is much more artful and complex than that – we are not robots that operate digitally via "yes" or "no." Thus, it is necessary to develop a fuller vocabulary to describe the multi-faceted strategic decisions we make in not only selecting, but also in preparing a message for the consumption of others.

Previous studies delineating strategies or factors that influence journalistic decision-making, consistent with White's (1950) early Mr. Gates study, have focused mainly on newsworthiness, the basic "yes/no" of story selection. For instance, from a review of recent literature, Allan (1999) gleaned a comprehensive list of 12 newsworthiness factors cited throughout media literature: conflict, relevance, timeliness, simplification, personalization, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite persons, cultural specificity, and negativity. However, in order to more fully address the entire repertoire of taste that media producers may draw from to make their stories appealing to their audiences, it is necessary to expand this list to account not only for the mere yes/no of which stories will be included, but also to account for the strategic presentational style of stories as crafted by those who produce them. The above-listed newsworthiness factors fail to account for a reporter's individual aesthetic sense, for instance, nor do they address a journalist's desire for her work to positively impact the lives of her audience. In other words, newsworthiness factors lead us to believe that there is something inherent in the piece of news itself that makes it "worthy" of being broadcast. It leaves little room for the human judgment or values of the communicator. Thus indeed, we need to take our attention all the way back to the beginning of Lasswell's media equation, from the "Says what" of the message to the "Who" that is communicating to more fully account for the subtle human forces at work in our globalizing media system.

This study will make use of a newly-developed list of strategic communication factors that transcend basic newsworthiness and move us further into the multi-layered decision-making process engaged in by media producers themselves. The ten categories include: aesthetics, breadth, convenience, depth, emotionality, freshness, germaneness, helpfulness, incisiveness, and justice. (These categories are described, in both journalistic and culinary terms, in Figure 1.) Aesthetics refers simply to what looks or sounds good – how to create a "good narrative" through fitting together words, scenes, and sounds to make a coherent piece (i.e., packaging or presentation). Breadth means drawing on universal values or interests to try to attract the broadest audience possible (i.e., appealing to the masses). Convenience refers to how readily producers can gather necessary footage or sound, working within constraints such as time, staffing, or equipment (i.e., "fast food"). Depth is about making a piece thought-provoking or analytical, gaining in-

depth or "expert" information, and avoiding sensationalism (i.e., something complex for the discriminating palate). Emotionality descriribes making a program personal, heartwarming, exciting, or fun – appealing to people's feelings to attract attention or touch them in a certain way (i.e., "comfort food," or something spicy or sweet). Freshness is making a program unique or clever; innovating in such a way that material is new, different, and creative (i.e., something "straight out of the garden"). Germaneness has to do with making a program relevant to current circumstances, addressing what is going on at a given time (i.e., seasonal or holiday food). Helpfulness means striving to make a program educational or useful to viewers, provide a needed service, or change the world for the better (i.e., something nutritious). Incisiveness provides the ability to analyze a situation and add something that is needed, providing missing elements or serving a "watchdog" role (i.e., nutritional supplements). Justice describes making a program fair, balanced, accurate, objective, or impartial (i.e., balanced meal).

One interesting element of this category scheme is that the ten categories can fall into a convenient alphabetical listing, which may be helpful as a mnemonic device for students or practitioners who might use such a coding scheme in the future. There may well be more categories than these herein mentioned, which will need the work of future studies to delineate.

The ten categories used in this study were devised through pilot-testing among both American and Chinese journalism students and professionals in the Washington D.C. area. Participants were asked to freelist "words that would make them happy if they were used to describe their work," and then further descriptors were sought through interviews and focus groups. Once a list of words was compiled, they were sorted and organized to fall into exhaustive general categories. Naturally, these ten categories have some degree of overlap, and it would be unusual for a journalist to be motivated by one sole category, to the exclusion of others. As we have noted, strategic decision-making in journalism is a multi-layered process in much the same way as cooking. If I am preparing a Christmas dinner for my family, I will probably focus largely on "germane" elements that evoke the holiday spirit, seeking heartwarming ingredients and spices that are traditional and satisfying to my guests. Of course, I want to also serve a nutritious, fresh, and balanced meal, yet on an occasion such as Christmas, I might choose to splurge, erring on the side of more emotionally evocative recipes. However, if I am preparing a summer salad for a picnic, I may choose to focus most of my efforts on freshness in order to use some of the vegetables currently coming out of my garden. And to make the salad palatable to everyone at the picnic, I may seek breadth, choosing a fairly universally-accepted salad dressing.

The point is that no one category is used exclusively by any journalist at any particular time – media production is a highly creative, multi-faceted process that adapts dynamically to meet evolving needs. Yet, there are circumstantial and preferential patterns to be found between individuals, media organizations, and even national cultures. Just as culture shapes our diet, cultural influences may also impact our communicative choices in ways that we have yet to fully understand. Everyone in the world eats. All media producers want their work to be "palatable" in some way to their audience. Thus, with the range of options provided by our ten-pronged category scheme, we may begin to work within a common conceptual vocabulary through which we can discuss and more clearly understand the choices we make, both as producers and consumers of mediated messages. After all, the creation and maintenance of "culture" is an iterative process, and at every moment we are situated in the highly contextual world of communicative decision-making. Developing and refining categories through which to discuss our choices can provide a number of new ingredients to our conceptual "cookbook."

THE STUDY

Samples

For the purposes of this study, I chose to draw participants from the Voice of America (VOA) in Washington D.C., the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) World Service in London, and Chinese journalists with official international media outlets in Beijing (China Central Television, China Radio International, and the Xinhua News Agency). I was interested in examining the influence of culture on media decision-making, but after spending some time within various media outlets, I realized it would impossible to isolate pure "cultural" elements from the myriad organizational influences affecting reporters working for news agencies in different countries. Especially because I wanted to focus on the main cultural influences of "Chinese" and "Western" values in mass communication, I found it would be impossible to do a study that focused on "culture" without significantly addressing the different organizational mandates driving media choices in places as disparate as Washington and Beijing. Thus, I had to find a way to somehow "control for" organization to be able to see the influence of culture itself.

VOA and the BBC are two of the world's premier broadcast institutions, employing relatively large numbers of well-seasoned journalists from many different national cultures. Both VOA and the BBC employ Indonesians and Afghans, Nigerians and Koreans, Russians and Chinese. These broadcasters now largely live in the same cities

(Washington and London); they work within the same organizational mandates; they work their way up the same bureaucratic structures as their American and British counterparts. (It can be argued that the Americans and British at the VOA and the BBC are still privileged nonetheless, but at least attempts are made to treat them equally "in principle" in terms of job descriptions, benefits, status within the organization, etc.) Many of these international broadcasters have lived in the West for years, and their adult lifestyles and experiences have run alongside their American and British counterparts. The main difference between these journalists is their native culture, which makes their discourse about their work a perfect "laboratory" for examining the influence of cultural background while at the same time "controlling for" organizational influences, at least to the extent possible.

I approached the entire features teams of the Chinese and English divisions of VOA and the BBC World Service, soliciting about ten people from each unit for interviews, striving for an equitable gender balance. I chose to focus on feature reporters because their latitude in story selection is much wider than that of their "hard news" colleagues, whose decisions are guided more by the availability of news stories on the international wire services. Feature producers and editors have a world of options before them, so I was interested in the values and strategic considerations that drive the stories they cover, and how they choose to cover them.

In order to examine the degree to which the Chinese reporters at VOA and the BBC think like their American or British colleagues, or rather like other Chinese reporters from their homeland, I also went to Beijing to interview ten more journalists employed by China's premier international broadcast organizations – China Central Television (CCTV), China Radio International (CRI), and the Xinhua News Agency. Unlike my experiences at VOA and the BBC, where I had enjoyed blanket approval to conduct research, in China I had to "take whomever I could get," relying on personal contacts and friends of friends for interviews. Naturally, this sample of Chinese journalists who were willing to let me interview them may be more internationally-minded than other reporters in Beijing, yet I was careful to reserve at least half of my sample in China for those who spoke no English.

In total, I interviewed 50 reporters – 10 Chinese at VOA, 10 Americans at VOA, 10 Chinese at the BBC, 10 British at the BBC, and 10 Chinese working for official Chinese international media. At VOA and the BBC, some of the Chinese reporters had American or British citizenship, or permanent residency status in the U.S. or U.K., yet all those I interviewed had grown up and been educated in the P.R.C. or Taiwan. Figure 2 describes the average ages, gender mix, and educational and journalistic training backgrounds of those I interviewed.

Although the Chinese sample in Beijing was self-selecting (international journalists who were willing to be interviewed on their own time), the VOA and BBC samples turned out to be quite representative of the larger teams from which they were drawn.

Procedures

I completed 30-45 minute semi-structured interviews in the native language (English or Chinese) of the 50 feature reporters who came forward for the study. The interviews focused around the reporters' story choices, their overall journalistic values, their role models and preferred media, their understanding of the composition and interests of their international audiences, and their notions about "propaganda" and the nature of modern international broadcasting. At the completion of the interview, I gave each journalist a blank piece of paper for a freelisting exercise, with the instruction to "Write down as many words as you can think of that would make you happy if they were used to describe your work." With these values now very salient in their minds, I then asked each journalist to complete a forced-choice selection task. I presented them with ten envelopes, on which were written the labels: Aesthetic-/Beautiful, Broad/Comprehensive, Convenient/Easy to produce, Deep-/Analytical, Emotional/Moving, Fresh/Original, Germane/Relevant, Helpful/Beneficial, Incisive/Probing, and Just/Balanced. Each journalist was asked to choose the top three that they personally thought were most important in their work to and rank them in order of importance. Opening the envelope that the journalist had selected as number one in importance, I then pulled out ten slips of paper on which were written out longer descriptions of each of the ten values – these slips of paper had been identical in each envelope. (Pilot testing among international journalists not involved in the study revealed 100% reliability between the ten categories and their lengthier descriptions.) The journalist again had to choose his or her top three and rank them in order of importance.

Once those two sets of choices were made, I made note of the journalist's selections and ranked them by a simple scoring system: three points for each first choice, two points for each second choice, and one point for each third choice. The range of possible scores between the two trials was thus 0-6, zero if a journalist had never selected a certain category, and six if they had selected a particular category as their first choice twice (thus 3+3). Summing these totals among the categories makes it possible to examine patterns of emphasis across the five samples.

Results

Graphically representing the weighted selections from the five samples of journalists reveals some significant patterns. (See Figure 3 for VOA data, Figure 4 for BBC data, and Figure 5 for data from the Chinese media.) The easiest finding to note is that almost none of the journalists (only two of the 50) selected convenience as one of their top three choices. Although, in their interviews, most of the reporters described time pressures which would make convenience an important selection criterion for stories in the midst of day-to-day deadline pressures, apparently when given a chance to articulate a choice, convenience does not appear as a value worth emphasizing – at least to a researcher. Thus, we might conclude that the categories being selected in the study are ideal values, or those that the journalists would strive to achieve under ideal circumstances. Because this study focuses on the journalists themselves rather than their products, no effort was made to try to correlate the reporters' stated values with the programs they have produced. Such questions will have to be answered by future research.

Probably the most significant finding of this study is the consistent propensity of Chinese journalists to select justice as one of their top three concerns – indeed, for one out of every five Chinese journalists in the study, justice was given as the number one choice during both trials of the selection task. After completing my interviews at VOA and the BBC and noting this pattern, I was very curious to see if this tendency was appearing because Chinese journalists employed by VOA and the BBC are a very special, self-selecting breed of journalists – those who have left their home country, become proficient enough in English to be employed by Western media organizations, and been willing to engage in broadcasts to China that they know are blocked by the Chinese government. Many of these journalists, particularly those employed by VOA or the BBC for ten or more years, experienced the Cultural Revolution and/or the Tiananmen Square incident firsthand, thus I expected that their feelings about journalistic values may resemble those of Westerners more than journalists from their home country. However, when I discovered the pattern of citing justice to be even further enhanced among reporters working for the official Chinese media, I realized that there must indeed be something "Chinese" about selecting justice as a top journalistic value.

Two possibilities I could imagine for this finding would be: 1) perhaps Chinese journalism curricula place great emphasis on this value, to the extent that "justice and balance" would emerge readily as a salient value when one is asked to articulate values, or 2) perhaps the Chinese media system has been deficient in this area, which produces a longing or a striving among journalists that translates into significant emphasis

on this value as one that is needed. In other words, could this pattern best be explained by abundance, or by scarcity? Do we value something because it is plentiful, or because we perceive it to be rare?

Examining the journalists' demographics, we find that although 70% of the Chinese journalists in Beijing did receive some formal journalism education in China (in many instances, such training is a prerequisite to take jobs in the official Chinese media), those were not necessarily the members of the sample who rated justice most highly. Of the Chinese VOA and BBC reporters, only two of the 20 had received significant journalism training in China. Most of the Chinese VOA and BBC reporters had received their education in the West, many in other fields. There emerges no significant correlation between having received journalistic training, or having received training either in the West or in China, and the tendency to select justice as a preeminent value. Likewise, there is no apparent correlation by gender. Aside from the strong effect by national culture, the only other factor that appears to be related to rating justice highly is age. Those who had been through traumatic events in China did tend to put justice on top of the pile more readily than others.

In subsequent follow-up conversations with the Chinese journalists, I asked them to provide some context around why justice/balance emerged as such a significant value for them. What they told me was reminiscent of the themes that appeared in their interviews. One VOA reporter explained: "I am a reporter, not a judge. So I cannot judge the matter. We should remove any judgment and strive for balance, which is the basis of news from my point of view. This is what I am always emphasizing, being complete and being impartial." Similarly, a journalist in China told me, "You must be truthful. The primary principle of journalism is to be factual. To put it simply, it has no exaggeration and hiding, just true reporting. People have their own judgments. It's not your job to teach them."

DISCUSSION

Choosing to Not Choose

Throughout the development of the Chinese media system, official media in China have been called the "mouthpiece of the Chinese Communist Party." Thus, I expected Chinese reporters to have a more public-service mindset than their Western counterparts. I imagined that they would focus significantly in their discourse on the responsibility to "feed" their audience with healthful servings of what they consider necessary to build a strong "socialist society with Chinese characteristics." After all, in China it is traditionally considered the responsibility of a

host or a leader to order dishes for his subordinates in a restaurant – to consider the needs of others and to meet them preemptively. At present, "junk food" is known as a more Western phenomenon, both in terms of food and media. Anyone who has seen even a small dose of official Chinese media broadcasts knows that reaching for a balance of perspectives does not manifest obviously as a highly-cherished value. Instead of "all the news that's fit to print," Chinese international media tend to focus more on "all the good news that's fit to print" – about China, at least.

However, the data from this study suggest that indeed, some Chinese reporters feel they can best do their job as a journalist by not choosing ideas or opinions for their audience. They see a danger in taking sides and want to be as objective as possible. One senior Chinese VOA reporter put it this way:

> We grew up in a very bigoted cultural environment, that is, at that time there was only one notion; other notions must be wrong. That is the education we received. So people would be going to extremes. However, after the Tiananmen Square incident, this extreme notion was broken. I know more than one notion can be correct in this world. There are other correct notions, and many wrong ones. So I should cherish more being objective, being truthful, and being complete. Now that I am out of that environment, at every second, I am, consciously or unconsciously, reminding myself of being objective and being complete. Because I grew up in that environment, I know how much damage and impact partiality could bring. So I should not be that way.

When I presented this quote to Chinese reporters at the BBC, almost every head in the room nodded. Likewise, journalists in China – even a senior editor with the Xinhua News Agency – expressed solidarity, as well. So, why the apparent disconnect between what Chinese reporters say they want and the output of their media system? One CCTV editor explained:

> Objectivity means that you have both positive and negative sides. But I cannot do this when it comes to some sensitive issues. I am not allowed to do so. I have to abide by the rules of CCTV and represent China. With regard to such sensitive issues as Taiwan, human rights, the Falun Gong cult, especially some resolutions passed by the United States condemning China, I can only position the United

States as our antagonistic target in my stories. That's all I can do. I will not even leave half of the space for the United States. Most likely I would present China's standing and argue against the United States. Ninety percent of the content will be devoted to China and the remaining 10% to the United States. I cannot put too many criticisms from the American side in my stories. It's not allowed. Under such circumstances, I cannot consider my audience. Whether it is effective or not is not my concern. I only speak for the government and weigh what I can say and cannot. Effectiveness is not my concern, because such political issues may affect my career.

Thus, the question that emerges is not whether the individuals that comprise the Chinese media system want to present their society (and the world society) with a healthful balance of news and information, but how to best go about that without damaging the stability and security of the status quo.

An employee at CCTV explained the disconnect he feels between the views he holds privately and the opinions he expresses publicly:

The boss rarely listens to input from staff. I think he may want to, but doesn't have such chances. We don't have such a mechanism. Another thing is that it may affect teamwork. We divide up our assignments among different teams. If one team actively suggests that we should do this and that, other lazy members will not be happy. So, we don't speak up. Chinese are like this. We all want a peaceful and secure life. Few Chinese talk about their suggestions. I have many suggestions, but I don't say them. Chinese culture doesn't favor spearheads. Spearheads often risk their life or career, especially in terms of political performance. They want to stick to the current rules so long as there are no big mistakes. I am one of them. I know foreigners don't act like this. Foreign experts speak up about their concerns and suggestions, but nothing changes, because of the teamwork thing I mentioned. So, they don't talk any more.

The Meaning of Justice

Ironically, one major question that emerges from the data in this study centers around the meaning of "justice" in broadcasting. By justice, do we mean complete impartiality, or do we mean social justice?

Chinese reporters most often defined what they were striving for as: objective/keguan (客观), correct/zhengque (正确), impartial/gongzheng (公正), complete/quanmian (全面), or truthful/zhenshi (真实). Yet, when I asked Western reporters about the meaning of these values, I was told, "Well, of course reporting has to be correct and truthful – that just goes without saying." Yet what constitutes a "whole" truth? Is there such a thing?

Although there was repeated emphasis among all the samples on the value of trying to be as impartial as possible, there was also an awareness among the American and British reporters that complete objectivity may be impossible. Everyone looks at their reporting through a lens created by life experience, I was told, thus striving for balance is much more about recognizing and correcting imbalances than pretending that no lens exists.

Among American and British reporters, particularly among British at the BBC, I found a marked tendency to equate justice with "leveling the playing field" in terms of social justice and welfare. One BBC feature maker stated the case passionately:

> What makes me feel effective is when I've given the voiceless a voice. I'm not on the side of the powerbrokers. It's very important to understand that that's a role within a large organization, primarily concerned with news that gives voice to the powerbrokers. News programs interview politicians, presidents, prime ministers, academics, intellectuals, experts. We are doing that as a news organization, wall to wall. So when I say that I'm batting for the underprivileged, if you like, that is within the context of an organization that is absolutely in the mainstream in giving voice to the privileged all the time. I mean, I'm not a crusader, I'm sounding like one, but I'm not a crusader with a big flag going out and righting wrongs. But there are real people who are being squashed by circumstance. And the discovery, if you like, of my professional life is that there's a difference between being told something in a classroom and experiential learning. You can say half the world drinks dirty water, but go and spend time with those people and get diarrhea and see their children die and it becomes a bit more important.

Indeed, most of the Western journalists I interviewed, particularly at the BBC, indicated certain values that they hoped their programs would promote – diversity, tolerance, democracy, human rights, social welfare. In that sense, they do not claim to be striving for pure "impart-

iality," but to be finding ways to promote an agenda, albeit given our modern sensibilities, a very constructive one. A BBC journalist described the thought process that underlies her choices in guests:

> It's the whole argument about being on the side of the angels, isn't it? You know, do you say that apartheid is right, or do you get somebody on to support apartheid, or do you get someone from the British National Party expressing their racist views? Do you get somebody on from the Mujahadin to say that jihad against the West is necessary? That 9/11 was the best thing? I think there are times when that point of view must be expressed. But immediately it needs to be balanced. You could not get somebody on the radio saying that 9/11 was the best thing that ever happened, in isolation. I mean, everybody would know that if you had somebody on saying that 9/11 was fantastic and then you went direct to "Thank you very much. Now we're going to do a story about the Green Party in Sweden." I mean, that just sounds wrong. It's not rocket science, but I mean, I have actually done an interview with somebody saying 9/11 was the best thing that ever happened, but that was in the context of a package that I had put together, so it was immediately balanced. But it's not bad in itself to have that expression. It's important to seek out alternative perspectives.

Indeed, I found that the reporters I interviewed at the BBC World Service stood apart from those at VOA and in the Chinese media in their open discussion of universal values, in their expressed hopes to "give the voiceless a voice," to facilitate "the world talking to itself," embracing a world view "devoid of Eurocentrism" to the extent possible. Although a few BBC journalists shared the view that their mandate was to "show the best of Britain simply by being impartial," most also felt it could be somewhat problematic at times that "we do cover British culture to a far disproportionate degree than we would if we were looking really at spaceship Earth." At VOA and in Beijing, there were no apologies for this – the American and Chinese reporters felt unequivocally that their institutional charge was to present their respective nations in the best light. Yet, as media evolve and reporters around the world begin to examine their values more clearly, perhaps there will develop a more self-imposed mandate to look beyond national boundaries for universal themes that nourish and inspire. Perhaps attracting audiences simply because one is broadcasting from a powerful nation will no longer be enough.

CONCLUSION

International broadcasters have a difficult mandate – to reach out to disparate audiences around the globe in ways that meet both their institutional requirements as well as the needs of the unfathomable variety of people who tune in. Yet when I asked these 50 international broadcasters who they worked for, the majority of them told me, "I work for myself." They work for international broadcast agencies because of the interesting and diverse nature of the work; they choose stories simply because they find them fascinating. They consider themselves perpetually "going to university," constantly learning new things and having the precious chance to share what they learn with people around the globe.

Through this, I realized that there appears to be something very freeing and even public-spirited about working for an international public broadcast agency. Because there is great difficulty in gaining audience ratings or clearly grounded feedback from everywhere one's signal is received, journalists for organizations like VOA, the BBC World Service, and the Chinese international media work on stories that feed themselves. It is as if they are eating a snack and offering to share some simply because it tastes good. "I like it, so maybe you'll like it, too."

If we conceive of media like food, we realize that the fare we produce does have profound effects on those who consume it. Yet how we conceive of health and balance may be impacted significantly by our own cultural norms and expectations. For instance, journalists in the different nations I studied likened their reporting to foods in unique cultural terms, as in the following representative sampling:

- Perhaps a stir-fried vegetable dish, because I like things clear and concise, not sloppy. No need to say something useless. I prefer things which are plain, that is to say, you could find facts, truthful stories inside. I don't like greasy things, like stories with lots of adjectives and jargon. (VOA Chinese)
- I would say a peanut butter and wildflower honey sandwich on really good peasant bread. The peasant bread for substance and honesty. The peanut butter for the flavor and comfort, and ease to make. And the wildflower honey because it's sweet in itself when it's doing its own thing rather than, you know, being shaped or domesticated. All together, it has substance, comfort, flavor, and a bit of a wild streak. (VOA English)
- I think it's like a fish-flavored vegetable that grows in Sichuan and Yunnan Provinces. You may not like it in the beginning because of the fishy smell. But one day, you might suddenly find it so delicious.

The more you eat, the more addicted you'll become. (China Central Television)

• Maybe something spicy and light. It's not something completely risk-free, but interesting enough to attract attention, you know, a bit on the spicy side, so they get a lovely shock, but then hopefully it would not upset their stomach completely, you know. You can still think, "That's interesting, I'd like to experiment a little bit more." (BBC Chinese)

• It would have to be cultural fusion. That's absolutely paramount. So it would have to be sort of Eurasian dish or, you know, Indochinese or something. It's the global conversation, it's the meeting of cultures. And it would have to be delicious. The dish probably hasn't been invented yet. (BBC English)

Limitations and Future Directions

This program of research is still in its early formative stage. The category scheme needs further refining and operationalizing. The food metaphor can be overstretched if not treated with care. The decision to interview 50 journalists for this project in order to attain some modest degree of generalizability comes at the cost of truly deep, grounded analysis, which will need to be undertaken as opportunities arise. More international reporters – from both commercial and public media, from every corner of the globe – need to be heard, and heard carefully. Particularly as the Chinese official media open up to the inexorable pull of globalization, we need to get to know journalists and officials there who are "higher up the food chain" in order to better understand the inertia of the current system; we all need to prove the sincerity of our intentions to each other in order to be able to engage in the long-term dialogue and collaboration that is so desperately needed.

Current nutritional wisdom teaches us that the healthiest approach to eating is to achieve a mindful, balanced diet. Likewise, there is room for a very wide diversity of media products on our international airwaves, especially if we can free our world's most talented and committed journalists from having to be mere "convenience store peddlers" in the impatient rush to grab bits of global market share. If we can forge a common vocabulary for what we want and how to get there, the invisible silken threads of communication we stretch between our nations may indeed bring our world closer together instead of tangling it in the white noise of global commercialization.

FIGURES

Figure 1. Description of Communication Value Scheme

Category	Journalistic Description	Culinary Description
Aesthetics	What looks or sounds good; what are the elements of a "good narrative;" how words, scenes, and sounds are organized to make a coherent package.	Attractive, aesthetically pleasing.
Breadth	How to engage the broadest possible audience; appealing to universally shared values, tastes, or interests.	Something everyone likes.
Convenience	How easy it will be for the producers to gather necessary footage or sound; how to work within constraints such as time, staffing, or equipment.	Ingredients on hand or readily available.
Depth	How to make a program thought-provoking or analytical; gaining in-depth or "expert" information; avoiding sensationalism.	"Haute cuisine;" something complex for the discriminating palate.
Emotion	How to make a program personal, heartwarming, exciting, or fun; appealing to people's feelings to attract attention or touch them in a certain way.	Tasty or evocative: spicy, sweet, salty, etc.
Freshness	How to make a program unique or clever; innovating in such a way that material is new, different, and creative.	Fresh ingredients, something "right out of the garden."
Germaneness	How to make a program relevant to current circumstances; addressing what is going on at a given time.	Appropriate for the occasion, such as seasonal or holiday-specific food.
Helpfulness	How to make a program educational or useful to viewers; providing a needed service; changing the world for the better.	Healthy, organic food that promotes wellness for individuals and/or the planet.
Incisiveness	How to analyze and add something needed; providing missing elements; serving a "watchdog" role.	Performing a vital function not otherwise provided, such as vitamin supplements.
Justice	How to make a program fair, balanced, or objective.	Creating a well-balanced diet without undue emphasis on one particular food.

Figure 2. Description of samples

Sample	Average age	Gender balance	Attended graduate school	Had formal journalism training
VOA	40	50% male	90%	60%

Chinese (80% China, 20% Taiwan)		50% female		
VOA English (100% Amer.)	43	60% male 40% female	60%	40%
BBC Chinese (90% China, 10% Taiwan)	38	50% male 50% female	60%	30%
BBC English (100% Britain)	37	30% male 70% female	40%	30%
Chinese media (100% China)	33	50% male 50% female	50%	70%

Figure 3. Weighted categories among journalists at VOA

A = Aesthetics
B = Breadth
C = Convenience
D = Depth
E = Emotionality
F = Freshness
G = Germaneness
H = Helpfulness
I = Incisiveness
J = Justice
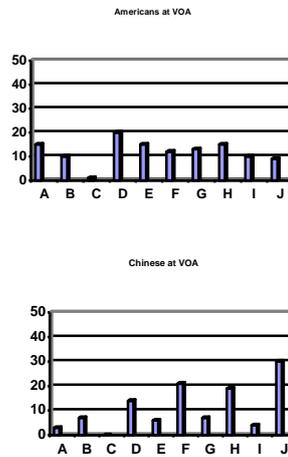
Figure 4. Weighted categories among journalists at the BBC

A = Aesthetics
B = Breadth
C = Convenience
D = Depth
E = Emotionality
F = Freshness
G = Germaneness
H = Helpfulness
I = Incisiveness
J = Justice
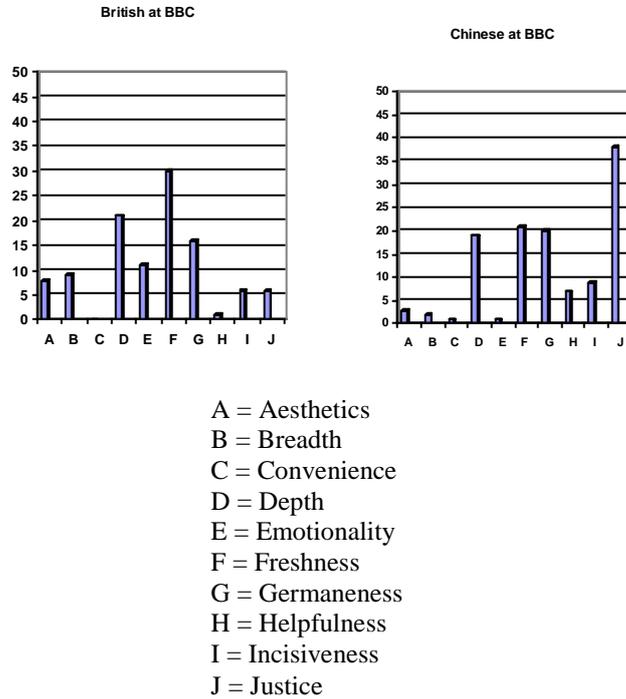
Figure 5. Weighted categories among journalists in the official Chinese media

A = Aesthetics
B = Breadth
C = Convenience
D = Depth
E = Emotionality
F = Freshness
G = Germaneness
H = Helpfulness
I = Incisiveness
J = Justice
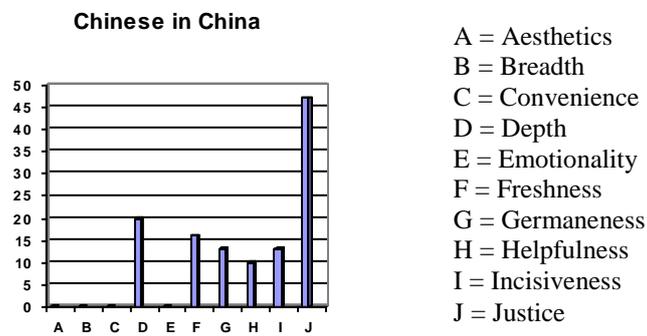
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CHAPTER XVII

A FIRMER FOOTING FOR THE RE-STORIED *POLIS*: IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS IN THE FORM OF APHORISMS

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It seems more and more likely that the fundamental assumptions and articles of faith that have sustained modernity for either two or four centuries – depending on whether one thinks it began in the Renaissance or the Enlightenment – have been eroded or even cast aside, just as Nietzsche had anticipated more than a hundred years ago. Nietzsche's concern that a humanity unprepared for life without an anchor in the traditional sense would face a nightmare in which the ridiculous and the reasonable, the base and the noble, the trivial and the serious, would all assume the same stature has also proved well founded. The solitary self-reliant human being who would transcend the confusion and fulfill his true potential would be a superman; indeed, it seems that our so-called post-modern phase – in its essence not yet worthy of designation as an era – demands almost superhuman effort and power to rise above the cacophony into an order of values that expresses life at its best.

Any attempt to re-story the polis in acquiescence to a climate of utter moral confusion is therefore futile. A polis whose citizens are not only confused between different moralities, but often are unable to tell what is moral from what is not in the first place, can be only stillborn. The twentieth century has witnessed harrowing attempts to attain moral clarity that only hastened the descent into an infernal state. Religious extremists and neo-fascists continue the struggle to attain a moral clarity as petty and inadequate as the confusion it seeks to supplant. What is presented here is hence a preliminary sketch of what must be kept in mind for our stories to effectively re-story the polis. A number of falsehoods and misconceptions are highlighted, as are suggestions made towards the attainment of greater clarity regarding some moral and spiritual concerns (An analogous case could be made for the aesthetic, but limitations on time and space dictate that this be left for another occasion).

1. To re-story the polis, we must have stories to tell: Never before have so many novels been written, so many stories told. But, for the most part, what are they really about? In the United States, with much of the rest of the world apparently eager to "catch up", more and more

people have only stories to tell in the context of their own group or pseudo-group (the *de facto* definition of 'minority' has turned both farcical and pathetic). Groups gathered around ever more ridiculous agenda become self-obsessed and babble endlessly about themselves to themselves. Amid such empty self-reference, stories are told, novels written. They tell nothing to those who do not belong to their narrowly defined audience, and not much to this audience that it does not already know, feel, or whatever.

What might one contrast with the narrow-minded, narrow-spirited literature that dominates the post-modern world? Great literature obviously, but also the fairly-tale. These prove that one need not ignore one's identity. Dostoyevsky was as Russian as Russians ever are, fervently concerned with the Russian character and destiny. But he never lost sight of the fundamental questions facing humanity. His universality was realized in an intensely specific cultural and historical milieu. The same can be said of Solzhenytsin. The tales collected and recast by the great Persio-Arab fabulist and moralist 'Abdullah Ibn al-Muqaffa' in the eighth century originated in specific contexts in India, Persia and the Arab Near East, yet they have universal import on a scale unknown since Aesop had performed a similar exercise more than a millenium earlier.

Quite apart from the contemporary tragicomic minority politics that shapes much post-modern and especially American storytelling, some American literature does not travel well across even small spatio-temporal divides because it is given to excessive chatter about ultra-local trivia and other ephemera. A comparison between Camus' *The Outsider* and Walker Percy's *The Moviegoer* shows this. Both are regarded as existential classics. However, while *The Outsider* is decisively set in the Algeria of Camus' childhood and youth, it never loses itself in details that could be of no conceivable interest to its audience abroad; Percy, in contrast, becomes so drawn into the sociology of southern families, and mannerisms and moods highly idiosyncratic of New Orleans, that far deeper themes, no doubt at the heart of the book, get buried underneath.

There is also the overwrought or listless nature of much contemporary storytelling. Camus and Dostoyevsky remind us that a story can be quite complex without ever being overwrought. In the end, it is what our stories are *about* that really matters. When this is the necessary significance, and the author is sufficiently attuned to it, maybe passionate about it – if we can still say 'it' – the story carries us success-fully through the localities and complexities in which all truly human stories must be immersed.

But what is significant amid the tragicomedy of contemporary "minority politics"? What has value? Again, Nietzsche was right: We do

not face a vicious circle, but a test of the sternest sort. What really has value must shine through all the muck and murk.

2. Tolerance and our capacity for it: If anything good distinguishes post-modernity, so it is claimed, it is unprecedented tolerance. On the surface, this is true. Never before has there been more co-habitation between more different viewpoints spread over more terrestrial space. But how many have examined the *qualitative* dimension of contemporary tolerance?

Real tolerance is when one holds many things dear – moral, spiritual, aesthetic – and puts up with those who do not, even when he thinks them dreadfully mistaken or misguided, even when he finds them woefully in need of proper guidance. Real tolerance is when the same group gathers people who see very important things very differently. But what have we got today?

In the first place, today's groups gather people around one thing, the more single-minded, the better. Groups often formed in frivolous ways compound the ridicule by being intolerant of the least internal dissent. Moreover, however single-minded and ridiculous the group's platform, other groups are always regarded as equivalent. No group is to be taken more seriously than another. The Society for Sex with Purple Lemmings is on the same footing as the Methodist Church or some freethinking scientific society.

What is tolerance today then? The belief that as many single-minded groups as possible be allowed to co-exist and that no order of values be acknowledged that enables one to distinguish between groups according to how far-reaching they are in allowing human beings to realize themselves. Tolerance effectively has become the attitude of people habituated to the company of others who see things – or, better see only the one thing that is all that "matters" – in exactly the same way, who imagine that others are also exactly the same except that their one thing is just some other logically, morally and legally equivalent obsession. Tolerance has been reduced to a totalitarian narcissistic fantasy.

We have reached a state where a member of the Society for Sex with Purple Lemmings no longer expects there to be anyone who condemns that society as perverse, nor even that there be someone who has no interest in any such society or dismisses it as frivolous. To run into such condemnation or avowed lack of interest has become a shocking experience for the fanatics that our implicit conception of tolerance has bred. And yet the whole idea of tolerance is for someone who *for good reason* regards some practice as perverse, or otherwise reprehensible, to profess his views, to call what is abnormal or base by its proper name, but still to put up with those who are abnormal or base

within the sensible bounds that many societies have worked long and hard to prescribe. It is just that many have lost the art of drawing lines, and with it the capacity for real tolerance.

3. Relative and absolute truth: Like all technological innovations, computers have their uses and abuses. Among the more invisible abuses of computers is how we have allowed the binary mentality to infect our minds. Computers translate all information into strings of 0's and 1's. Every digit is either 0 or 1. We too have reduced some of the deepest and most complex human problems into quasi-digitized either/or questions.

And so it is with truth. If truth is not absolute, then it must be relative. If post-modernity is the age when absolute truth can no longer be sustained, then it is the age of relativism. Not much thought is given to the nature of truth, nor to the various metaphors that usually accompany the conception of absolute truth.

The reverberations of Pontius Pilate's question refuse to fade into silence. They have not even decayed. Most people imagine absolute truth as something out there, perhaps analogous to something geometric, fixed and eternal, to be revealed or grasped much as one grasps a syllogism or proof. If truth on the moral or spiritual plane shifts from one time, culture or religion to another, then it cannot be fixed and eternal in that geometric sense, and so cannot be absolute. God's intractability to geometrism entails relativism.

But post-modernity's sloganeering about the inevitability of relative truth is blind to the fact that truth does not always accommodate itself to some kind of mathematical metaphor favoured by our limited imagination. Truth, at least in morals, art, and religion, is *lived,* not grasped. Truth transforms our being. It apprehends us and not we it. But nothing point- or object-like is to be imagined here. The "it" stands for something far more elusive. Whatever transforms our being is beyond it and we cannot possibly be etched in stone by it. If truth really is something lived, then it follows that there *must* be different versions of what it is. Every version is already a translation of what is beyond being to language defined within some domain or other of (human) being. That there are many accounts of the truth is not an affirmation of the relativity of truth, *but of the relativity of what is finite from the standpoint of truth.*

Relativism is the result of arrogance. We declare something null and void because it resists our metaphors and our desire to find a definitive and permanent expression for it. Definitive and permanent expressions, however, are more appropriate for cemeteries than the realm of the living. It would be strange to think that truth, if absolute, must be buried alongside other victims of definitive and permanent

expressions. It would be strange to think that truth is not living, and beyond, way beyond, reduction to digitized binarism.

4. Pluralism: Our post-modern phase is pluralistic through and through. We hear this often enough. But is post-modernity pluralistic because worldviews will never again draw humanity into them as before? Are we consigned to the pluralism of pseudo-worldviews forever lightly taken? In this case, we have nothing to boast about. Since one has little reason to go too far in the defense of what, after all, has been adopted half in jest, we may go a little further and accuse that much-lauded pluralism of concealing a great lie; for what we really suffer is the illusory pluralism of motley surface opinions all in alliance against anything that has genuine depth. The very idea of depth is suppressed, for the threat that it poses to the parade of surface opinions posturing as democratic life is obvious.

Our reality: The monism of mutually substitutable pseudo-worldviews that only appears pluralistic to those so conditioned to the casual adoption of what they profess that they have forgotten what it is for something to be a matter of life and death.

Any pluralism worth its name must embrace the co-existence of worldviews whose adherents are prepared to go very far in upholding them, worldviews each of which allows a human being *as a whole* the best and most extensive life possible both as an individual and together with others. It is best to interpret our global condition as one of transition, not from life to the mimicry of life, but towards its renewal. We do not yet know what form (or forms) this renewal will take. In the meantime, many will revel in the mimicry and take it for the real thing. The noise of their party will drown out all other sounds. One day, however, the monistic festivities will come to an end, perhaps to be subjected once more to monastic discipline.

5. Choice, belief, and belief "systems": Postmodernity's propagandists tell us that not only are we in a unique position to choose what we believe, but we have no choice other than to exercise that choice. As usual, those propagandists overlook the meaning of 'choice' and 'belief' and, based on that, the relationship between them. To be fair, the error is not just theirs, but compounds a wrong turn taken centuries ago.

In his superbly researched and argued book *Faith and Belief*, Wilfred Cantwell Smith demonstrates that 'belief' once stood for that which we hold dear or pledge ourselves to, with 'lief' closely related to 'love' ('Liebe' in German). Modernity on the other hand has conditioned us to contrasting 'belief' with 'knowledge'. One believes when one is not in a position to know. What one believes has a status of "uncertainty" about it and is in some sense inferior to knowledge. This comple-

tely misses the point of belief. Belief is not something we retreat into when we are unable to know, but represents a radically different way of relating to reality than knowledge, something obscured by epistemological monism. Epistemological monism, one of the cornerstones of late modernity, will have us "believe" that we always seek knowledge, and when we fail, for whatever reason, then there is room for "belief". Of course, such monism entails belief (in the second, weaker and distorted, sense) in knowledge. There is no escape from the way of belief, except that now it is tucked snugly beneath the blanket of knowledge (with the meaning of 'knowledge' itself a victim of reductionism).

In order to imagine that belief is a matter of choice, one must already be habituated to a considerably weakened sense of 'belief'. In order to meaningfully use expressions such as 'belief system', one must he conditioned to 'belief' as something applicable to some proposition about which we are unable to have knowledge. A collection of such propositions then forms a "belief system". But a belief as that to which we pledge ourselves, as what we hold dear, as a way of (intimately) relating to (possibly transcendent) reality, is not at all propositional in its logical form and can never form a collection of interrelated statements that add up to a "system". It also seems unlikely that belief in this sense can ever be casually chosen. If one is at all in a position to choose what one holds dear or pledges oneself to, then it is in a very unusual sense of 'choice', one that at its limit no longer seems like choice at all – for what we truly pledge ourselves to and hold dear in a way chooses us.

When we become alienated from all that is worthy of our deepest commitments – in a context of mutually substitutable pseudo-world-views, epistemological monism, and the attendant misuse of some key words and concepts – we may speak of the unavoidable right to choose our beliefs, belief systems, and so on. But then, we will have forgotten what it is really to believe.

6. Freedom and decision: Just as freedom has been excessively – and mistakenly – linked with choice, so has it been linked with decision. To be sure, we do make free choices and decisions and feel unfree were we constrained in these. When faced with choices and decisions, we should be free to choose or decide. But what about the foundation for our choices or decisions? Should we not also be *able* to choose or decide? Is a person who chooses or decides listlessly the same as one who does so with a strong sense of purpose? And how does one acquire a sense of purpose?

Freedom is at least as much a matter of having a strong sense of purpose as being free to choose or decide. No amount of freedom of choice, or the freedom to decide can compensate for apathy or existential vacuum. But one cannot choose or decide to have a strong

sense of purpose. The only decision to be made is to let go in the most decisive sense, to accept the possibility of attunement with a higher kind of flow and grow accordingly. There are various disciplines to help one reach that state, but they do not substitute for that state.

Kierkegaard recognized that even the noblest decision cannot by itself form the basis for a realized human existence. If it were only a matter of decision, then there are several situations in which after enough reflection and scrutiny, one decision appears as good as another. A decision can only be a means to an end, but the end itself must have the power to carry itself into a human life beyond all skepticism.

Heidegger also appreciated the value of letting go late in his life after having given undue attention to the role of decision. Decision always has an important self-conscious quality, something contrived, and hence lacks the inner strength necessary for it to endure. Letting go at the proper level ensures contiguity with whatever provides long-term existential sustenance.

From the vantage point of sustained purposiveness, one is able to choose or decide freely when faced with the relevant situation in a manner that goes far beyond the mere freedom to choose or decide. Freedom of choice means that one is free to choose; existential freedom means that one is able to choose.

7. *The computerization of man redux*: The social scientist Walter Truett Anderson truly belongs to the computer generation. Just as computers operate only with 0's and 1's, Anderson's mind is caught in a world that oscillates between consumerism and fundamentalism, secular humanism and scientism, relativism and ideologism, and so on.

Let us for a moment overlook the internal flaws of Anderson's digitized sociology given that nothing, for instance, prevents a secular humanist from adhering to scientism, or relativism itself, from being a rigid ideology. What is of greater concern is the obliviousness of Anderson and his like to the possibility that aversion to consumerism or secular humanism do not entail something like fundamentalism, nor opposition to relativism some rigid ideology or other. The trouble with digitized "thinking" is that it is as rigid as the computational algorithms that have "inspired" it. It oscillates between rigidly defined extremes, once in a while including some mechanically conceived middle ground. It is rigidly denied the transcendence of its rigidity.

Is it really the case that to reject consumerism, be it at the level of material objects or ideas, one must get caught up in a fundamentalist frenzy? Must any solemn moral or religious commitment be reduced to caricature, translated into the infantilism of digitized "thinking"? In order to cast aside relativism, must we become totalitarian absolutists?

Where does a mature, sophisticated conception of truth find its place? Surely not under a régime of digitized totalitarianism!

The most insidious error perpetrated by post-modernity lies in the rigidly binary either/or situations with which it confronts us. It forces people to choose between equally infantile extremes. Such is its tyranny that many soon fall for the illusion that the two infantile extremes of the various either/or situations that they face are their only real options. The least criticism of free market economics, which has degenerated into *le capitalisme sauvage* (as a dear departed friend has called it), brings on the accusation that one is a 'socialist' (which usually means "Soviet-style communist"). The least openly expressed discontent with the absurd minority politics that has poisoned much American intellectual life is silenced with intimations of crypto-fascism. The least discomfort with dangerous levels of moral relativism are snuffed out with cries that to draw the line anywhere is to draw it everywhere.

The official ideology is (a) complete acceptance of a relativism of mutually substitutable pseudo-worldviews within a rigorously free-market economy, and (b) the condescending tolerance of dissenting views with thinly veiled intimations that these issue from poor old souls too limited or frightened to join the party. Those who tacitly or explicitly abide by that official ideology have no clue that their entire framework is but an "either" in a much grander "either/or". Moreover, the "or" in this case is not some infantile or otherwise mechanical antithesis to the "either", but is of a different order, far outside the narrow bounds of digitized cultural totalitarianism.

8. Post-colonialism and self-consciousness: Some of the most important re-storyings of the polis will come through the stories that societies outside of Europe and North America must tell themselves. This is because in addition to the political, military, economic and social constraints that European colonialism has imposed, there are psychological and spiritual constraints that derive from the hitherto unknown compulsion to become self-conscious about one's own civilization. For better or worse, the civilization of the Enlightenment is far more self-conscious than any before it and has left almost no society untouched by its obsessive quest (lust?) for certainty through self-doubt and self-examination. All of a sudden, it has become possible, nay necessary, for the people immediately concerned to ask themselves: "Who – or what – is an Algerian? A Malaysian? A Peruvian?"

In many cases, the answer to those questions takes two forms: negative identity, when local traits, mores, and customs that least resemble the European are emphasized; and mimicry, when countries (or groups within them) not geographically part of Europe, and perhaps quite remote from it, really wish to be taken for Europeans. There are

also several combinations of the two, sometimes uneasy to the point of civil strife.

A few countries like Morocco, Egypt, Thailand, China and Japan, however, have enough confidence in their continuity and traditions that the question of self-definition hardly ever arises with much urgency. It is difficult for Egyptians or Chinese not to know who they are, such is the depth and age of their respective civilizations. Almost every Egyptian novel, for example, has an "Egyptian-ness" about it that, far from being forced, gives every sense that it is there because the author could not help it, because it flows as naturally as the script with which one writes.

Countries that brim with civilizational depth and continuity are in a good position to have relaxed cultural exchanges with Europe and North America. But not always. Something about those exchanges has badly affected several Iranians and Indians, so that we now find strong movements in both countries that self-consciously assert local identity, and do so quite violently. This may be a sign that there are limits to the encroachments of globalism and that such limits, in the face of globalism's ferocity, will inevitably be set with at least some violence. (Globalization is forcing us down yet another stifling either/or: either shallow global culture, or an equally shallow reaction to it. Once again, the grander either/or, above all the broader and nobler "or" that completes it, is lost in the noise).

Finally, we find countries in which all the foregoing options coexist, countries like Mexico where we find a mix of particularist pride, European-ness, and awareness of a deep, resonant, and complex past. Perhaps Russia is a good candidate for such a hybrid path.

In general, it is useless to draft an identity in a contrived manner, whether this be the fervent declaration of otherness in relation to Europe, the desire for Europeanization (and its recent extension into Americanization), or the reenactment of a distant past, whether humble or glorious. What matters is for such societies not to hold up the wrong mirror(s) to themselves. (It is better that there be no mirror at all, but our excessively self-conscious global culture throws mirrors at us incessantly).

Distant voices from the past should be allowed to speak with as little contrivance as possible and mingle freely with newly acquired traits, whether idiosyncratic and local or imported. But some things do need to be strongly encouraged: The hygiene of public spaces in imitation of Europe, and the humane pace of life that sustains the health of families and friendships in contrast with Europe and United States.

The danger is for a single attitude to take over when in fact a variety of issues need to be handled with appropriately different mind-sets.

9. Gratuité and moral automatism: Readers of the *One Thousand and One Nights* or the *Brothers Grimm* may recall the frequency with which characters in those collected tales encounter gratuitous acts of goodness: Fortunes take sudden turns for the better, people at the mercy of a tyrant's whims are saved at the last moment, travelers near the brink of starvation or frostbite find food and shelter in the middle of nowhere among kind and gentle souls – often *for nothing in return.* Goodness is spread and encountered as gratuitously as something coming out of nothing in imitation of the primordial metaphysical act, the Pure Giving without which existence withdraws back into the abyss. All movement, metaphysically considered, is fundamentally gratuitous. So is life itself. This is *La gratuité,* acts of service, sacrifice, generosity, hospitality, charity, and so on, all performed without the least expectation of reward. Such *gratuité* has even been forgotten in French culture, for one does not find it easily in this sense in bilingual dictionaries. But one certainly finds it in works such as Pierre Hadot's wonderful little hook on Plotinus or Jean Giono's *The Horseman on the Roof.*

Our forgetfulness of *La gratuité* has been sealed in the oppressive climate of the justice of resentment, under whose rule the concern is mostly that one not be taken advantage of and hence that one feel entitled to reciprocity in whatever good one does. This is not to say that it is a good thing to be taken advantage of, and it goes without saying that an evil such as slavery ought to be recognized for what it is and strictly forbidden. But what we have allowed and tacitly encouraged is the steady descent of entitlements towards the farcical, pathetic or perverse, amid an excessive preoccupation with tit for tat justice that has crushed the *gratuité* that once graced our societies.

Allegedly, people feel "empowered" when the justice of resentment has been served and their entitlements recognized. But the power thereby gained is so limited by the billiard ball morality to which our morals have been reduced that such empowerment is really enfeeblement. Something worse happens: Wherever tit for tat justice reigns, wherever *La gratuité* is choked by pettiness, there can no longer be a polis, but only a colony of moral automata.

AN APPEAL FOR RE-STORIED CHILDHOODS AND AGAINST THE INFANTILISM

Richard K. Khuri

> The reason children are the future is not that they will one day be grownups. No, the reason is that mankind is moving more and more in the direction of infancy, and childhood is the image of the future. (Kundera, 186)

Images of unprecedented barbarism dominate our impressions of the twentieth century. But they may just as well be dominated by images of unprecedented infantilism. One need not choose one or the other. The two are related. After all, much of the barbarism has been inflicted on humanity by mass infantilism organized into killing machines. Any mature person who studies film footage of Nazi rallies, Stalinist mobilezation campaigns, and various outbreaks of American flag-waving that, seemingly far more benign, has caused its share of tragedies across the globe, is struck first and foremost by how childish these all are. So much for the prognostications of positivists who thought at the turn of the century that humanity would finally reach adulthood after having "outgrown" religion.

It is worth our while to remind ourselves of certain enduring images: How strange it is that loudspeakers are placed within reach of almost all people at all times in certain countries to bellow martial music and have propaganda read out with an hysterical pitch. There was no escape even for those lucky enough to join summer camps or take holidays at beach resorts. Most of us think of Stalinism and Maoism in this context, and now we believe the nightmare is firmly behind us. But is it?

Think of the emblems that define global culture and contrast them with emblems of past endeavours to expand civilizational realms as far as possible. The signs of Roman conquest are typically magnificent temples, baths and amphitheatres. Some ancient Roman roads and aqueducts were so well built that they are still in use. When Islam reached its peak in the Middle Ages, its most visible imprint was in the form of great centres of learning and worship. And today, what signifies global culture? Mickey Mouse, McDonald's arches, Nike's check mark (as though to exclusively identify the company's Products with the right choice, on top of the sophomoric association with the Greek goddess of

victory), the Coca Cola and Microsoft trademarks, and so on. The contrast between Mickey Mouse and a gothic cathedral tells us all that we need to know about contemporary priorities. We regularly receive reports about American officials who travel around the globe with nothing other than their corporate products to promote. The popularity of American goods elsewhere is often used as a measure of American influence. The lack of conviction with which most Western leaders address issues of fundamental value only underlines the bankruptcy of which we are all aware.

The trouble is that the sincere desire to bring twentieth century barbarism to an end was not purged from twentieth century infantilism. Just as ideas of global domination, whether fascist or Communist, are childish, so is the idea of global peace that arose in reaction to it. The infantile psychology that lay behind the idea of global peace to which we have become bound has made it inevitable that our world should be turned into a gigantic amusement park. We are now forced to live with an amusement park mentality. And precisely because it has grown in the same sullen ambience as totalitarianism, the amusement park mentality does not exude festiveness. Fairs, feasts, parades and carnivals had genuine roots in the lives and cultures of various peoples. They were typically associated with meaningful events and punctuated the ordinary rhythms of life with a true sense of occasion from which flowed joy and merry-making. The amusement park, however, is self-consciously stand-ardized and has become available all the time. It goes no further than the commercial exploitation of a child's need for fun. The debasement of a child's spontaneous instinct for fun and play through commercialism sets the tone for the conversion of childhood into infantilism. Infantilism is the perversion of childhood.

And now, we can once more ask the question left unanswered: Is it any easier for us to escape the amusement park mentality than it was for Communist citizens from Czechoslovakia to North Korea to escape those bellowing loudspeakers? Is it any easier to experience silence, thoughtfulness, contemplation, to author one's life rather than just be a character in it? Childish motifs adorn many a man-made object: Nashville has a 'Batman" skyscraper, Houston another shaped like a jukebox. Corporate trademarks are spread far and wide. And now there is the ultimate medium for the amusement park mentality: the Internet, where infantilism begins with the sounds emitted and the clutter of symbols that appear as soon as one switches on the computer. The composition of great science and poetry is thus being consigned to a toy.

The Internet also has negative consequences for human relation-ships. Its promoters will have us believe that it reunites friends and relatives separated by enormous distances, that it creates unparalleled opportunities for "meeting". But the Internet cannot possibly sustain the

intangibles that make human relationships what they are: countenance, tone of voice, fragrance, diction, a special sense of place and atmos-phere, innumerable gestures, heartfelt solidarity, conversa-tional rhythm. One already notices the degree to which these are missing or diluted during telephone conversations. For letters to adequately convey the richness of human interaction, a serious literary effort is required. The Internet is already inferior to these with regard to the level of human interaction that it can sustain. It encourages stunted human relationships, confined to exchanges of information mostly in the narrow sense. It may accelerate the coming together of like-minded individuals, but it is a weak medium for the emotional, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions of their interactions.

We can go on at great length with our depiction of twentieth century infantilism. But we should turn to an analysis of the reasons for it on the way towards finding possible solutions. The association between the infantile aspect of the emergent global culture of peace and totalitarian infantilism has already been made. In an important sense, world war and world peace grew in the same childish soil. But infanti-lism has deeper roots. Before we briefly examine these, we must bear in mind certain distinctions: To be a child and to be childish are different things. It is wonderful for a child to be a child, rather less so for one to be infantile. But for adults to be infantile en masse is grotesque. This is where the problem lies: Children can no longer be children, are unable to be children, and thus turn infantile as adults. Here are a few suggestions why.

Children today live in a world of things in the crudest material sense. They are surrounded with material objects whose symbolic meaning grows thinner by the year. Not so long ago, they were at least able to reenact battles with monumental consequences; set up their own theatre with costumes or puppets; discover the world of magic often with no more than a deck of cards or a kaleidoscope; play board games that represented a wide variety of human concerns, from the rush to publish the best story ("Scoop") and the solution of crimes ("Cluedo") to world travel ("Go, Traveler") and business competition ("Monopoly"); or put together dollhouses exquisitely crafted by hand, such is the skill with which miniature furniture was made that it is now displayed in some European museums. Toys today have overwhelmingly commercial import, signifying their manufacturers before all else, sought only in response to successful advertising campaigns, for instance spin-off products from "blockbuster" movies.

The underlying reasons for the crudely material world of things inhabited by children in affluent countries has to do with the cause/effect mentality that has dominated the modern world. Whatever cannot be captured by an infantile scheme of cause and effect is consigned to the

margins of human consciousness (according to the epistemological monism alluded to in the first part of this paper). But it is children above all who disregard the childish reasoning according to cause and effect that has been imposed so ruthlessly. Children are children only when they give free reign to their imagination. They are children only when they live in an enchanted world filled with legends, a world that they naturally see – if we allow them to – as brimming with spirits good and bad, a world at times kind and bounteous, at others haunted and hideous. From the Andes to Lake Baikal, children grew up in mountains and valleys that sounded mythical tones and delighted them with magical streams (Arguedas and Borodin).

The tribal motifs and gargoyles that adorn many human dwellings from sub-Saharan Africa to Great Britain are remnants of an enchanted world. Today, we reject ornament, revive it with flagrant falseness, or allow buildings to become embellished with advertisements. This does not make for enchantment, although brilliant efforts like Italo Calvino's in *Marcovaldo* come close. In one of the stories in this collection, he makes a sign for Cognac seem almost as magical as the Peruvian sun is to the Quechua (Calvino, 71-76).

In general, myth has been banished from our world, to be replaced with scientific fairy tales based on ever more distant disruptions of intricate and very long causal chains, such as black holes, vacuum pressure, holographic universes, and extraterrestrials. Children, still children, have embraced these with their customary fervour, unaware of the acute sense of homelessness that awaits them when they realize that scientific and pseudoscientific myths all converge at the same point: Earth disenchanted.

A planet viewed with the infantile eyes of cause and effect, dull and flat, nurtures children who inhabit a world of crudely material things. In such a world, childhood has itself become stunted. The ravages suffered by family life compound the feeling of homelessness eventually brought about by the pervasive disenchantment. The current tendency is for children to be deprived of their homes at such a deep level that they are unlikely to surmount the permanent scars left within them. One tendency has become so commonplace in the most modernized countries that some barely notice it: the death of the extended family. In countries like the United States, millions of children grow up unaware of the layering of generations, their grandparents unknown to them, granduncles and grandaunts unheard of, aunts, uncles and cousins like strangers. What most are left with is the nuclear family. This too grows ever smaller, often split further by divorce and siblings who move away well before they reach adulthood.

In countries where we ordinarily look for signs of the future, all too many children have extremely limited human interaction at an age

when they could best learn how to relate to others. The tragically small numbers of people in their families are usually overworked and unable to compensate for the drastic loss of company. As if this were not enough, children are not encouraged to be themselves either. They no longer hear stories from people who are much older, and sometimes none at all. While a quiet reversal seems to be underway, television has undercut spontaneous storytelling and story making. The internet is not a good medium for making and telling stories for the same reason that it cannot sustain human relationships beyond a limited dimension: Stories have to he told in a certain way and are accompanied by a special atmosphere, all the more so if told be an aunt or grandfather. This is a primary source for the development of the imagination.

Children also develop their imagination at play. Yet the games in which a make-believe world must be actively constructed have nearly vanished. Excessive reliance on science fiction underlines this, for a healthy imagination does not need galactic dimensions in order to project itself. Simulations of reality available through computers further discourage children from using their own imagination as they once had to. One need only think of how one had to imagine distant lands and peoples before we have become inundated with documentaries and photojournalism. Despite the racial slurs and other prejudices, a Western child is far likelier to have his imagination aroused by Hergé's portrayal of the Incas in an episode of Tintin's adventures (*Le temple du soleil*) than by a politically correct television special.

The concept of play has itself become distorted in a climate of pseudo-Darwinian competitiveness obsessively centered on the market-place. When a child is forced to enter various competitions at a very young age and is taught that winning is all that counts, it loses its sense of play. A child truly at play might not want to win at all, for that signals the end of a game that it would like extended. Thus many children who played *Monopoly* often prolonged the game indefinitely by preventing their competitors from going bankrupt and allowing them to borrow repeatedly, which meant that the game was only broken when they were called home by their parents. It did not really matter who won. But a child that must compete for pre-school, music or dance lessons, and a place on a sports team when it barely has the coordination to participate in that sport, is not allowed to develop a proper concept of play. It is prematurely inducted into an adult competitive mentality. Moreover, childhoods are tarnished by premature exposure to the adult world throughout most modernized countries. And since the adults who impose this are nowadays themselves victims of stunted childhoods, it is largely infantile. Children not allowed to be children will thus fall back later into a deformed childhood.

All at once, children age prematurely and adults exhibit a grotesque childishness. So contemporary global culture becomes infantile, to the degree that adults who could never be children and children who might never become adults define our global culture. This sounds like – and probably is – a vicious circle. Can it be broken?

The good will of children must not be overestimated. But it must not be underestimated either. Towards the end of Andrei Makine's beautifully written *Dreams of My Russian Summers,* the person around whose childhood memories the novel revolves discovers that he was born in a concentration camp as a result of favours that an imprisoned young woman had to bestow upon her warden. The young woman later dies and the child is given up for adoption. The child grows up believing that its adopted family is its real family. Most important for us, until the revelation of the circumstances of his birth, the narrator retains the memory of the barbed wire of the Gulag not as such, but as gossamer threads in the taiga illumined by the Siberian autumn sun, a fond memory that returns in his adolescence when he becomes infatuated with a girl at a communist training camp in the forest.

Given half a chance, children will bathe their world with wonder. The narrator in Makine's novel could turn a tragic infancy into what seems to have been a happy childhood because he did have a happy childhood with his adopted family, especially his French adopted grandmother, who created an enchanted world for him with various fragments from her life and education in France (Makine). While it is far easier said than done, we need to encourage adults to create surroundings in which children can really play and give free reign to their imagination, surroundings uncluttered with heaps of meaningless material things and torrents of idiotic and stultifying messages transmitted through various media. Children need to be told stories that inspire them to make up their own. They need to *see* the world as a place full of life and not be told that at second or third hand. Above all, they need the human warmth that brings out the good in them and lays the ground for healthy adulthood.

A global peace that is mature is built on children who can be themselves and thus become adults who no longer hunger for unrealized childhoods and thus sink into infantilism. But we must remain realistic and accept that the present world economic order will not tolerate such measures, for the consumerist frenzy into which we have driven ourselves would be severely curtailed by extended families and friendships, in which healthy human interaction has time to unfold and sustain a culture that makes room for real play and assigns a special place to the imagination. Nothing less than a revolutionary change in current economic thought and practice is necessary for children to be themselves, for them to have homes, for the return of an environment

that nurtures and supports childhood rather than infantilism. However, since our century has brought forth the evils of revolutionary action, it remains to be seen how revolutionary change might occur without causing greater harm than that which it seeks to prevent. On the other hand, evolutionary social and economic changes have contributed to the stunted childhoods of our times. So it is equally harmful to do nothing at all. There is as yet no blueprint for change. Nor is it clear that one is desirable. But a few definite steps that hold some promise must be taken.

One decisive step that can be taken is a move away from globalism. The problem with globalism is that t it creates intolerance for the complexity of human life. Globalists have no time for local idiosyncrasies and the multifaceted nature of human aspirations. The globalist mentality pushes everything towards oversimplification. Think about it for a moment: What travels best of all, across every conceivable cultural boundary? Only two kinds of things: whatever is of universal importance to humanity, and whatever is so shallow that it does not touch on anything important. Suppose we said that religion were a good example of something of universal importance. But then, the religious life of an individual is no simple matter. Even if its fundamental elements were spelled out irrespective of local or personal differences, as has been the case with every world religion, a close study of the evolution of world religions will show just how far their representatives have had to go in accommodating their preaching and teaching to local realities. A lot of effort is required for a religion to truly sink in among *real* individuals. Conversely, the contemporary tendency to standardize world religions like Islam is a good demonstration of how a religion becomes impoverished, certainly with regard to the internal dimensions of the lives of the faithful. Before modern communications and politico-economic developments made it possible to standardize Islam, the lives of the faithful were far richer.

What is of universal importance thus only travels well if a lot of time and effort were devoted to help it sink in given the complexity of human life. No such time and effort are required for what is universal on account of its shallowness. People drawn in to their television sets and computers as they are drawn out of their inner lives can be enticed to consume Disney products and drink Pepsi wherever they are. Since human beings prefer what is easy to what is hard given the choice, globalism can only result in oversimplification, which translates itself into a kind of infantilism. This, in addition to what has been mentioned about the secondary effects of the infantile culture that had given rise to totalitarianism, is another way that the project of global peace has been deformed.

Originally, members of cultural elites who understood the futility of world war conceived that project. Perhaps they unconsciously

imagined such a peace among their own kind. This is the legacy of DeGaulle and Adenauer. We can already see how the standards of that peace have fallen with succeeding generations of French and German leaders, from DeGaulle to Chirac and Sarkozy, and Adenauer to Kohl and Schröder (The jury is still out on Merkel). Among the population at large, it has turned into a farce. European peace is far too preoccupied with a collective consumerism overseen by bureaucrats who periodically hold esoteric financial discussions in Brussels. The same logic is being extended elsewhere, thanks in no small measure to the government of the United States and organizations such as the International Monetary Fund. It seems that football has become a main source of excitement among the population at large, an excitement that has obviously turned into a longing for the days of conquest and war among North Europeans, particularly the English, the Germans, and the Dutch, with Spain and Italy not too far "behind", indeed "catching up".

The only way that global infantilism can be reversed is to either reverse or radically modify globalism. The only way that the culture of global peace can be a peace among adults is to distinguish between global peace and globalism. Globalism is not a necessary condition for global peace. A more mature peace can be attained through the recognition of important differences between cultures and individuals and their various complexities and profundities. It may be better to think in terms of global coexistence or harmony than global peace, for the latter often presupposes beings far shallower than us. Alternatively, we may think in terms of a culture of global tolerance or acceptance if we like the word 'global' so much. In such a culture, it would be perfectly normal for people not to stand one another other and only put up with the situation in which they find themselves. A culture that imagines interactions without the least ill-feelings, quarrels, sharp arguments and other expressions of unpleasantness between diverse individuals and groups would be a new kind of Gulag, one without barbed wire and armed guards, but with the means to create atrophied psyches and souls worldwide. Let us remember that brothers are often not only best friends, but best enemies as well. Like brothers, we must live together and sometimes even love one another although we may intensely disagree.

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MERLEAU-PONTY:
THE BODY AS A WORK OF ART

VILMA SLIUZAITE

INTRODUCTION

Maurice Merleau-Ponty was interested not only in phenome-nology but also in art, particularly painting. He refers to modern painters such as Alberto Giacometti, Paul Klee, Juan Gris, Braque, Picasso and Cézanne as doing the same kind of job as the phenomenologist. In his analysis of the art of painting during the very end of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth, Merleau-Ponty shows how painting relates to the perception of the body and the world. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, he concludes that "The body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art."[1]

However, Eric Matthews rightly notices that it is not easy to answer why modern art represents "the world of perception" best.[2] It seems that modern painting does not portray a real view of the world. In modern art, especially impressionism and cubism, things seem to be distorted: there are no sharp outlines or natural colors; the shapes and arrangements of things do not correspond to what we see in reality. Particularly in cubist painting, objects are broken up and re-assembled into abstracted forms. Instead of depicting objects from one viewpoint, modern painters paint things from various angles and create a view which differs from what we naturally see. For example, in many of Picasso paintings the surfaces are intersected with seemingly random angles, which do not present any coherent sense of depth; the background and objects interpenetrate one another and create the ambiguous shallow space typical of cubism.

Paul Cézanne, to whom Merleau-Ponty pays much attention, traditionally is named as one who formed the bridge between late 19th century Impressionism and early 20th century's new style of painting, Cubism. Therefore, although Cézanne uses the vivid unnatural colors of Impressionism, as a Post-Impressionist painter he re-stores a sense of order and structure to the painting rejected by Impressionism. On the

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[1] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 171.

[2] Eric Matthews, *Merleau-Ponty: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London and New York: Continuum, 2006), p. 136.

other hand, if we look at the paintings of Cézanne's final period, we will see that he breaks the painted surface into small multiple pieces and simplifies natural forms into cylinders, cones, and spheres, trying to emphasize the plural view given by binocular vision.

On the contrary, classical art gives a very realistic view of things. One of the distinguishing features of Renaissance art is its development of highly realistic representation of figures and objects in painting and sculpture. For example, in the works of painters such as Sandro Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, or Raphael, we see the ideal lines of the human body and harmony of nature. Matthews charact-erizes Renaissance painting in the following words: "It [Renaissance painting] presents things in perspective:…objects have firm outlines and definite colours, the colours that things 'naturally' have – snow is white, grass is green, and so on; things are arranged in space as we would normally expect them to be, and so on."[3]

How then could Merleau-Ponty compare the body to the work of modern art?

A CRITIQUE OF CLASSICAL SCIENCES AND MODERN PHILOSOPHY

According to Merleau-Ponty, perception has never been ade-quately understood by classical sciences and modern philosophy. That is why he, on the one hand, opposes empiricism, experimental science, rationalism and idealism, since none of them disclose adequately the phenomenon of perception.

He is sharply critical of the subject-object dichotomy. In the *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty points out that for empiri-cism everything takes place only in the objective world, whereas the *subject* as such disappears. He says, "The perceiving subject ceases to be an 'acosmic' thinking subject, and action, feeling and will remain to be explored as original ways of positing an object."[4] Moreover, in the *Eye and Mind*, Merleau-Ponty ascribes certain properties to science: "Science manipulates things and gives up living them…it comes face to face with the real world only at rare intervals…[science's] fundamental bias is to treat everything as though it were an object-in-general – as though it meant nothing to us and yet was predestined for our own use."[5]

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[3] *Ibid.*, 136.

[4] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 28.

[5] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," in *The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty*, edited by Alden L. Fisher (New York, Chicago: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969), p. 252.

On the contrary, intellectualism moves to an absolute subjectivism and by doing so, it rejects the existence of objectivism. Thus, both empiricism and intellectualism misrepresent the *phenomenon* of perception: "Empiricism does so because it makes of the subject an object in the objective world where there is consequently *no one* who perceives. Intellectualism does so because it makes of perception an operation of thought, an act by which an absolute consciousness projects before itself 'a universe perfectly explicit in itself.'"[6]

Merleau-Ponty argues that "subject" and "object" are not two different sorts of reality. He calls us to return to the *phenomena*, that is, to the world as we actually experience it as *embodied subjects*. Merleau-Ponty makes the body the central theme in his philosophical analysis and presents the philosophy of *the lived body* or *the body subject*. His main argument is that the lived body is not an object in the world, distinct from the knowing subject (as, for example, we have in Descartes' thought): we exist as *body-subjects* who act in the physical world. We have self-knowledge as *body-subjects* neither by thinking about our bodies nor by observing them, but by *being* them. Merleau-Ponty shows that one's body is not only a thing, a potential object of study for science, but that it is also a permanent condition of experience; the body is that by which we are in contact with the world. For example, he says, "The body is the vehicle of being in the world, and having a body is, for a living creature, to be intervolved in a definitive environment, to identify oneself with certain projects and to be continually committed to them."[7]

The essential point Merleau-Ponty makes is that the body is a *unity*. He argues against both intellectualism and empiricism. Intellectualism, he says, denies the contribution of the senses to the experiences of the world; it does not entail a concept of sensations and senses because it is only through the act of reason that the objectivity can be achieved; thus, for intellectualism "there are not the senses, but only consciousness."[8] The inadequacy of empiricism, he says, consists in its loss of the unity of the senses; it does not see that "the sensory aspects of my body are immediately and mutually symbolical, precisely because my body is a ready-made system of equivalents and transpositions from one sense to another."[9] We experience the body as *an organic whole* which is not constructed, but has been given to us as a whole in our lived experience. Merleau-Ponty says the same about our perception of the

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[6] Gary Brent Madison, *The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1981), p. 20.

[7] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 94.

[8]*Ibid*., p. 252.

[9]*Ibid*., p. 273.

world: we do not assemble our perceived world piece by piece, but perceive the whole of the world (Merleau-Ponty presents a *Gestalt* psychology, which rejects the atomistic account of perception found in classical psychology.)

Furthermore, Merleau-Ponty criticizes classical sciences and philosophy for failing adequately to describe the nature of the interaction between body and world. Merleau-Ponty strongly opposes the divorce between the body and the world; for him, the lived body and the world are correlative. He reveals this idea very clearly in the beginning of the second part of the *Phenomenology of Perception*: "Our own body is in the world as the heart is in the organism: it keeps the visible spectacle constantly alive, it breathes life into it and sustains it inwardly, and with it forms a system."[10]

Merleau-Ponty offers his own phenomenological account: the account of man's "being-in-the-world": "it is not only an experience of my body, but an experience of my body-in-the-world."[11] Thus, for Merleau-Ponty, there is an internal relation between the perceived world and the lived body; the world and the body together constitute *one inseparable system*. It follows then that the perception of the body is at the same time the perception of the world.

Merleau-Ponty examines the interrelation between the lived body and the world by going into a discussion of space. He holds that the classical conception of space – that of Newtonian physics, which is based on the conception of "absolute" space within which physical objects have an absolute location and can move around without any change of their intrinsic physical properties – is misleading.[12] According to Merleau-Ponty, it is false to think of the body-subject as being *in* space. He prefers to speak of the body-subject as *of* space: "To be a body, is to be tied to a certain world…our body is not primarily *in* space: it is of it."[13] As a body-subject a man has his own subjective spatiality. In *being-in-the world*, body-subject and space mutually constitute one another. Thus, "everything throws us back onto the organic relations between subject and space, to that hold of the subject on the world which is the origin of space."[14]

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[10] *Ibid.*, p. 235.

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 163-4.

[12] See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 17. Seven talks were written by Merleau-Ponty for a series of the French national radio and delivered by him in 1948. These talks were recorded and kept at the Institut National de l'Audiovisuel. In 1948, his talks were published in French as *Causeries*. In 2004, they were published in English by title *The World of Perception*.

[13] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 171.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 291.

In summary, we see that for Merleau-Ponty the body is a phenomenon of special importance. We can say that the central theme of his philosophy is the clarification of the significance of the body in relation to self, to others, and to the world. His main criticism of classical sciences and modern philosophy consists in their disregard of the body, which is considered just another object in the world.

We will now reflect on how Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the body and his fascination with modern painting work together.

PAINTING AND THE BODY

In the *Eye and Mind*, Merleau-Ponty cites a French essayist and philosopher Paul Valéry: "The painter 'takes his body with him.'"[15] The painter is not betrayed by the illusion of disembodiment that may afflict the writer, and especially the philosopher. [16] "Indeed," he continues, "we cannot imagine how a *mind* could paint. It is by lending his body to the world that the artist changes the world into paintings."[17] "I am not in front of my body, I am in it, or rather I am it,"[18] says Merleau-Ponty. We cannot even think that we may exist without our bodies. Without my body, I have no existence. Merleau-Ponty says, "the body expresses existence at every moment…not because it [the body] is an external accompaniment to that existence, but because existence realizes itself in the body."[19] Because 'I am a body,' I am able to be in contact with the physical world; I am able to express myself and I am able to perceive other bodies. "It is through my body," says Merleau-Ponty, "that I understand other people, just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things.'"[20]

Because of my body I am *body-subject*, I am the perceiver and perceived, I am the seer and seen. Thus, "Saying that I have a body is…a way of saying that I can be seen as an object and that I try to be seen as a

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[15] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 255.

[16] Marjorie Grene, "The Sense of Things," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 38, No. 4 (Summer, 1980): 385.

[17] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 255.

[18] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 173.

[19] *Ibid*., p. 192.

[20] *Ibid.*, p. 216. "Other human beings are never pure spirit for me: I only know them through their glances, their gestures, their speech – in other words, through their bodies. Of course *another human being* is certainly more that simply a body to me: rather, this other is a body animated by all manner of intentions, the origin of numerous actions and words…Another person, for us, is a spirit which haunts a body and we seem to see a whole host of possibilities contained within this body when it appears before us; the body is the very presence of these possibilities." Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 83.

subject…"[21] To disclose the *body-subject* phenomena, Merleau-Ponty uses the analogy of the painter's act of seeing. There is a sense in which things "look at" the painter, rather than the other way around. Merleau-Ponty refers to a French painter André Marchand who shows that sometimes the roles between him and the visible are reversed. Marchand says: "In a forest, I have felt many times over that it was not I who looked at the forest. Some days I felt that the trees were looking at me, were speaking to me…I was there, listening…I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it."[22]

Moreover, Merleau-Ponty finds the analogy of seeing oneself in the mirror helpful in understanding the concept of being *body-subject*. He says: "The mirror itself is the instrument of a universal magic that changes things into a spectacle, spectacles into things, myself into another, and another into myself."[23] Because of this "magic trick," artists like to contemplate while sitting in front of the mirror. In the mirror, they recognize the metamorphosis of seeing and being seen. This explains, Merleau-Ponty says, why painters have always been interested in painting themselves. What the painter gives us in the self-portrait is not just things-there but thing-to-be-seen and the seer-seeing.

For Merleau-Ponty, modern art exemplifies most clearly the expressivity of the body. To be a body means to be a manifestation. Marjorie Grene notes that in the thought of Merleau-Ponty "…the uniqueness of human existence lies in the way in which the body becomes (and has become) expressive, and second, the expressiveness of the body is most evident in the way in which the artist and especially the painter work."[24] The artist, by definition, is a *creator*; he creates things – a painting, a movie, a novel, and so on – which then exist independently of their creator. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that "art is not imitation…It is a process of *expressing*."[25] Art thus is the *expression of a meaning*.

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[21] *Ibid.*, p. 193.

[22] Op. cit. Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 261.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 262.

[24] Grene, "The Sense of Things," p. 385.

[25] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's doubt," in *The Essential Writings of Merleau-Ponty*, edited by Alden L. Fisher (New York, Chicago: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1969), p. 242. Making reference to a French post-impressionist painter Emile Bernard, Merleau-Ponty states that "a realistic painter is only an ape "and therefore his work is "precisely the opposite of the truth." See Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's doubt," p. 241. Merleau-Ponty also cites a famous French cubist painter, Georges Braque, who says that painting does not strive to "reconstitute an anecdote" but rather "to constitute a pictorial event." See Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 96.

But does that mean, Eric Matthews asks, that artists are doing no more than express *themselves* in the work which they create?[26] What is the relation between the painter and the things, which he expresses in the paintings? On the one hand, we should agree that the painter starts from where he or she is, from his or her individual personality, that is, the painter's personality is expressed in the paintings. The painter paints the world as he experiences it, as he lives through it. The painter paints the world "as it is," which means "as it is for him." Merleau-Ponty says, "Although it is certain that a man's life does not *explain* his work, it is equally certain that the two are connected. The truth is that *this work to be done called for this life*."[27] Merleau-Ponty considers this issue using the example of Cézanne, who had a personality that many people might classify as schizophrenic. As Matthews notices, Cézanne had difficulties with ordinary human relationships and, that is why, one can see his extremely close attention to inanimate nature and the impersonal character of his paintings.[28] His paintings, Merleau-Ponty notes, suspends our usual habit of seeing things only through our human use and "reveals the base of inhuman nature upon which man has installed himself."[29]

On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty does not see the problem of modern art as an exaggerated expression of individualism in an act of creation. According to Merleau-Ponty, modern art is neither the imitation of the visible world nor the expression of individual taste. Although the painter's individuality is expressed in the works, the works transcend the painter as an individual. Gary Brent Madison says: "What is expressed in his [Cézanne's] work is neither mere 'sensations' nor an 'in-itself' reality, but the primordial encounter of man and the world, the moment when they *mutually come into being*, one as perceiving, the other as perceived."[30] Modern painting thus has to do with what it means for man to look at the world, understand it, and represent it. We can say that modern painting is a report of a *process of perceiving* the physical world.

Painting is the *language* expressed on canvas between the painter and the world. The act of painting is a reflection on being in the world; it is the expression of "communication with the world;"[31] it is the response

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[26] Eric Matthews, *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty* (Washington, D.C.: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), p. 139.

[27] Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's doubt," p. 245.

[28] Matthews, *The Philosophy of Merleau-Ponty*, p. 139.

[29] Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's doubt," p. 241.

[30] Madison, *The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty*, p. 80.

[31] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, translated by Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: NorthWestern University Press, 1964), p. 55.

the painter makes to the "call" of things, to the "questioning" of the world.[32] Merleau-Ponty notes that painting is an expression of the nature of being not only because what is is visible, and thus painting depicts the visible through the visible, but rather because only "a human being is capable of such a vision which penetrates right to the root of things. Everything indicates that animals cannot *look at* things, cannot penetrate them in expectation of nothing but the truth."[33]

Merleau-Ponty opposes the view that Cézanne's paintings do not express the depth of things. Referring to the modern painters Alberto Giacometti and Robert Delaunay, he says: "I believe Cézanne was seeking depth all his life" when "Depth is the new inspiration."[34] In other words, the depth of Being expressed in modern painting "is still new, it insists on being sought, not 'once in lifetime' but all through life."[35] Even though all things in the world are finite forms, at the same time they are infinite. There is a mystery at the heart of things, which never can be disclosed fully. The painter thus is in a constant never-ending dialog with the world; he reaches beyond the visual objects and gives visual existence to what is invisible. That is why, when Merleau-Ponty speaks of modern art, he says that not only works of art are unfinished, but also the world they express is like a work which lacks a conclusion.[36]

Another feature of perception, Merleau-Ponty brings out, is that our bodies function as a whole in our active involvement with the world. Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that there is unity of the senses; the senses communicate with each other; and they are united by an act of intellectual synthesis. He puts this in the *Phenomenology of Perception* in the following way: "The various parts of my body, its visual, tactile and motor aspects are not simply co-ordinated…I do not bring together one by one the parts of my body; this translation and this unification are performed once and for all within me: they are my body, itself."[37] Or he says: "We do not merely behold as spectators the relations between the parts of our body, and the correlations between the visual and tactile

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[32] *Ibid.*, p. 58.

[33] Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's doubt," p. 241. "A Cartesian can believe that the existing world is not visible, that the only light is that of the mind…A painter cannot grant that our openness to the world is illusory or indirect, that what we see is not the world itself, or that the mind has to do only with its thoughts or with another mind." Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 282.

[34] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 274.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 274.

[36] See Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 108.

[37] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 173.

body: we are ourselves the unifier of these arms and legs, the person who both sees and touches them."[38]

Merleau-Ponty again refers to Cézanne, who says that part of the content of a painted landscape is the very smell of the countryside that it depicts, which means that the color of the thing is not independent of its shape, its tactile properties, its resonance, or its smell. The painter *sees* the depth, the smoothness, the softness, the hardness of things. Cézanne even says that we see the odor of the things.[39] Merleau-Ponty, therefore, concludes that in attempting to paint the landscape, the painter has to recognize the synthesis of his different senses because "if a phenomenon…strikes only one of my senses, it is a mere phantom, and it will come near to real existence only if…it becomes capable of speaking to my other senses."[40]

However, a painting is not something produced as the passive effect of Being on the senses of the painter. In "Cézanne's Doubt," Merleau-Ponty says that Cézanne never thought he had to choose between feeling and thought; he never wished to "paint like a savage;" on the contrary, he wanted to put intelligence and ideas.[41] As a painter Frenhofer, in Balzac's "The Unknown Masterpiece," says: "A hand is not simply part of the body, but the expression and continuation of a thought which must be captured and conveyed…That is the real struggle! Many painters triumph instinctively unaware of this theme of art! You draw a woman, but you do not see her."[42] Thus, by using the analogy of art, Merleau-Ponty shows that the body exists as one unity, where there is no separation of the senses and no separation between sense and mind.

Merleau-Ponty also emphasizes the idea of *whole* when he talks of one's perception of the world: first, we do not perceive the properties of things in separate pieces and only later combine them into a whole; second, we always perceive things in relation to a certain background. Merleau-Ponty argues that it is impossible to separate things from their way of appearing. The *unity* of things does not lie behind their qualities but each of their qualities is the whole. Cézanne, for instance, says that we should be able to paint the smell of trees.[43] Merleau-Ponty states: "The unity of the object will remain a mystery for as long as we think of its various qualities…as just so many dates belonging to the entirely

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[39] See Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," p. 240.
[40] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 371.
[41] Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," p. 238.
[42] *Ibid.*, p. 243.
[43] See, Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 62.

distinct worlds of sight, smell, touch and so on."[44] It is impossible to completely describe the color of things "without implying in this color a certain tactile value, a certain weight and a certain resistance to sound."[45] This is why Cézanne does not try to use color to *suggest* the tactile sensations which would give shape and depth. "These distinctions between touch and sight," Merleau-Ponty notes, "are unknown in primordial perception. It is only as a result of a science of the human body that we finally learn to distinguish between our senses."[46]

The things of the world are not only individual objects which stand before us for our contemplation but, as Cézanne says, there is the particular 'halo' of things, which the painter has to capture. Making reference to Cézanne, Merleau-Ponty says: "The outline and the color are no longer distinct; in proportion as one paints, one outlines, and the more the color is harmonized, the more definite the outline becomes…when the color is at its richest, the form is complete."[47] In modern painting, although each thing has its own small world, it reveals itself within the larger world. Paintings reveal the world, which is a mass without gaps; the world, which is a system of colors.

A CRITIQUE OF THE CLASSICAL CONCEPT OF SPACE

Merleau-Ponty criticizes the classical concept of space for its clear distinction between space and the physical world. Space is seen by classical science as an unchangeable medium in which things are placed and in which they remain the same regardless of their position. Merleau-Ponty says, "the fields of geometry and physics remain entirely distinct: the form and content of the world do not mix."[48]

It is very interesting that Merleau-Ponty associates the "classical" conception of space, that is, a Newtonian one, with that which is found in classical painting. He shows that in classical painting, as in classical science, we have an absolute distinction between space and things. Classical painting, he says, distinguishes between outline and color: "the artist draws the spatial pattern of the object before filling it with color."[49] In classic painting, objects are depicted as they are viewed under a gaze directed at a point of a horizon, what Merleau-Ponty calls "a gaze fixed

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[44] *Ibid*., pp. 59-60.

[45] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 376.

[46] Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt," p. 240.

[47] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 377.

[48] Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception,* p. 50.

[49] *Ibid*., p. 51.

at infinity."[50] The viewer is under the impression that he sees the view in the picture as through a window. That is why, such paintings "have a peaceful look" and they "remain at a distance and do not involve the viewer."[51]

However, Merleau-Ponty argues, "it is not how the world appears when we encounter it in perception."[52] For Merleau-Ponty space is not something 'out there,' something that "remains absolutely in itself, everywhere equal to itself, homogeneous."[53] On the contrary, it is something that is implied in the body's very constitution and way of orienting itself. Merleau-Ponty concludes: "It is, rather, a space reckoned starting from me as the zero point or degree zero of spatiality. I do not see it according to its exterior envelope; I live in it from the inside; I am immersed in it. After all, the world is around me, not in front of me."[54]

We are not just pure disembodied subjects, and that is why our relationship to space cannot be understood as relations of pure disembodied subjects to objects surrounding us. Therefore, Merleau-Ponty argues that space is not just a medium of simultaneous objects that are apprehended by "an absolute observer" who remains close to them, who "is a medium without point of view, without body and without spatial position – in sum, the medium of pure intellect."[55] Merleau-Ponty shows that the space of modern painting is space in which we too are located, space with which we are organically connected, "space which the heart feels."[56] He quotes a French writer, Paul Paulhan, who speaks of modern

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[50] *Ibid.*, p. 53. For example, Merleau-Ponty characterizes classical painting in the following way: "This means that when a painter is confronted by, for example, a landscape, he chooses to depict on his canvas an entirely conventional representation of what he sees…On the canvas, he arranges things such that what he represents is no more than a compromise between these various different visual impressions: he strives to find a common denominator to all these perceptions by rendering each object not with the size, colors and aspect it presents when the painter fixes it in his gaze but rather with the conventional size and aspect that it would present in a gaze directed at a particular vanishing point on the horizon, a point in relation to which the landscape is then arranged along lines running from the painter to the horizon." *Ibid.*, p. 53.

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

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

[53] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 268. In *The World of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty says: "We can no longer draw an absolute distinction between space and the things which occupy it, nor indeed between the pure idea of space and the concrete spectacle it presents to our senses." P. 51.

[54] *Ibid.*, p. 273. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty also says: "It [the space] is already built into my bodily structure, and is its inseparable correlative." P. 164.

[55] Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 54.

[56] Here, Merleau-Ponty cites the words of a French writer, Jean Paulhan.

painting in the following way: "it may well be that in an age devoted to technical measurement and, as it were, consumed by quantity, the cubism painter is quietly celebrating – in a space attuned more to the heart than the intellect – the marriage and reconciliation of man with the world.'"[57]

As body-subjects, we are situated in a concrete space and time. That is why we see things around us only from a limited perspective, that is, our perspective. Merleau-Ponty refers to modern art, especially Cézanne's painting, as a means which helps to see the world differently. He shows that Cézanne's works transform earlier ideals of perspective, particularly single-point perspective. He demonstrates how through the distribution of color Cézanne gives liveliness to the objects and by doing that he opposes the classical "gaze at infinity." Cézanne's paintings give the true composition of the visual world, that is, the world in which all objects are not attended to at one time from one point of view; instead the perceived world is composed by a plurality of overlapping perspectives within which different aspects are somehow seen together, as aspects of just one world.[58] Thus, although it can appear that we do not see a natural view in modern paintings, if we look more attentively we will get a feel that it is exactly how we see things around us, that is, each of these things "speaks in its own language," but at the same time not one is without the others.

In "Eye and Mind", Merleau-Ponty considers Descartes' account of perspective in his *Dioptrics*, which treats perspective in *geometric terms*, that is, as if it were merely a matter of man's relations detached from all his points of view in an objective space. Descartes' geometric conception of perspective can be called "photographic" because it treats man's relation to things like that of camera.[59] However, we do not perceive the world passively, but are actively involved with it. In Cézanne's paintings, we find a new perspective; not a geometric or photographic one but one named by modern psychologists, 'lived perspective.' Merleau-Ponty speaks of Cézanne as one who is engaged in a kind of phenomenological research in his attempt adequately to depict perspective in his painting. By means of this research, he corrects the errors of a more 'objectivist' philosophy' and the science based on it. He shows that the world in which we live as body-subjects is given to us as already having meaning. Thus, the meaning of things is not originated through our mind, but is there already *in* the things.

The beauty of Merleau-Ponty's discussion of space, Brendan Prendeville notes, consists in the disclosure of the interdependence

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[57] Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 54.

[58] *Ibid*., pp. 18-19.

[59] See Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," pp. 263-8.

between the body and the world, which means that their interrelation arises from their mutuality.[60] In modern art, especially in painting, Merleau-Ponty argues, we can feel how the painter, as embodied, is a *part* of the world, not *apart from* it, perceiving it from outside. His vision is thus not an abstract or conceptual thought, and paintings are not mere indirect representations of the world. The painter experiences a different kind of vision: "The painter's vision is not from *outside*, a merely "physical-optical" relation with the world. The world no longer stands before him through representation: rather, it is the painter to whom the things of the world give birth by a sort of concentration coming-to-itself of the visible."[61] Merleau-Ponty refers to modern painting, since it "thrusts us once again into the presence of the world of lived experience…it led us back to a vision of things themselves."[62] In the work of Cézanne, Georges Braque, Juan Gris, or Picasso, says Merleau-Ponty, we encounter objects that do not pass quickly before our eyes, as if we knew them well but, on the contrary, they hold our gaze, they speak to us, they "stand 'bleeding' before us" provoking us to ask questions of them.

Marjorie Grene rightly notes that the question of how the concepts of the lived body and painting belong together in Merleau-Ponty's thought can be answered only if being-in-the-world is taken as the frame of the reflection about human being.[63] Merleau-Ponty chooses the analogy of modern art because it shows man's contact with the world in *living* it, rather than in thinking about it. Modern art is a representation of the truth; it leads us back to "a vision of things themselves."[64] It is not surprising why Merleau-Ponty says: "Philosophy is not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing truth into being."[65] For Merleau-Ponty, truth can be discovered only through engagement with the world; it does not consist only in ideas, as suggested by Descartes. We are able to grasp the truth because we are in the world; 'to be-in-the-world' for Merleau-Ponty means 'to be-in-truth." That is why,

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[60] Brendan Prendeville, "Merleau-Ponty, Realism and Painting: Psychophysical Space and the Space of Exchange" *Art History* Vol. 22, No. 3 (September 1999): 371. "We noticed for the first time, with regard to our own body, what is true of all perceived things: that the perception of space and the perception of the thing, the spatiality of the thing and its being as a thing are not two distinct problems." Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 171.

[61] Merleau-Ponty, "Eye and Mind," p. 276.

[62] Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, p. 93.

[63] Grene, "The Sense of Things," p. 378.

[64] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, p. 93.

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

Merleau-Ponty concludes: "We experience a *participation in the world*, and 'being-in-truth' is indistinguishable from being-in-the-world."[66]

In summary, a work of art reveals and expresses the body as the *manifestation*; it shows that the body can be expressed only through being in relations with other bodies, only through being-in-the-world. Modern art shows that we are not "strangers" in the world, but are constituent parts of one whole unity. That is why, in agreement with Merleau-Ponty, we conclude: "A novel, poem, picture or musical work are individuals, that is, beings in which the *expression* is indistinguishable from the thing *expressed*, their meaning, accessible only through *direct contact*, being radiated with no change of their temporal and spatial situation. It is in this sense that our body is compared to a work of art."[67]

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[66] *Ibid*., p. 459.
[67] *Ibid*., p. 175.

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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 Research 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.

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