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**HISTORY
AND
CULTURAL IDENTITY**
Retrieving the Past, Shaping the Future

Edited by
John P. Hogan

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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FORWARD

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND HISTORY

DAVID N. POWER

One of the principal ways in which peoples, ethnic groups, and religions, express their sense of origins, of destiny, of identity, and of communal belonging, is through the narration of their history. It is with this that they associate many of their rituals and symbolic expressions and hopes for the future. One of the well-known assertions of post-modernity is that under the conditions of life in the world today, there is no overarching myth and no grand narrative to which people may hold; there is only a series of small and often disconnected stories. Factually, it is true that, with constant uprooting and migration and under the influence of globalization, the kind of history which tells of origins, destiny and communal belonging is difficult to unfold or to keep in place. It is also true that hitherto established perceptions of the past are called into question when its wrongdoings, mishaps, oppressions and ideologies become more apparent. For many of the peoples of the world who were subjected to colonial rule, their history has often been told through the eyes of the colonizer or overlord, but today these peoples wish to retrieve their own history as they would tell it themselves. Unfortunately, many peoples are likely to practice the false art of forgetting, of committing to oblivion what is hard to remember or that of which it is difficult to make sense. In a contrary way, peoples can also hold so tightly to gathering and retaining the signs and facts of injustice and horror that these obscure all possibilities of gathering such events into an overarching historical story that projects the possibilities of hope and reconciliation, even for and with the dead.

Given the issues at stake in elaborating a viable history today, it is all the more important to understand how history is told, what the word itself means, and how the narration of the past may be unfolded through an act of retrieving what was lost and a reversal of injustices. It is also important to heed how history is recast when minorities or oppressed groups try through historical narration to find their just place in the projection of a future, or when peoples or oppressed groups develop a postcolonial history.

This project on history has multiple tasks. In the first place, it would be helpful to consider how facts are gathered through archival research or with the aid of auxiliary sciences such as archeology or the history of art and architecture. It would also be useful to give thought to the gathering of what is known as oral history, especially among peoples whose primary mode of communication has been oral. Indeed, this might also be helpful for recent events in the story of any people, especially with relation to memories of war and disaster. One also has to look at the contours of

historical narrative, realizing that events are not factually laid out in story but interpreted through the artifices of narration and imaginative construction. In this, one is attentive to the sense of time, relating past, present and future that is built into historical narrative. How does a phenomenology of being in time and towards death converge with the narrative of history and its openness to a future of promise. One also has to ask how forgetting intersects with remembering.

In a more particular way, it would be helpful to hear postcolonial narratives through which peoples overcome the colonial narrative of their past to write it as their own and with their own perspectives. It would also be helpful to hear the narratives of those who have been oppressed or marginal to the symbolic order and the “ideal” history, such as feminist history, the story of Europe’s new immigrants, the story of slaves on the North American continent, the story of programmatic discrimination such as that practiced against Jewish peoples or under systems of apartheid, the story of peoples whose land was taken over by foreign invasion. How some writers have more recently written the story of childhood, the story of aging, or the story of illness, the story of death, the story of penal systems, could be examined to see how all this fits into the larger story of civilizations.

For religions in particular, given that on the world scene they have been and are the cause of conflict, the history of religions, general and particular, has to be written in a way that offers new understandings of religions’ origins, of past religious conflict, and new promise of reconciliation and mutual understanding. In this, openness to what is common must not be allowed to obscure that which is particular to each religion, since it is only through respectful mutual recognition of differences that shared goals may be pursued.

PREFACE

During the fall of 2006, a group of scholars from around the globe met in Washington, DC, to discuss *History and Cultural Identity*. The 10 week seminar was lively and intense. Delicate issues were honestly confronted and discussions were characterized by a genuine praxis of research, candor and friendship. The papers collected here are the fruit of that endeavor.

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John P. Hogan

INTRODUCTION

HISTORY, HERMENEUTICS AND CULTURE

JOHN P. HOGAN

INTRODUCTION

In times of crisis and deep social change, the study and interpretation of history seem inevitably to bubble to the surface. In these times of crisis, history and identity often seem either to merge or clash. Particular events and especially human suffering provoke questions. Why? How did we get to this point; why me; why us? Often the questions are couched in broader terms: can we make sense of life; can we make sense of history; what is history for? Global events and issues, such as the holocaust, world wars, genocide, totalitarianism, terrorism, colonialism, immigration, nationalism, gender, sexual identity, race, religious oppression and conflict, are often the flash-points that cause us to stumble into and question our past. At the same time personal and cultural identity comes under scrutiny. History and cultural identity are forged in the same fire.

Examples of these kinds of questions abound. The events of September 11, 2001 and the subsequent American wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have opened floodgates of inquiry into Islamic-Western relations and history. The process of economic and cultural globalization, as well as the recent economic recession has spurred whole libraries on economic and development history. The election of the first African-American president in the United States has provoked volumes on race and politics. One notable hermeneutical device has been the comparison of Barack Obama to various historical figures, e.g., Abraham Lincoln, John Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr. Recent political change in Latin America, often rooted in the cultural divide between rich and poor, has provoked a relatively widespread examination and revision of constitutional history in the region. This same kind of rethinking is manifest also in recent religious history. One example is the Catholic Church, confronted with internal and external conflict, trying to decipher its own recent past, with different interpretations of Vatican II. On a broader religious-philosophical-historical scale, Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* traces a detailed trajectory throughout the whole western world "...of a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it

is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace.”¹

These are but a few contemporary examples where history and culture intersect. They foreshadow some of the practical reasons for the need to reflect on the speculative philosophy of history. In these changing times, there is need to retrieve a sense of continuity and intelligibility and to defend a society or nation’s sense of historical and cultural identity. At the same time there is need to admit diversity and discontinuity and to deny the “deniers”—those who insist on denying the past but erroneously believe they can still forge an identity. Moreover, the retrieval of past and identity is not simply about knowing the past but, more importantly, about facing the future, or at least, having some influence on that future.² This is, to a great extent, what a speculative philosophy of history is about.

In like manner the other branch of philosophy of history—the analytic—is also affected by current trends. Can we even know the past? How do we know it? What kinds of historical evidence help us to construct that past? Where do we start? Most importantly, for the present work, is the role played by culture in reconstructing and interpreting the past. Is culture too much of a bias, barrier, or prejudice? Is such a bias or prejudice a corrupting negative or might culture and a tradition provide a lens through which history is retrieved in order to answer questions in the present and open a people to the future? Admittedly culture can be a blinder that turns people in on themselves, but it is not necessarily so. It can and ought to be a perspective and support system that focuses a people not only on its past but also, its present and future, and opens to freedom, to the other, and to transcendence.

Humankind has expressed multiple modes of recounting its history, including some of its most ancient and sacred texts. Modernity, with its emphasis on objectivity and clarity, universality and necessity, has pulled the historical toward establishing a single overall narrative which, ended up, perhaps not surprisingly, reflecting the time and place of a Hegel or Marx. In this process, attention to the diversity of peoples, cultures and civilizations was neglected. Today in the developing global interchange of peoples, we are paying for this neglect. Indeed, in the end, we were

¹ Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, Harvard U. P., 2007), p. 3. On Vatican II, see for example, the writings of Giuseppe Alberigo, Avery Dulles, SJ, John O’Malley, SJ, and Joseph Komonchak. For a good summary of Pope Benedict’s view, see: Joseph Komonchak, “Novelty in Continuity”, *America* 200, Feb. 2, 2009, 10-16.

² M.C. Lemon, *Philosophy of History: A Guide for Students* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 12. See also, Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, 2nd ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). For a very recent and relevant treatment of some of these issues, from the historian’s perspective, see, Margaret MacMillan, *Dangerous games: The Uses and Abuses of History* (New York: Modern Library, 2009).

confronted with the harsh extremes of Fukuyama's, *End of History* or Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*;³ neither a happy nor realistic choice.

The present thrust beyond the strictures of modernity might best be marked by a new attention to human subjectivity. Avoiding some of the pitfalls of postmodernism, this thrust enables a more interior reading of history in terms of the inspirations, motivations and commitments of peoples, how they conceive life, and their efforts to survive and even thrive under difficult and changing circumstances.

This shift to peoples' thoughts, actions, pains, hopes and joys moves us from a negative "freedom from" to a positive and creative "freedom for" which shapes values and cultures. It is here we find a civilization's history. This overall shift to the subject also leads to the search for transcendence and ultimately to religion as the root of culture.

INTERPRETING HISTORY THROUGH CULTURE

In the fall of 2006, a group of scholars from around the world met in Washington, DC to discuss "History and Cultural Identity." They came armed with their cultures and traditions but sought to overcome the dead weight of traditionalism. The conversations bore the spirit of Jaroslav Pelican's oft-quoted remark, "Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."⁴

Their task, over the ten week intensive seminar period, was to look into the impact that their cultural traditions have on their view and retrieval of history. Although most were philosophers, the effort was interdisciplinary and drew on all relevant research. Using history, philosophy, social sciences, economics, physical sciences, and religious studies, the group was able to penetrate deeply into the philosophical, cultural and religious roots involved in the reconstruction of the past. The process of cultural and economic globalization loomed large in the debates. Participants were from: Canada, China, India, Iran, Ireland, Lebanon, Philippines, Poland, Romania, Russia, Vietnam, and the United States.

The group worked its way through readings from Greek and Roman speculation on history through Christian and Islamic reflections on history as providence. These were illustrated by St. Augustine's *City of God*, Ibn Khaldun's, *An Arab Philosophy of History*, and de la Vega's, *Royal Commentaries of the Incas*. They then proceeded through Herder,

³ See: Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 1992). Fukuyama later backed away from his "End" thesis; see his "Reflections on the End of History—Five Years Later, in *After History? Francis Fukuyama and His Critics*, ed. T. Burns, (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994). Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

⁴ Jaroslav Pelican, *The Vindication of Tradition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), p. 65.

Hegel, and Vico. The quest continued with readings on history as science, by Bradley, Dilthey and Collingwood, and on to the challenge of postmodernism, Foucault and Derrida, and the revival of narrative.⁵ Care was taken to include and place emphasis on the underrepresented voices in the reconstruction and writing of history, the “little stories”, the “subalterns,” the underdog and oppressed, especially from Africa, Latin America, and Asia.⁶

Gadamer’s analysis of the “historically effected consciousness” and his logic of question and answer, the latter, inherited from Collingwood, provide worthwhile tools in the search for authenticity, freedom and historical truth.⁷ History is intertwined with our culture—our received ways of thinking and acting. It is more about the present than the past; and arises from present questions and concerns. Our historical questions emerge from a particular culture and society and are articulated from a specific viewpoint. Gender, class, social, national, and religious groupings play defining roles. “Inevitably, these settings shape both the kind of questions this somebody asks and how they answer those questions.”⁸

Gary Macy of the University of Santa Clara points out two important implications that follow from these assumptions.

⁵ See Georg G. Iggers, *Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2005). Jacques Derrida, *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991); Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rainbow, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984). See also Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, ed./trans. Colin Gordon, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).

⁶ On Africa see for example the writings of V. Y. Mudimbe, Cheikh Anta Diop, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, J. F. Ade Ajayi, Aimé Césaire and Leopold Sédor Senghor. For Latin America, see “The Violent and Unequal Encounter of Cultures”, in Alejandro García-Rivera, *St. Martin de Porres: The “Little Stories” and the Semiotics of Culture*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1995); see also Aidan Foster-Carter, “From Rostrow to Gunder Frank: Conflicting Paradigms in the Analysis of Underdevelopment,” *World Development* 4 (1976): 167-180. For India, see, Ranajit Guha, “On Some aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India,” *Subaltern Studies*, I, pp. 1-8; and “The Small Voice of History,” *Subaltern Studies*, IX, pp. 1-12. See also, Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd rev. edition, (New York, Continuum, 2003).

⁸ Gary Macy, “Diversity as Tradition: Why the Future of Christianity Is Looking More Like Its Past,” *The Santa Clara Lecture* 14, November 8, 2007, p. 3.

First, different historians emerge from different perspectives. History depends on who is writing the history and for whom the history is being written and also on who allows the history to be disseminated. Secondly, writing history is itself a political act, since it helps create the present insofar as telling us who we have been suggests who we are and who we can become.⁹

This cultural perspective, however, need not push the historian off the cliff of historical relativism. It does not necessarily lead to a position which denies all historical knowledge and truth. Here again Gadamer's hermeneutics is a sound guide. Tradition and culture, for him, do not imply a blinding prejudice or "dead traditionalism" but rather provide a "horizon" that opens out to unity, truth and beauty. History can disclose universal truth across the ages. His hermeneutics implies metaphysics. This is the truth behind Gadamer's "fusion of horizons." He notes,

In truth the horizon of the present is apprehended in a constant learning process, in so far as we must subject all our prejudices to continuous testing. Not the least relevant opportunity for this testing is encounter with the past and understanding the tradition out of which we come. [For] without the horizon of the past, the horizon of the present would have no form at all. There is as little such a thing as a present horizon per se as there is an historical horizon which one might have had to attain. Rather understanding is always a process of fusion of each of such putative horizons existing in isolation.¹⁰

The past's horizon is really a reconstruction of the question for which the text or event is meant to be an answer. The interrogator's horizon is that which envelopes him or her as a questioner speaking out of a tradition. Speaking out of a tradition or culture is the only way to truth, as long as "negative" prejudices or blockages are examined and overcome. This kind of encounter with the past is ontological. For Gadamer, this fusion provides a "common historical world" and clears a way to truth. "Man experiences himself at any time and in all changing conditions of history in

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8. See also, Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), especially chapters 8 and 9.

¹⁰ Quoted in John Hogan, "Gadamer and the Hermeneutical Experience," *Philosophy Today*, Spring 1976, pp. 9-10. See also, F. Lawrence, "Self-knowledge in History in Gadamer and Lonergan," in *Language, Truth and Meaning*, ed. Philip McShena, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1972).

the reality that comprehends and transcends himself and reveals an absolute element, an absolutely ultimate and unconditioned horizon.”¹¹

While the “prejudice” of a culture can be problematic for Gadamer, pre-judgment does not necessarily mean “false judgment.” Rather, for him historical analysis shows that it was only after the enlightenment that the concept of prejudice became negative. “Prejudice,” for Gadamer means a judgment that is given before all the evidence has been examined. Such forethought has its place and is part of any acquisition of knowledge. Nonetheless, Gadamer does not deny that prejudice as bias can be negative and blinding. Every culture, especially when threatened with perceived danger or change, or linked to a questionable and/or painful past, needs to be aware of this and think and speak from an examined, reflective, and critical perspective. Gadamer warns:

It is not at all a matter of securing ourselves against the tradition that speaks out of the text then, but, on the contrary, of excluding everything that could hinder us from understanding it in terms of the subject matter. It is the tyranny of hidden prejudices that makes us deaf to what speaks to us in tradition.¹²

The “tyranny of hidden prejudices” is a strong and important comment for the subject matter of this volume. It bears renewed reflection with each chapter. Gadamer’s grasp of the importance of tradition is immensely helpful and provides firm grounding. However, additional steps forward might be found in the work of Paul Ricoeur. He adds the powerful dimensions of memory, forgetting and forgiveness. These play large roles in a culture and tradition’s reconstruction and retrieval of the past—especially a painful past. Memory is not always a very sure way of gaining our past but it is present and needed. Moreover, it is most helpful when supported by evidence and healed with forgiveness. Nonetheless, memory and forgiveness can be a painful and excruciating mix, sometimes distorting the historical search. It is difficult to forgive when forgiveness is not sought or when repentance of any kind is absent. This is clearly a problem for history when victims or perpetrators of past evils are dead. There is no one to ask for forgiveness and no one to receive it.

For Ricoeur, hope is the only hope. Hope that a moment will eventually come when things will be sorted out and forgiveness achieved. This hope, of course, drives one beyond history, and even philosophy, to a theological/eschatological horizon. As David Pellaurer indicates, “Until that

¹¹ Quoted in Hogan, p. 10. See Emerich Coreth, “From Hermeneutics to Metaphysics,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 11, 1971.

¹² Gadamer, pp. 269-270; see also pp. 271-285.

moment, [Ricoeur] reminds us that to forgive is not to forget, but as his own reading of the Song of Songs reminds us, love is as strong as death.”¹³

In this vein, theologian, Gustavo Gutierrez, invites readers to look at history from the “underside,” from the perspective of the poor and he calls the poor to become “subjects of their own history.” This is the key to his “theology of liberation.” Gutierrez notes, “Paul Ricoeur says that theology is born at the intersection of ‘a space of experience’ and ‘a horizon of hope.’”¹⁴ It emerges that Ricoeur’s “arc of understanding-interpretation-understanding” moves beyond Gadamer’s hermeneutic and allows for even more critical interpretive methods and recognizes more clearly the “community’s interpretive horizon.”¹⁵

Gadamer and Ricoeur serve as sure guides to authenticity, tradition and critical reflection as well as to an openness to transcendence. They provide a roadmap through the winding terrain of historiography, philosophy of history, and even unspeakable memories. In this dialectic of critique, history, even painful or embarrassing history, can be faced with hope and the roots of cultural identity exposed and strengthened.

OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

The articles collected here, after in-depth discussion, span many aspects of the history and cultural identity question—from Confucius to Complexity Theory. What comes through is the hope, joy and pain which emerge between the lines, like grass sneaking up through cracks in

¹³ David Pellamer, *Ricoeur: A Guide for the Perplexed* (London: Continuum, 2007), p. 126. See Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); also George F. McLean, *Hermeneutics, Tradition and Contemporary Change: Lectures in Chennai/Madras, India*, (Washington, DC: CRVP, 2003), Chapter III, “The Relation of Continuity and Critique: Paul Ricoeur,” pp. 37-50. For ideas similar to Ricoeur’s “eschatological horizon”—from a historian’s perspective, see, R. G. Collingwood, *Speculum Mentis or the Map of Knowledge*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924, 1970), pp. 138-153.

¹⁴ Gustavo Gutiérrez, “The Option for the Poor Arises from Faith in Christ,” *Theological Studies* 70, June 2009, p. 323. Gutiérrez writes from the “underside of history.” See for example his, *The Power of the Poor in History*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987); *We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1984). For a recent summary of his work, see “Liberation Theology for the Twenty-First Century,” in *Romero’s Legacy: The Call to Peace and Justice*, Pilar Hogan Closkey and John P. Hogan, eds. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007, pp. 45—59).

¹⁵ Michael E. Lee, “Galilean Journey Revisited: Mestizje, Anti-Judaism, and the Dynamics of Exclusion,” *Theological Studies* 70, June 2009, p. 395, fn. 69. See also Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and Surplus of Meaning*, (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1976) and *Oneself as Another*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

concrete. History, in our troubled times, has taken on a harsh reality. In many instances, history—how it is retrieved, reconstructed, and applied is a matter of life and death.¹⁶ Yet, knowing our past can also be a saving grace, and as noted above, a way to answer questions in the present, and map a future.

In Part I, “Overview and New Paradigm,” the philosophical and historical stage is set. William Sweet, in Chapter 1, “The Use of History,” asks the fundamental questions. Why bother with history? Is history passé? He surveys the philosophy of history, gaining much from Bradley, Bosanquet, and Collingwood. He strongly defends the study of history as a useful endeavor. In Chapter 2, “The Construction of a New Paradigm for History in the Third Millennium,” George F. McLean invites us to overcome barriers and enter into the culture and past of the “other.” Building on Nicholas of Cusa and Mohammed Iqbal, as well as Husserl and Heidegger, he sees history taking on the possibilities of complementarity and mutual help activated by a unitive force of love. In this new paradigm, “justice is implemented by love.”

Part II, “Human Action, Meaning, and Story,” attempts to link human free actions, historical thinking, science and story. In Chapter 3, “On Confucian Philosophy of History,” Vincent Shen seeks “meaningfulness through history.” He searches for whether there is something akin to the idea of God’s revelation in sacred scripture in Chinese culture. His journey through a Confucian view of history—the *Dao* of history—ends with an historical ontology and political theology where “Ultimate Reality is the great peace to come at the end of history by crossing all borders.” Chapter 4, “Xuan Zang: Monumental Figure in China’s History of Translation,” by Cheng Mei, describes the unique role of the Chinese monk, Xuan Zang (602-664). Her careful description of the translator is reminiscent of Gadamer’s understanding of the translator as interpreter, hermeneut, and historian.

In Chapter 5, “Collingwood: The Re-enactment of Past Thought,” John P. Hogan takes up the Oxford philosopher-historian-archeologist’s foundational question, “How or on what condition, can the historian know the past?” The answer Collingwood provided, even taking into account relatively recent manuscripts found in the Bodleian library, is still one of the most controversial statements in the history of the philosophy of history, “...the historian must re-enact the past in his own mind.” Is this an

¹⁶ The dimension of history as a “harsh reality” has recently been raised by theologian Jon Sobrino. See also the foundational writings on this approach—Xavier Zubiri, Johan Baptist Metz, S.J. and Ignacio Ellacuria, S.J. For a recent summary presentation see, Jon Sobrino, S.J. “Jesus of Galilee From the Salvadoran Context: Compassion, Hope, and Following the Light of the Cross,” *Theological Studies* 70, June 2009, pp. 437-460.

idealistic block, a dead-end, as many have claimed, or a hermeneutical opening similar to Gadamer's "fusion of horizons?"

Chapter 6, "History as an Increasingly Complex System," by Carlos Maldonado, treats history as a complex system marked by an increasingly unpredictable process of classification with increasing degrees of freedom. "The more degrees of freedom a system has, the more complex it is." In Chapter 7, "Narrative History and Social Integration: Storytelling in Africa," Ikechukwu Ani reflects on the role of oral history and storytelling in Africa. He has learned much from his fellow Nigerian, Chinua Achebe, and identifies the general characteristics of storytelling in Africa and its role in narration history. He endorses Hayden White's dictum that historians should not overdo their claims to objectivity, "...rather than even aspiring to objectivity, historiographers should make it clear to their readers that events do not and cannot 'tell themselves.'"

Part III, "Dialogue, Freedom, Tolerance, and Pluralism," mines the religious roots of culture and the implications for some present-day thorny questions. In Chapter 8, "Religious Culture and Historical Change: Vatican II on Religious Freedom," M. John Farrelly traces the intricate process, led by John Courtney Murray, by which Vatican II changed Catholic teaching from opposition to religious freedom to acclaiming that freedom in principle and practice. Chapter 9, "Toward a Sustainable Global 'World Order,'" by Richard K. Khuri presents a clear and insightful outline for religious tolerance and pluralism in our global age. With wisdom, he notes, "Religious conflict occurs when we name Mystery, when my names conflict with yours, and we both take our names to be naming the Unnamable." In Chapter 10, Rahim Nobahar spells out Islamic doctrine as it relates to the public and private spheres. His study has broad implications, especially in Islamic republics, for understanding the role of religion in public life as well as in personal and family morality.

In Part IV, "Symbols, Sufferings, and Hope," our authors take up issues that define and refine cultural identity and a people's history. Events, great and small, become symbols of suffering and hope. Chapters 11 and 12 are by Rosemary Winslow. Chapter 11, "Troping Trauma: Conceiving (of) Experiences of Speechless Terror," unpacks terror and trauma as narratives which tell the deeper history of a people. Winslow builds on the holocaust writings of Elie Wiesel and Alicia Ostriker. "To understand trauma narratives, then, we have to look inside, not just for facts of events but for the language that binds meaning and significance to them. We have to read their language more fully than we are used to doing." In Chapter 12, "Between Two Circles: 'Host' as Metaphor of Identity in the Language of Inclusion and Exclusion," Winslow describes different senses of "host" and changing contexts in a Washington, DC neighborhood and their impact on community and personal identity.

Chapter 13, “History and Cultural Identity: The Philippine Case,” by Rolando M. Gripaldo shows how cultural identity evolves with historical development. Although he admits that Filipino culture appears caught in historically rooted “colonial and crab” mentalities, he argues strongly that Filipino cultural identity is still in the making and rapidly evolving with a strong sense of community identity and personal dignity.

In Chapter 14, “Social Memory and the Ontological Roots of Identity: Kyrgyz Republic,” John P. Hogan and Maura Donohue outline the contribution of Kyrgyz philosopher, Gulnara Bakieva (d. 2005). Bakieva presents a phenomenology of social memory with her retelling of the Central Asian epic tale “*Manas*” and its impact on Kyrgyz identity, culture and history. The recent sad events in the country, including betrayal, violence, and the overthrow of an authoritarian government, once again force the Kyrgyz people back to a reexamination of their history and the *Manas* epic.

Chapters 15 and 16 are summaries of discussions on Vietnam and India. Chapter 15, “National Identities and Cultural Globalization: Vietnam,” by Nguyen Ngoc Ha summarizes his reflections on what to preserve and what might be discarded in terms of cultural characteristics in a rapidly globalizing Vietnam. In Chapter 16, “The Roots of Democratic History and Culture in India,” Chintamani Malviya provides a summary of the roots of Indian democracy, grounded in a limited monarchy and people participation, from the Vedic, Post-Vedic, and Buddha periods.

Part V, “Eastern Europe, Reclaiming the Past to Build a Future,” presents a series of case studies from the former Soviet-dominated countries of Eastern Europe. The cases involve turning points of hope and fear and clearly indicate attempts to reclaim cultural and religious roots in order to find identity and build a future. In Chapter 17, “The Interpretation of the Concepts ‘Culture’ and ‘Civilization’ in the Works of A. I. Herzen,” by Elena S. Grevtsova carefully unpacks the contribution of Herzen (1812-1870) to a philosophy of culture applicable not only to Russia and other former Soviet countries, but to the whole world. Chapter 18, also by Grevtsova, “Russia—A Special Destiny in History?” makes bold claims and raises probing questions about the long span of philosophy in Russia, as well as, philosophy and religion’s contributions and obstacles in helping to solve “...problems of Russian historical existence in its relation to the world historical process.”

Chapter 19, “Chasing the Global: The ‘World’ in Bulgarian Historical Thought” by Ivelina Ivanova searches for meaning in Bulgarian history. That meaning, she claims is a relatively recent construction only gaining form between the two World Wars. Meaning emerges in a paragon, or ideal image, of what Bulgaria ought to be. However, this paragon can also be an impediment to development.

In Chapter 20, “Memory and Identity in Post-Communist Romania: A Phenomenological Approach to Romania’s Recent Past,” Wilhelm

Dancă, meticulously unfolds the transition from dictatorship to democracy in his homeland. The painful memories of persecution and the need to unravel the tangle of injustice are honestly examined. He provides a detailed account of the attempts to apply the “Lustration Laws” and the obstacles encountered. Here again the religious roots of culture play a significant role in unearthing the past, admitting to its evils, and thus allowing history to help construct a new future with a tolerant civil society. Chapter 21, by Alin Tat also deals with Romania, “History, Identity and Conflict: Romanian Confessional Identity and the Byzantine Catholic Church.” Tat sketches the history of the Catholic—Greek and Roman—Churches and the Orthodox Church in Romania. He traces this complex pattern and sheds light on contemporary contentious problems of property, goods, clergy, authority and politics.

Chapters 22 and 23 concern recent developments in Poland. In Chapter 22, “Civil Society and Social Capital in Poland,” Eugeniusz Gorski draws on Bourdieu, Coleman, Putnam and Fukuyama to illustrate the importance of people power and civil society to offset social “apathy and economic backwardness.” He presents a rather grim picture in which old oppositions between Communists and Civil Society advocates keep coming back and inhibiting long-term transformation and pluralistic democracy. Chapter 23, “Solidarity: The Creative Power of the Symbol in the Polish Revolution,” by Michal Reka presents a more nuanced, and more positive description of Poland’s recent history, and calls for a rekindling of the spirit of “solidarity.” Echoing the words of John Paul II, he indicates that the model of solidarity might be applied on a global scale.

The authors collected here grope their way through the dialectic of history and cultural identity. History forms our identity but, in turn, our cultural identity provides the lens through which we retrieve and reconstruct our history. Gadamer’s profound respect for the continuity of tradition, his “fusion of horizons” coupled with Ricoeur’s “forgiving but not forgetting” provide firm hermeneutical bookends for history and cultural identity in this rapidly changing global world. In answer to our earlier question, what is history for? Collingwood’s response still rings true.

...history is “for” human self-understanding. It is generally thought to be of importance to man that he should know himself: where knowing himself means knowing not his merely personal peculiarities, the things that distinguish him from other men, but his nature as man. Knowing yourself means knowing, first what it is to be a man; secondly knowing what it is to be the kind of man you are; and thirdly, knowing what it is to be the kind of man *you* are and nobody else is. Knowing yourself means knowing what you can do; and since nobody knows what he can do until he tries, the only clue to what man can do is what

man has done. The value of history, then, is that it teaches us what man has done, and thus what man is.¹⁷

In the global context in which we meet the other—through education, commerce, diplomacy, science, development, and the media—it becomes more necessary to understand the nature of history, as well as our own histories and our responsibility for the future. Further, we need to understand the nature and role of cultures and religions as they shape our histories, and indeed, our cultural identities. The hermeneutical approaches of Gadamer and Ricoeur are invaluable in this endeavor and receive support from Charles Taylor’s “Politics of Recognition.” Taylor states:

Thus my discovering my own identity doesn’t mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others. That is why the development of an ideal of inwardly generated identity gives a new importance to recognition. My own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relations with others.¹⁸

Taylor might well have added, as his broader approach clearly manifests, “and with the past.” This points to the need to grasp how, in these global times, our histories and our cultural identities converge and how this convergence can be the basis, not for conflict and destruction but for cooperation and progress. This, indeed, is history and culture writ large.

¹⁷ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1956) p. 10. See also Iain Nicol, “History and Transcendence” in *God, Secularization and History: Essays in Memory of Ronald Gregor Smith*, ed. Eugene Thomas Long, (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press), pp. 76-91. It should be noted that long neglected Collingwood manuscripts found in the Bodleian library shed new light on this approach to historical knowledge and transcendence. See for example: Robert M. Burns, “Collingwood, Bradley, and Historical Knowledge,” *History and Theory* 45, May 2006, pp. 178-20.

¹⁸ Charles Taylor, et. al. *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*, edited and introduced by Amy Gutmann (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.34. See also, in the same volume articles by Jurgen Habermas and K. Anthony Appiah. In addition to Taylor’s *A Secular Age*, see also “Comparison, History, Truth,” in *Myth and Philosophy*, Frank Reynolds and David Tracy, eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

PART I

OVERVIEW AND NEW PARADIGM

CHAPTER 1
THE USE OF HISTORY

WILLIAM SWEET

Critical discussion in and about history is lively today, but—at least at first look—there seems to be little agreement. Not only is there no consensus in this discussion, but it is far from settled what questions may be asked.¹

Those who are interested in what history is, what its purpose (if any) might be, what historians (claim they) do, and what it is to *write* history, find themselves confronted with cultural and literary analyses of history (for example, of history as literature or as a quasi-literary product); with debates of whether histories are simply chronicles or whether they are narratives with underlying principles and with goals; and with ‘internal’ discussions among historiographers about what is involved—and whether anything *need* be involved—in the practice of writing history.

For many, of course, history is not *just* such an interest; it is important to life—and it is particularly significant at a time when the conventions and norms of religion and science no longer hold firm. People want to know who they are and where they come from, and so they turn to history—to family or local history, to genealogies and chronicles, but also to stories and accounts of historical figures, of nations and civilisations, and even histories of the world. But here, too, little appears settled, for we have institutional histories, ‘people’s histories,’ academic histories—and we are told that all histories are ideological, each promising to tell things ‘as they were’ and yet frequently leaving out more than they include. So the underlying assumptions involved in the writing of history concern not only scholars, but anyone struck by the uncertainty that exists at the beginning of the 21st century.

I.

If we look at history—academic history—as it is engaged in today, we see that many historians find themselves confronted with challenges concerning the presuppositions of history. So, while some may go no further than to admit that there is a distinction between history as ‘event’ or a series of events, and history as a discipline, historians and

¹ An earlier version of this essay was presented at the Institut for Pædagogisk Filosofi—Danmarks Pædagogiske Universitet, København, Denmark, on March 25, 2004. As well, I draw on material that appeared in the Introduction to my book *The Philosophy of History: a Re-Examination* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishers, 2004).

historiographers (and philosophers as well) raise the issue of what history is—whether it is a science, a social science, an art, a “corpus of ascertained facts” (Carr, 1961, p. 6), a social practice (that inevitably reflects ideologies and models of gender), or a ‘conceptual structure’ that makes no claim to be ‘about’ people or events. Some historians and philosophers go further, raising such questions as whether there are any *facts* or only *judgements*—whether one can ever *know* the past and, if so, how one could attain it. Others raise the points that, even if the past can be known, one cannot conclude anything from this knowledge—and that historical understanding or explanation is not even possible.

As historians (and philosophers) today consider and reconsider questions central to what history is and what it is about, the answers they give certainly divide them. But it seems that the source of this division does not lie in the interpretation of data, but in how one answers the more basic questions of the possibility and status of historical knowledge. In current debates, then, what one takes history to be, what it is to do history, and so on, are influenced by what is generally called ‘historicism.’

‘Historicism’ is an ambiguous—or at least vague—term. It appears in the movement called the ‘New Historicism’ that has been influential in literary and cultural studies (cf. Michaels, 1987; Greenblatt, 1988; Veese, 1989). The term has also been used in (what is for an Anglo-American audience) a somewhat idiosyncratic sense by Karl Popper, where it is equated with a kind of grand narrative determinism—that, “through studying the history of society, we can detect patterns and recurrences which will enable us to predict the future” (Popper, 1957)—which, to Popper, not only denies human freedom but suggests that there may be some way in which to engage in ‘social engineering’ to create the perfect society. And the term refers, as well, to a movement rooted in 19th- century German scholarship in religion, philosophy, and history, concerned with the basic questions of how knowledge—and particularly judgements of value about what is ‘known’—are possible when we recognise that the conditions under which we know are in flux, that human knowledge is limited, and that what we know has an essentially subjective character which seems to preclude absolute objectivity and the possibility of making definitive judgements (cf. Iggers, 1995; Megill, 1997; Hoover, 1992).

Historicism in its most widespread and popular sense today is close to this third description. It holds that “human phenomena cannot be understood in isolation from their historical development and from their significance to the particular historical period in which they existed” (Martin, 1991, p. 103)—that “the nature of any phenomenon can only be adequately comprehended by considering its place within a process of historical development” (Gardiner, 1995)—and it emphasises the particularity (and possibly incommensurability) of past events compared with present events. Because of this, it is often equated with a kind of historical relativism. Historicists reject the claim that there can be “a purely ahistorical perspective on human affairs” (Kemerling, 2003) and hold that

there can be no understanding events or the actions of agents as events or actions of a certain type; events have meaning and significance only within a particular context. *Everything* is subject to “interpretation.” Historicists also suggest that, at best, the only legitimate judgements (i.e., value judgements) we can make about these events are those we could have made *at the time* so that, by extension, we have relativism.

Historicism, then, challenges not only the possibility of historical understanding, but the giving of ‘historical explanations,’ and it would also appear to challenge the possibility of history itself as being anything other than “something spun out of the human brain” (Carr, 1961, p. 30).

Historicism has become entrenched within our intellectual culture; at least, one finds a widespread acceptance of many of its underlying principles. Some scholars have become so convinced of the relativity of claims of knowledge and meaning, that they are reluctant to claim that we can say anything true about the past. Indeed, they question whether ‘truth’ is a proper historical concern. This has contributed to the development of a post-modern approach to history and to a philosophy of history which rejects any attempt to present the past “as it really was” (Ranke in Carr, 1961, p. 5), any claim that there are any principles or rules or models of history, and any attempt to see history as a science—particularly an explanatory science. This approach is also resolutely anti-foundationalist.

The postmodern ‘solution’ or response, then, has been to focus on issues other than knowledge, objectivity, and meaning, and to see history as a construct—as a narrative that does not have a particular logic or character to it (Ricoeur, 1983-85)—and not to be concerned with seeking to explain events (cf. the essays in *A New Philosophy of History*, Ankersmit and Kelner, eds., 1995). Some have chosen to discuss the character of historical writing as literature, or in relation to gender or politics or ideology (Smith, 1998). Others, having similar views, have become more open to seeing even historical ‘fiction’ as a source of knowledge and understanding.

There are, of course, those who resist this. There seems to be something wrong in just giving up on history, or saying that it has no use. Some scholars have suggested that the post-modern turn, exemplified by its fundamental historicism, “is self destructive and can lead to solipsism” (Hoover, 1992, p. 355). Others have tried to argue that reality exercises a constraint on theory, and that the objections of the post-modern sceptic just are not borne out (cf. *Telling the Truth about History*, in Appleby, Hunt, and Jacob, 1994). Some argue that, no matter how persuasive—or how difficult to refute—it is, this post-modern approach to history is “methodologically irrelevant” to historians, so that “hardly anyone... *acts as if* he or she” believes it in practice (Martin, 1995, p. 327). Still others acknowledge the legitimacy of the issues raised by historicism about the “historical sensitivity” of knowledge claims or the relativity of knowledge, but seek to avoid post-modern or relativistic conclusions (whatever this might mean); this is a strategy suggested by Hilary Putnam’s 1981 *Reason, Truth, and History* and also acknowledged, at least in part, by E. H. Carr

(1961). There are those who return to such philosophers as R.G. Collingwood, whose recognition of the contextual character of knowledge nevertheless claims to allow room for genuine historical understanding. And there are other responses besides.

Nevertheless, historicism presents us with a number of challenges. Is history *passé*—a ‘thing of the past’? Why should anyone seek to understand history? Can we ever speak of objectivity in history? To see better the present debates in history, and to help in answering or responding to these three challenges, it may be useful to review briefly how matters got to where they are today. After all, the present debates about history and historicism, like all events, are ‘historical’; they are products of what has come before.

II.

History—by which I mean the activity or discipline of history—is old. The “Father of History” in the West is commonly held to be Herodotus (c 490-425 BCE), and it is perhaps no surprise that he is also sometimes referred to as the “Father of Lies.” It was his *History*, written at the time of the Peloponnesian War that sought to do more than chronicle or relate a series of events; its aim was to interpret events, explain them, and draw a lesson from them.

But a key moment in the discussion of history occurred more than 2,000 years later, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Following on 18th century models of history reflected in the work of scholars like Edward Gibbon and William Robertson, the 19th and early 20th century was still a period of detailed, comprehensive historical accounts, and included attempts to describe the course of events, not just in a nation or an empire, but in the world as a whole. In the Anglo-American world, for example, Robert Labberton (1812-1898), Edward Augustus Freeman (1823-1892), Thomas Keightley (1789-1872), and H. G. Wells (1866-1946; see Wells, 1920) continued to provide grand historical accounts. (On the continent, Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) may be included as well [see Spengler, 1939].) Here we see instances of historians writing works that were not mere chronicles, and which explicitly sought to interpret events, to put them into a ‘meaningful’ order, and to suggest some kind of direction in them. A model of such endeavours—and perhaps the greatest project in history in the 20th century—was that of Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975). In his magisterial twelve-volume *A Study of History* (1934-61), Toynbee produced a comparative study of 26 civilizations, analyzing their development, and discerning not only a pattern, but a “lesson.” Focussing on civilisations rather than nations or empires, Toynbee allowed that there can be a development in history—that history is not cyclical—but neither is it necessarily a straight line of progress from the past to the future.

Yet the 19th and early 20th centuries were, in many respects, also a watershed in the writing of history. From the mid-19th century, an

increasing number of scholars—particularly philosophers—argued that undertaking large, narrative histories was highly problematic. The stirrings of this concern, first found in the historical and literary criticism of Biblical texts in the early to mid-19th century (e.g., in Friedrich Schleiermacher [1768-1834]), and inspired by the work of J.G. Herder and G.W.F. Hegel, came to have an influence in dealing not just with texts, but with any talk about events in a historical past.

These ‘stirrings’ did not influence just 19th-century German thought; it had an impact far beyond its borders. Critical reflection on history was undertaken by many of the leading Anglo-American philosophers and, while this interest may not have been pervasive, it was acute. F. H. Bradley (1846-1924) raised a number of fundamental questions in his *Presuppositions of Critical History* (1874). Influenced by the German Biblical scholarship and criticism, Bradley argued that (historical) testimony does not stand as a fact on its own, but must be evaluated from the perspective of the historian. History, then, must be “critical”—it cannot pretend just to be a “copy” of what happened in the past. The historian must select, and must also be aware of the presuppositions of the approach she or he brings to historical enquiry. For Bradley, the historian’s judgement is the basis of history; “The historian ... is the real criterion” (Bradley, 1968, p. 78). Bradley does not deny that there are facts; he simply rejects the view that these facts exist independently of the historian and are there for scholars just to collect. While Bradley’s position is not (narrowly) historicist, it recognises the inseparability of (value) judgement from event and the importance of understanding historical events within their contexts. Bradley’s view, R.G. Collingwood later wrote, was a “Copernican revolution in the theory of historical knowledge” (Collingwood, 1946, p. 240).

Bradley’s colleague, Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923) has seemed to many to take an even more cautious and sceptical view of history. When confronted with “mechanistic” accounts of history or accounts that emphasized the fundamental role of “great individuals,” Bosanquet was struck by their “fragmentary” and dead quality. He was suspicious of any history *qua* narrative or *qua* chronicle of the contingent events of the past which proposed to give a “total explanation”—and of the historian who sought to provide an explanation of “the minds and natures of great men as if he was God’s spy” (Bosanquet, 1912, p. 79). Such history was a “fragmentary diorama of finite life processes unrolling themselves in time,” consisting of “mere conjectures,” and “incapable of any considerable degree of being or trueness” (Bosanquet, 1912, pp. 78-79). And thus Bosanquet wrote what some take to be a remark dismissive of the whole practice of history—that history was “the doubtful story of successive events” (Bosanquet, 1912, p. 79).

Bosanquet did not, however, mean to reject the value of history, or imply that history could not be done, or say that there is no point in studying history, or hold that history is merely “one damn thing after

another.”² (He was, for example, the author of *A History of Aesthetic* (1892) and, like many ‘speculative philosophers’ of the period, had been schooled in the Greek and Roman classics and had a deep appreciation of history and tradition.) Bosanquet’s objection was, however, that history—when it is understood simply as a series of contingent events in a narrative—ignores the general; it is not a concrete universal. And so Bosanquet proposes that, rather than concern ourselves with this kind of history, we should turn to art and religion, both of which bring together the particular and the general. Thus, Bosanquet could write a history of —of the development of aesthetic consciousness in and through particular works of art—but not be interested in a history of art.

We see this “critical” approach to history in R.G. Collingwood (1889—1943), as well. Influenced by Benedetto Croce (1866-1953) and by the idealism of his teachers in Oxford, Collingwood is best known for his *The Idea of History*, (posthumously published in 1946). Here, Collingwood develops some of the insights of the idealist tradition by arguing that “All history is the history of thought ... and therefore all history, is the re-enactment of past thought in the historian’s own mind” (Collingwood, 1946, p. 215). An experienced archaeologist and a distinguished historian of Roman Britain (see Collingwood, 1926, 1923, 1930, 1936), but a philosopher by inclination, training, and profession, Collingwood had the experience to reflect seriously on history. He argued for a closer relation between history and philosophy than was generally held, and insisted that philosophy must understand itself as a historical discipline—that philosophy’s task was to articulate the “absolute presuppositions” characteristic of an age or way of thinking, and that the truth and falsity of philosophical claims must be understood in their context. Yet Collingwood believed in the possibility of historical knowledge and historical explanation through the method of re-enactment. (i.e., a “re-thinking” of the historical actor’s thoughts). Collingwood focused on the historical figure as an agent—on what he or she thinks—rather than on just what the person does. Explanation, then, requires understanding—and hence the appropriateness of re-enactment.

Collingwood has been called a historicist (Strauss, 1952; Mink, 1987³). Perhaps rightly so—though if he is, it must be in a sense that is consistent with his rejection of relativism and subjectivism. Indeed, whether Bradley, Bosanquet, or Collingwood actually held strongly historicist views, in the sense in which the term is used today, is doubtful. For while they raise some problems in giving historical explanations, they do not deny

² Despite Bosanquet’s view of history, he is not an ally of the postmoderns, and would not hold that since we can’t know the past itself, there is nothing to know and, in consequence, history is simply explained away.

³ See, especially, the essays “Collingwood’s Historicism: A Dialectic of Process,” and “Collingwood’s Dialectic of History,” pp. 223-45 and 246-85.

that this is possible, nor do they claim that there can be no history or historical truth.

One of the key features of these three thinkers, then, was that they identified some central problems in the practice of history. And so, by the mid-20th century, the study of history was much more critical, and there were serious questions about the nature of that activity itself—and indeed, of what it was to do history.

III.

This ‘moment’ in the philosophical reflection on history described above—though I am speaking here of a ‘moment’ that lasted some 50 years—was a ‘watershed’. And it evoked two radically different responses in the understanding of history in the Anglo-American world.

The first was a move to formal or critical philosophy of history; this can be said to begin in the middle of the 20th century, about the time of the death of Collingwood in 1943. In a 1952 essay, “Some Neglected Philosophic Problems Regarding History,” Maurice Mandelbaum presented what was becoming clear to many who engaged in, or thought about, history, and that was that how one ‘did’ history was rooted in an issue in the philosophy of history—that there was a distinction between “formal” and “material” approaches to the field.

“Formal” philosophy of history dealt with “a philosophical concern with the problem of historical knowledge” and attempted “to interpret the historical process itself” (Mandelbaum 1952, p. 317); “material” philosophy of history sought to provide “some ‘meaning’ within the whole of man’s historical experience” (Mandelbaum 1952, p. 318). Much the same distinction was made, at the same time, by W.H. Walsh—between critical and speculative philosophies of history—the former dealing with such questions as “the nature and validity of historical knowledge” and the latter being “attempts to give an over-all, ‘metaphysical,’ interpretation of the course of events” (see Oakeshott, 1952).

Speculative philosophy of history, then, was that which hailed back to Augustine, and through Bossuet to Vico, to Hegel and Marx, on to Spengler and Toynbee and up to Karl Löwith and Niebuhr⁴. Here, one found accounts that professed to discern a pattern within history, to find a principle that serves as an axiom of interpretation and explanation, and therefore to give a meaning to the historical process.

Formal or critical philosophy of history, however, did not have such ambitions. It focused on the assumptions underlying history—for example, about the nature and objectivity of historical knowledge. Other questions included whether we can establish causal relations among events and, if so, whether they have a general character. Broadly, formal philosophy of history was concerned with epistemological and logical

⁴ Löwith, 1949; see also Jaspers, 1953.

problems. Because of this focus on the analysis of the fundamental concepts of historical practice, most philosophers of history in the 20th century Anglo-American tradition can be seen as formal philosophers of history. It is an approach that one sees reflected early, in Herbert Butterfield (1931), in E.H. Carr (1961), and in other historians. And there were attempts by philosophers to ensure that history could be a truth-bearing discipline: by Karl Popper and C.G. Hempel—who insisted that unless history provided causal explanations involving “covering laws,” it had no title to call itself a science (Hempel, 1966, 1963, and 1942; Popper, 1949)—and by those like William Dray who insisted that explanations with ‘law governing’ rules or general statements were possible in history, even if these rules did not have a necessary character (Dray, 1957). Formal philosophy of history was widely accepted, no doubt, because of the awareness of problems with the selection process used by historians in gathering data and the adequacy of any resulting knowledge—but also because of suspicion of speculative philosophies together with (or perhaps because of) the anti-metaphysical and anti-systematic tendencies of mid-20th century philosophy.⁵

Whether one can make a rigid distinction between speculative and formal philosophy—whether each does not implicitly lead the philosopher to questions characteristic of the other—is a fair concern. Nevertheless, by the mid-1960s, Anglo-American historiography and philosophy of history was almost exclusively formal, and the dominant questions were the formal (epistemological) questions of explanation, of objectivity, and of whether history can be a science.

But there was a second response to the late 19th and early 20th century discussion of history, that went beyond many of the mid-twentieth century “epistemological” questions of explanation and objectivity. Some found many of the concerns of philosophers and historians simply question begging—for they presumed that there *can* be explanation and objectivity when such things are simply not possible. Such challenges were—and are—pressed by those who, explicitly or implicitly, adopt the ‘principles’ of postmodernism.

The term ‘postmodern’ is, like many terms to describe intellectual movements, vague (see Sweet, 1997)—but in general one can say that it is rooted in the conviction of the legitimacy of historicism and, by extension,

⁵ Outside of the Anglo-American world are figures like Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) and Raymond Aron (1905-1983). Despite dealing in his later works (e.g., *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, 1883) with the question of whether there can be a “foundation of the human sciences”—a question which bears indirectly on the possibility of a philosophy of history—Dilthey also addressed the issue of historical understanding, and thus can properly be regarded as a critical philosopher (see Dilthey, 1962). Similarly, Aron (1961) provides a powerful critique of positivism, but also proposes the use, in history, of an imaginative reconstruction that is more than empathy.)

of the inappropriateness or impossibility of claims of objectivity and truth.⁶ Drawing on Hegel, Martin Heidegger, Michel Foucault, Jean Baudrillard, Roland Barthes, and Jean-François Lyotard, postmodern historians insist that both “upper case” history and “lower case” history have collapsed. (The former is “a way of looking at the past in terms which assigned to contingent events and situations an objective significance by identifying their place and function within a general progressive schema of historical development usually, construed as appropriately progressive” [Jenkins, 1997, p. 5], the latter is “the study of the past ‘for its own sake’” [Jenkins, 1997, p. 6]). Thus, speculative and formal philosophy of history are both rejected.⁷

Many see the postmoderns as taking the late 19th century theory of ‘critical history’ to its logical conclusion—that, by recognizing the role of the historian in history, we must also challenge many of the pretensions to truth and objectivity of history itself. And so, inspired explicitly or implicitly by the historicism of the 19th and early 20th century German and Anglo-American philosophers, postmoderns asked: Is there room for the concept of truth in history? Is it proper to attempt to judge (morally) the motives and actions of agents in the distant past? Or is all this ruled out of court, given the questionable status of historical knowledge? Today, then, while some scholars may still hope that there is a ‘meaning’ to history, few would claim that reason, observation, or experience *shows* that there is and, like pluralistic postmodern philosophers, many have come to accept the possibility that there is no such meaning at all. Some have gone so far as to suggest that, because historical objectivity is impossible—there always being bias in the posing of questions and in the selection of data—history should become more focussed on advocacy (Zinn, 1970).

Of course, while postmodernism is influential—largely because of the persuasiveness of some features of historicism—it is not without its critics (e.g., Brunzl, 1997; Evans, 1997; cf. Fox-Genovese, 1999). And so it would be presumptuous to hold that postmodernism expresses the consensus of historians or philosophers of history, and a mistake to think that contemporary philosophy of history has entirely left behind the debates and controversies of the preceding generation. Nevertheless, in the scholarly literature today, a large—perhaps an inordinately large—amount

⁶ Historicism was not, at first, particularly influential on historians or historiographers; neither was it immediately adopted in philosophical circles. Thus, Karl Marx provided a purely objectivist and materialist philosophy of history which was—withstanding later works by Benedetto Croce (*Storia come pensiero e come azione*, 1938; Engl. Tr. 1941), Reinhold Niebuhr (*The Nature and Destiny of Man*, 1939), and Oswald Spengler (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, 1918; Engl. Tr. 1939)—the last profoundly influential philosophy of history..

⁷ Keith Jenkins and Hayden White (1973) have had a significant influence here.

of time is spent discussing the various postmodern criticisms (and there are many) of history, historiography, and the philosophy of history. And thus the three challenges of historicism raised earlier need to be addressed. But I would suggest that the preceding ‘history’ of how we arrived at where we are may provide us with some responses to these challenges.

IV.

As we have seen, postmodern historicists press the points made by those like Bradley, Bosanquet, and Collingwood concerning the place of the historian in history, the pretensions of a value-free historical science, and the alleged independence of historical knowledge. But do these points in fact lead us to, or oblige us to hold, the conclusions of the postmodern historicist? Consider the first question raised earlier, in section I: Is history a thing of the past? When we ask such questions as ‘What is it to have knowledge of the past?’ or ‘What are the conditions for the possession of historical knowledge?’ It may seem that we cannot avoid ending up with some kind of subjectivity—for how (as Bradley noted) can history be done without reference to the standpoint or the context of the historian?

But does this—as some postmodern critics maintain—eliminate the possibility of the study of history as a study of what has happened in the past? As students of R.G. Collingwood remind us, “...the possession of a point of view by the historian should not be confused with bias,”⁸ and we can acknowledge the inevitability of having a perspective without being committed to arbitrariness or relativism. After all, it is obvious that any historical account is given from a point of view, and that this point of view may not have been available to the historical agents. But this does not entail that there is incommensurability in the accounts or bias. Historians can or do know what their presuppositions are, are normally open to debating and criticizing them, and seek to avoid unreflective bias. Historians recognize that their histories are always written from a perspective representative of their time, and yet seek to organise or present them in a way that allows them to engage the past in a ‘critical’ and self-critical way. In other words, a “critical history” (to use Bradley’s term) recognises the inseparability of context from historical knowledge while, at the same time, avoiding the potentially relativistic consequences of postmodern historicism.

Yet—a postmodern might claim—even if we can have historical knowledge, history is nevertheless *just* a “thing of the past”, that neither bears on contemporary discussion, nor can be subject to any kind of (contemporary) normative assessment. Substantive critical commentary on the actions or the motives of past historical agents is not possible; (as Quentin Skinner⁹ seems to hold) we are prohibited from making such

⁸ See James Connelly, ‘Is History a Thing of the Past?’, in Sweet (2004), pp. 27-42, at p. 39.

⁹ See Skinner (1969).

(putatively anachronistic) attributions and limited to merely formal commentary.¹⁰ Collingwood, however, would allow that we can reasonably know what past historical agents held “on their own terms”; this is, in part, what is undertaken when we engage in re-enactment. And because we focus here on historical agents as agents—decision makers—we can hold them responsible for their views (as Collingwood does in *The New Leviathan*). Thus, we can appropriately make substantive critical comments (as distinct from simply formal remarks) about a past historical agent’s blindness or lack of blindness on an issue—at the very least, provided that there are reasons to believe that that person could have had his or her position challenged by others who lived at that time.¹¹

This is not to ignore that Collingwood’s re-enactment theory is not without its difficulties, and later scholars, such as William Dray, have tried to develop Collingwood’s insights in a way that avoids these problems. Nevertheless, it is clear that Collingwood did not see the role of the historian in doing history as providing any reason to doubt that there is something called the past, or that we can have access to the past—and there is certainly no logical connection between Collingwood’s claims and the postmodern ‘conclusions’ putatively drawn from them.

But even if history is not just a thing of the past, what—if anything—are we to do with history? Why seek to understand history? Even if we grant that we can know the past, are not past events also unique—the results of events that, strictly, can never take place again? And doesn’t it follow that history is, therefore, of little help to us?

I think that there are two responses to this, implicit in the accounts of Bradley, Bosanquet and Collingwood. The first is that we seek to understand history because it is required in order to make sense of the present. The postmodern challenge to historical knowledge and understanding—based on the concern that our location in the present and in a ‘different’ place always impedes any genuine knowledge—is misplaced, for neither the present nor one’s aims for the future can be known unless they are already understood in the context of the past. Indeed, ignorance of the past severely inhibits action in the present.¹² For Collingwood, for example, we must know the past in our own lives in order to know our own ‘presuppositions’, and these serve as guides for action and our own personal development.¹³ Again, it is by a study of the past that we can have a

¹⁰ See Catherine Wilson, “Postformalist Criticism in the History of Philosophy”, in Sweet (2004), 43-62.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See Franz Schreiner and Mostafa Faghfoury, “Temporal Priority and a Better World”, in Sweet (2004), 119-127. Here, they argue for a similar point, drawing on the work of Wilhelm Dilthey.

¹³ Lionel Rubinoff, “History, Philosophy and Historiography: Philosophy and the Critique of Historical Thinking”, in Sweet (2004): 163—196, at p. 191; cf. Collingwood 1946, pp. 226; 230.

“trained eye for the situation in which one acts”¹⁴—and thereby can bring about progress.

Second, not only do we need to have some understanding of the past to make *sense* of our own present (i.e., to ‘make ourselves’), but we need to know the past so that we can be aware of the present in a broader sense. Collingwood would point out that a re-enactment by the historian of the thinking of the historical actors allows us to understand it as a process that is historical and relative, and yet does not require explanation of the past in terms of principles or laws. Thus we do not need a casual theory to explain why an agent acted or chose as he or she did, or a law-like account of history. And so, even if we accept the putative uniqueness of historical events, there can still be an understanding of the past.

Still, some postmodern critics argue that such ‘knowledge’ of the past can never be genuine because it can never succeed in being objective; it is ‘just’ a perspective. (It is ironic that a principal argument for this presupposes the correspondence theory of truth which postmoderns generally reject.) These postmodern critics would add that historical explanation involves historical understanding—and understanding is a process that is historically relative and value-laden. But there can be no objectivity—not in history or in any social science or even science. And it is precisely its claim to objectivity that makes conventional or traditional history suspect. Many post-modern historians would consider that a “narrative” is sufficient to provide all we need (and all we can have) *qua* explanation.

Nevertheless, Bradley and Collingwood (who saw himself as completing Bradley’s ‘Copernican Revolution’¹⁵)—both figures whose work lies at the origin of this historicist critique—would insist that objectivity can still be achieved. Indeed, they would argue that objectivity can be achieved not in spite of, but because of, the fact that historians write from a point of view. By re-enacting the thought of agents, Collingwood says one is attempting an objective picture—by taking into account all the relevant details that one can, being ready to adjust or to correct error, and so on.¹⁶ It is true, of course, that with the writings of different historians, we have before us a multiplicity of perspectives. But, first, historians would normally allow that these perspectives and presuppositions are open to discussion and critique—and that, to do so, they admit that there is enough that is shared to allow for the possibility of the engagement of, and a reconciliation between, differing views. And, second, to the extent that this diversity remains, there is no sufficient reason to believe that that the result is less, rather than more knowledge. Consider a Marxist and a feminist account of an historical event. Each would draw attention to details the other might not. But by having both to hand, we may have a better

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 175.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 174.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 179.

understanding than only one—even a ‘best’ one on its own—might provide. While the multiplicity of different accounts does not cumulatively provide a general principle or law, i) what counts as good research is the same, ii) one recognises and overcomes certain problems in the selection of data and in the selection process, and the result is that iii) one may have a better *understanding* of the event, even if not a better *explanation* of the event. If none of this were the case, why take feminist or Marxist criticism seriously? In short, there is no good reason to assume that objectivity entails that exactly or only one correct perspective does or can describe best how events took place. Such an “interspectivism” among historians, taking its inspiration from Collingwood, would thereby allow one to claim that one’s knowledge is objective. This does not mean that historical truth is absolute and unchanging, but that it meets a standard, appropriate to the object of study, where ‘the past’ and the historian’s self-awareness of doing history and his or her judgement lead to understanding the event.

As a result, if we adopt a broadly Collingwoodian conception of re-enactment—which contains elements of narrative—we may have both a better understanding of the agency of historical actors, and a basis for objective knowledge of the past.¹⁷

In short, we can take some of the basic claims of postmodern historicism, and see that, if we look at their roots, this origin not only does not entail postmodernism, but may provide for a more robust account of history as objective. While taking seriously the three challenges of historicism enumerated at the beginning of this paper, we can allow that historical explanations are not value free, and yet objective; we can still claim that we can have knowledge and understanding of the past; and we can hold that understanding the past is an activity that is done not just for its own sake, but because it bears on our capacities to understand ourselves and the world around us, and to respond thoughtfully to what may happen in the future.

V.

The preceding remarks present some reasons for holding that there is a use for history today.

‘Doing’ history today cannot ignore the arguments of postmodern critics and of all those who would argue that the ‘subjectivity’ of the discipline of history makes it impossible to carry out. It requires reassessing or rethinking what it means to have historical understanding, and what it is that historians do.

Nevertheless, in this paper I have suggested that, if we return to the work of some of the key figures in Anglo-American philosophy of history, we can see that a postmodern, historicist critique of the ‘use’ of history

¹⁷ See for example, Karsten Steuber, “Agency and the Objectivity of Historical Narratives”, in Sweet (2004), 197-222.

need not succeed. I have argued, first, that history is not just a thing of the past. This does not mean that history is just a series of events that the historian merely identifies and puts into some externally determined right order. It requires a critical effort on the part of the historian, as well as an act of interpretation. But neither does this mean that there is nothing in ‘the past’ that we must respond to.

Second, I have argued that the issues of historicism and historical understanding have to be carefully and fully assessed. As paradoxical as the notion of knowledge of what does not exist—i.e., the past—may be, it is obviously necessary both for our social practices and for our ability to understand the present; this suggests that the subjectivist or post modern may simply be posing a set of pseudo problems. This is not to deny that the questions have force, but perhaps the issue of the nature of the past is just like the issue of the nature of time. It is a puzzle about which Augustine remarked, “If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know” (Augustine, 1993, Bk. 11, ch. 14, sect. 17).

Third, I have argued that there is no sufficient reason to abandon the search for objectivity. Rather than rule out objectivity *tout court*, it seems plausible to hold that there are different ways in which we might understand objectivity—with some ways more likely to be fruitful than others. Here, we need to explore the notion of standpoint or perspective, what it entails, and whether (and how) it is consistent with objectivity and the possibility of making judgements about the past.

And finally, I have suggested by returning to, and reassessing, the work of figures such as Bradley, Bosanquet, and Collingwood—who were central in the critical understanding of history—that we may be able to resist the temptations of historicism. Despite the many difficulties that critics note, we may still have confidence that history is possible, that there can be some kind of historical understanding, and that we can learn lessons from—and make criticisms of—history.

There is a use for history.

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CHAPTER 2

THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW PARADIGM FOR HISTORY IN THE THIRD MILLENNIUM

GEORGE F. McLEAN

In the past one lived within one's own culture and thought in its terms; others were dismissed or put down as in the well-known etymologies of "barbarian" or "ethnic". That time has passed.

We now enter a time when different cultures are no longer merely the object of scientific curiosity limited mostly to classical departments of ethnology. In our present global circumstances of economic, political and especially informational interaction "the other" is no longer separated by barriers of distance, mountain ranges or oceans. "The other" from the most distant places is now here; he lives next door; he appears nightly on the television in my living room.

The issue is no longer how to learn about others, for strategic reasons of competition, and exploitation, or of control and subordination, but how to live with them. This is made significantly more difficult by an individualism which dismisses the concerns of others and by habits of scientific abstraction which omit what differentiates them; both are characteristic of modern times. As a result, rather than business as usual or mere minor adjustments, it would appear that our newly global times that bring all intimately together require a new paradigm. This would enable not only horizontal communication across cultures, but a fundamentally new way to appreciate our own cultural identity and that of others and enable all to live together in concord and collaboration.

What becomes immediately evident is the limitation of the human mind as it attempts to achieve a vision adequate to integrate all of humanity in a way that enables each people to value its own traditions and to be appreciated by others. Thus the classical and perduring problem of philosophy has always been that of the one and the many, of unity and multiplicity. It can be expected that the challenge of globalization as it unites even more peoples in ever closer patterns of interaction will be there: how are they able to be appreciated as one while living each as unique and free?

This is not only a broad issue among persons and peoples, but repeats itself in every part of philosophy, e.g., in epistemology, how can we manage our world through universal and synthetic concepts and yet appreciate each reality analytically; in psychology, how can the human person exist both bodily and spiritually and yet constitute one human reality; and in ethics, how can our life be so truly free as to be personally responsible for our actions and yet essentially social.

This suggests then that we take up afresh the issue of unity and diversity, of the one and the many, and see its implication for the understanding of our histories as these flows into both our self understandings or identities and our relations with others or, for the future, global solidarity. This, in turn, will provide direction in our search for a new paradigm for these newly global times.

THE PARADIGM OF UNITY

From earliest times human thought has always and everywhere had a center so unique as to be held sacred. It is possible to track the evolution of this constant awareness by following it in the opening of the three dimensions of the human mind. The first is the external senses of sight, touch and the like by which one receives information from the external world. The second is the internal sense of imagination and memory by which one assembles the received data in various patterns. Finally, beyond the external and internal senses is the intellect by which one knows the nature of things and judges regarding existence.¹

Not surprisingly, upon examination it appears that the actual evolution of human awareness of the unity of the whole follows this sequence of one's natural capacities for knowledge. In all cases it is intellectual knowledge that is in play for the human concern is not merely with what distinguishes objects as sensible, but with the overall meaning of life and in that context with each of its details. This was articulated successively, first in terms of the external senses in the totemic stage of thought, then in terms of the internal sense in the mythic period, and finally in properly intellectual terms as the origin of philosophy or science.² This, indeed, is the sequence recounted by Plato in his famous allegory of the cave and by Descartes in his levels of doubt.

To follow this evolution it should be noted that for life in any human society as a grouping of persons there is a basic need to understand oneself and one's relation to others. It should not be thought that these are necessarily two questions rather than one. They will be diversely formalized in the history of philosophy, but prior to any such formalization, indeed prior even to the capacity to formalize this as a speculative issue, some

¹ This threefold structure followed both in Aquinas' *Commentary on Boethius' Work On the Trinity*, pp. 3 and 5, and Descartes' systematic procedure for placing under doubt all that arises from the three sources of knowledge until what is derived from that source could be certified as true. Aristotle's dictum regarding humans as physical and spiritual held that there is nothing in the intellect which is not first in the senses.

² Indeed, one might define philosophy and science precisely as knowledge of the various aspects of reality in terms proper to human reason and hence expressive of the nature or existence of the things themselves. See also Plato, *Republic*, VI.

mode of lived empathy rather than antipathy must be possible. Plato later worked out formally and in detail that the unity of the multiple is possible only on the basis of something that is one, but the history of human life manifests that according to their own mode of awareness even the earliest peoples always understood all in relation to something one.

The Totem: Thinking in Terms of the Senses

The primitive or foundational mode of self-understanding was totemic. The earliest understanding by peoples of themselves and their unity with others and with nature was expressed in terms of some object perceivable by the external senses, such as an animal or bird with which people spoke of themselves by simple identity. This was the totem of their clan. Levy-Bruhl expressed this in a law of participation: persons were in some way both themselves and their totem. They saw themselves not merely as in some manner like, or descendent from, their totem, but instead asserted directly, e.g., "I am lion." In these terms they founded their identity and dignity, considered themselves bound to all others who had the same totem, and understood by analogy of their totem with that of other tribes the relations between their two persons for marriage and the like.³

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

This concept brings important insight to the question of unity and distinctiveness. The totem is not one in a series, but the unique reality in which each and all have their being and, by the same token, their unity with all else.

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

³ L. Levy-Bruhl, *How Natives Think* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1966), ch. II.

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

The thought of the primitive is not merely a poorer form of what people in subsequent ages would do better with improved tools. On the contrary, it set a paradigm of unity which would be the essence of the classical philosophical traditions. This tradition would end precisely when its paradigm of unity came to be substituted by multiplicity. The totem was rather the unique limitless reality in terms of which all particular people and things had their identity and interrelation. It was the sacred center of individual and community life in terms of which all had meaning and cohesion. It made possible the sense of both personal dignity and interpersonal relations, which were the most important aspects of human life. This it did with a sense of direct immediacy that would be echoed, but never surpassed, in subsequent stages of more formally religious thought.

Myth: Thinking in Terms of the Imagination

The totem was able to provide this paradigm of unity and meaning while the life of all members of the tribe remained similar. But its manner of expressing this paradigm became insufficient as society became more specialized and differentiated. Unity would remain, but to express it the manner of thinking would need to evolve. The bonds between members of the tribe came to depend not merely upon similarity and sameness, but upon the differentiated capabilities of, e.g., hunters, fishers and eventually farmers. With this ability to be both united and differentiated came an appreciation, as well, of the special distinctiveness of the sacred with regard to the many individuals of which it was the principle and center. What in totemic thought previously had been stated simply by identity ('I am lion') could now be appreciated as greater than, and transcending, the members of the tribe. This is reflected in the development of priesthood, rituals and symbols to reflect what was seen no longer simply as one's deepest identity but as the principle thereof.⁴

Such a reality could no longer be stated in terms corresponding to the external senses, but needed instead to be figured by the imagination. Totemic terms drawn originally from the senses now were reconfigured into forms that expressed life above humankind and which stood as the principle of human life. Such higher principles, as more knowing and having the

⁴ *How Natives Think*, ch. XII.

power to will, would be personal; and as transcendent persons, they would be gods.

It would be incorrect then to consider this, as did Freud and Marx, to be simply a projection of human characteristics. On the contrary, the development of the ability to think in terms shaped by the imagination released human appreciation of the principle of life from the limitations of animals, birds and other natural entities available to the intellect working in terms of the external senses. It allowed the transcendence of the principle of unity to be expressed in a more effective manner. This was not to create the sense of transcendence; rather it allowed the unique and essential foundation of human meaning to find new expression in terms of the evolving capabilities of human consciousness.

In this regard the *Theogony*,⁵ written by Hesiod (ca. 776 B.C.), is especially indicative. Because the gods stated the reality of the various parts of nature, when Hesiod undertook to state how these were interrelated he in effect articulated the unity and interrelation of all.

His work has a number of important characteristics. First, it intends to state the highest possible type of knowledge. Thus, it begins with an invocation to the Muses to provide him with divine knowledge: "These things declare to me from the beginning, ye Muses who dwell in the house of Olympus."⁶ Secondly and correspondingly, it is concerned with the deepest issues, namely, the origin and unity of all things: "Tell me which of them came first" he asked, and then proceeded to a poetic delineation of the most important issues, from the justification of the divine reign (later named "theodicy" by Leibniz) to the understanding of evil.⁷ Thirdly, because it was written as the period of purely mythic thought was drawing to a close—within two centuries of the initiation of philosophy in Greece—Hesiod was able to draw upon the full resources of the body of Greek mythology, weaving the entire panoply of the gods into the structure of his poem. This he did not externally in a topographical or chronological sequence, but in terms of their inner reality and real order of dependence. Thus, when in the *Theogony* he responds to the question: "how, at the first, gods and earth came to be," his ordering of the gods wed theogony and cosmogony to constitute a unique mythical understanding regarding the unity and diversity of all.

The understanding of the unity of reality expressed by this poem is the very opposite of a random gathering of totally disparate, limited and equally original units. On the contrary, the relation between the gods, and hence between the parts of nature they bespeak, is expressed in terms of

⁵ Hesiod, *Theogony* (New York: Liberal Arts Press, 1953).

⁶ Xenophanes, fragments 11, 14-16 in George F. McLean and Patrick J. Aspell, *Readings in Ancient Western Philosophy* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1970), p. 31.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4. See also by the same authors, *Ancient Western Philosophy: The Hellenic Emergence* (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1971).

procreation. Hence, every reality is appreciated as related positively to all others in its genetic sequence. The relatedness of things does not depend upon a later and arbitrary decision, but is equally original with their very reality and extends to their total actuality. This unity is understood to be by nature prior to diversity for it appears through a genetic structure in which each god proceeds from the union of an earlier pair of gods, as united in love, under the unitive power of Eros, who is equally original with heaven and earth.

From what has been said we can conclude that unity pervades and precedes gods and men. All is traced back to Earth and Heaven as the original pair from whose union, under the impetus of Eros, all is generated. But what is the relation between Heaven and Earth? This question is at the root of the issue of unity as expressed in mythic terms and promises to be able to take us to a still deeper understanding.

Kirk and Raven understand the opening verses of the body of the text, namely, "Verily at the first Chaos came to be, but next wide-boomed Earth . . . and Earth first bare starry Heaven equal to herself" in an active sense to express the opening of a gap or space, which, thereby, gives rise to Heaven and Earth as its two boundaries.⁸

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

It would be premature, however, to ask of the mythic mind whether this derivation took place by material or efficient causality; that question must await the development of philosophy. But it is clear that the original reality itself is not differentiated; it is an undivided unity. As such it is without name, for the names we give reflect our sense perceptions which concern not what is constant and homogenous, but the differentiated bases of the various sense stimuli. What is undifferentiated is not only unspoken in fact, but unspeakable in principle by the language of myth which depends essentially upon the imagination as an internal sense.

Though unspeakable by the mythic mind itself, nevertheless, reflection can uncover or reveal something of that undifferentiated reality which the *Theogony* implies. We have, for instance, noted its reality and unity. This lack of differentiation is not a deficiency, but a fullness of reality and meaning from which all particulars and contraries are derived. It

⁸ *Hesiod, the Homeric Hymns and Homeric*, trans. by H.G. Evelyn-White (London: Heinemann, 1920), p. 86. Werner Jaeger, *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (London: Oxford, 1967), pp. 12-13.

is unspeakable because not bounded, limited and related after the fashion of one imaged contrary to another. It is the source, not only whence the differentiated realities are derived, but of the coming forth itself of these realities. This is reflected in three significant manners.

First positively, Eros, which itself is said to come from chaos, is the power which joins together in procreative union the pairs of gods, thereby reflecting the dynamic, manifestive and sharing character of the undifferentiated reality.

Second and negatively this is indicated also by the acts which the *Theogony* describes as evil inasmuch as they impede the process by which new realities are brought into existence. This implies that its opposite, the good, involves essentially bringing forth the real. Hence, the undifferentiated unity is the origin of the multiple and differentiated.

Third, all the progeny, that is, all parts of the universe and all humans, are born into not chaos as conflict, but an undifferentiated Unity as an aspect of that reality. Though undifferentiated and therefore unspeakable, this one is productive of the multiple and therefore participative, generous and sharing. For the Greek mythic mind then, beings are more one than many, more related than divided, more complementary than contrasting.

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

The expression of all this in terms of the forms available to the mythic internal sense of imagination had its temptations. These were pointed out by Xenophanes who noted that by the time of Homer and Hesiod a perfervid imagination had gone from expressing the transcendence of the gods to attributing to them as well the many forms of evil found among men:⁹ the very principles of meaning and value had begun to point as well to their opposites. Thinking the paradigm of unity in terms of the imagination was no longer entirely sufficient. The paradigm would remain, but the intellect would need to proceed in its own terms, beyond sense and imagination, to enable the deeper unity of the divine and of nature to be expressed and defended against confusion and corruption. Hence, the mind advanced to operate in properly intellectual terms, rather than through the

⁹ G.S. Kirk and J.E. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960), pp. 26-32.

images of mythic thinking. Science and philosophy would then replace myth as the basic mode of human understanding according to the paradigm of unity.

Parmenides: Thinking in Terms of the Intellect, the Metaphysics of the Changeless, Eternal One

Once begun, philosophy made spectacularly rapid progress. Within but a few generations, the human intellect had worked out a structure of the physical world using the basic categories of hot and cold, wet and dry available to the external senses, along with mechanisms of vortex motion.¹⁰ Mathematical reason worked with the internal senses to lay down the basic theorems of geometry.¹¹ In brief, by developing properly intellectual terms the Greeks elaborated with new and hitherto unknown precision insight regarding physical reality.

But that had never been the root human issue. Totemic and mythic thought were not merely ways of understanding and working with nature, although they did that as well. Fundamentally they concerned the metaphysical and religious issues of what it meant to be, the transcendent divine basis of life, and the religious terms in which it needed to be lived in time. After the work of others in conceptualizing the physical and mathematical orders, Parmenides was able to take up the most basic questions of life and being in properly intellectual or metaphysical terms.

First, he bound the work of the intellect directly to being: "It is the same thing to think and to be" (fragment 3).¹² Hence, the requirements of thinking would manifest those of being. Second, he contrasted 'being' with its opposite, 'nonbeing,' as 'something' in contrast to 'nothing at all' (fragment 2). This principle of non-contradiction was a construct of the mind; like *pi* in geometry it was something good to think with, for it enabled the mind to reflect upon the requirements of both being and mind, so as to avoid anything that would undermine their reality.

Parmenides imaged himself proceeding further along the great highway¹³ till he comes to a fork with one signpost pointing toward 'beginning'. Here, Parmenides must reason regarding the implications of such a route. As "to begin" means to move from nonbeing or nothingness to being, were "to be" to include "to begin" that would mean that being included within its very essence *nonbeing* or nothingness. There would be then no difference between 'being' and 'nothing'; being would be without meaning; the real would be nothing at all. If conversely, from this notion of

¹⁰ Anaximander, fragments, see McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, pp. 22-28.

¹¹ See McLean and Aspell, *Ancient Western Philosophy*, ch. III.

¹² Parmenides, fragments, see McLean and Aspell, *Readings*, pp. 39-44.

¹³ Fragment 8; see Alexander P.D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides: A Study of Word, Images, and Argument in the Fragments* (New Haven: Yale, 1970).

beginning such nonbeing is removed, then it emerges as essentially not beginning, but eternal.

The procedure is analogous at the two subsequent forks in the road where the signposts tempt one to consider being as essentially changing and multiple. Each of these, Parmenides reasons, would again place nonbeing within being itself, thereby destroying its very character as being. These are the characteristics of being: it is infinite and eternal, unchanging and one. Being itself then transcends the multiple and changing world in which we live: it is in a manner more perfect than could possibly be appreciated in the graphic terms of the external or internal senses.

In this way Parmenides discerned the necessity of the absolutely One, eternal and unchanging being—whatever be said of anything else. Neither being nor thought makes sense if being is the same as nonbeing, for then to do, say or be anything would be the same as not doing, not saying or not being, respectively. As the real is irreducible to nothing and being is irreducible to nonbeing—as it must be if there is any thing or any meaning whatsoever—then being must have about it the self-sufficiency expressed by Parmenides’ notion of the absolute One. It is not surprising, therefore, that Aristotle would conclude his metaphysics as a search for the nature of being with a description of divine life and call the whole a “theology”.¹⁴

The issue then is not how the notion of the One entered human thought; it has always been the paradigm, for without that which is One and Absolute in the sense of infinite and self-sufficient man and nature would be at odds; humankind would lack social cohesion; indeed, thinking would be the same as not thinking, just as being would be the same as nonbeing.

Within this basic unity philosophers were challenged to open room for plurality, which Plato did through his notion of participation, but the paradigm remained one of unity from which and toward which the multiple were understood to emerge and return by some process of creation or emanation. Independence and autonomy belonged to the One alone. Articulated as monotheism, by the Middle Ages God was imaged as king to whom all others were servants. ‘Islam’ incorporated this into its very name which means “submission”.

This, however, did not appear to be the key to the problem of diversity or freedom which seems to have come not from the absolute One, but rather from the excesses of the human mind. For when Plotinus extended the scientific search not only to why things could not be other than they were to the realm of the spirit, then to the degree that they succeeded freedom declined. Thus the establishment of laws for the emanation of all from the One provided clarity of understanding but at the expense of freedom. This illustrated the drama which would become ever more tense in modern times. I would suggest the great narratives of the drama of human history, but the reduction of the history of human freedom to the scientific laws of a dialectic. Thereby freedom and responsibility

¹⁴ *Metaphysics*, XII, 7, 1072b26-29.

were reduced to scientific necessity: man-machine was now society-machine. Human history was the account of its necessitated dialectical cycles. Plotinus may have been the better philosophy if this consists in giving a clear account of all, but, at the cost of clarity, Augustine went further to engage both the mystery of evil and the deeper sense of love.

This set the drama of the philosophy of the high Middle Ages, as both Islam and Christianity undertook to explore the issues of sacred history more fully.

THE PARADIGM OF DIVERSITY: INDIVIDUALISM

Above we have seen how the paradigm of unity arose with the earliest modes of human life. In the West it continued to the Christian and Islamic Middle Ages. The emergence of the great monotheisms both intensified this sense of unity and at the same time founded the autonomy and freedom of the individual person through the notion of participation. The paradigm was founded in unity but delicately balanced. By the late Middle Ages the emerging sense of the person and of one's freedom began to erode the sense of unity and shifted attention to diversity, individual freedom, diversity and multiplicity.

As a fundamental shift of human horizons, everything was involved from the Bubonic plague to ecclesiastical and national polities (e.g., the *Magna Carta*). In the first half of the fourteenth century William of Ockham took the radical position that all reality consisted simply of a set of singles. On that basis he developed a logic which before long would generate a new paradigm based on the multiple rather than on the One. This would characterize the modern era, which, indeed, it began.

Knowledge as Empirical: the Lockean Tradition

Above we saw the unity paradigm emerging according to the sequence of human cognitive abilities, from the external senses to the imagination, and then to intellect. It is striking that the emergence of the modern paradigm of multiplicity reflects a parallel sequence. This is reflected in the epistemological dimension in the difference between the more rationalist continental, and the more empirical British, traditions. To follow this it is necessary to reach back to John Locke and, indeed, to the Reformation.

On the one hand, as an ex-Augustinian, friar Martin Luther was educated in a loosely Platonic tradition which favored an ideal pattern of unity over the concrete and the differentiated. On the other hand, being as he noted, of the camp of Ockham, and hence of nominalism, he held closely to sense knowledge of single things and rejected a capacity of the intellectual for knowledge of natures and universals. In order to bring out the importance of faith in his commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans*, Luther focused upon the damage done to humankind by the Fall, seeing it

as not merely weakening, but corrupting human nature and its capacity of reason. On this theological, rather than philosophical, basis human reason was considered no longer capable of knowing the One God and all beings as the proper effects of His causality. In the important matters of life, faith firmly held was substituted for reason; theology replaced philosophy, which shrunk suddenly to external sense knowledge of accidental happenings between basically diverse realities.

The questions of the time, however, were not shrinking but expanding and becoming more pervasive. They included not only what one could know, but how one could redevelop the socio-economic order on the basis of diversity rather than unity and in view of the vastly expanded resources of farflung empires and the newly invented industrial capabilities. Even more important was the question of how a mass of single humans could come together to develop a parliamentary manner of governance. All this would have to be rethought on the very narrow band of sense knowledge and correspondingly heterogeneous understanding of freedom.

Early on, John Locke, in the complex political eddies of those changing times, came to see how progress on political and other issues required further clarification of what we could know in this new paradigm of diversity. Facing the issue of how the *arché*, origination and sovereignty in political decision-making could reside not in the single person of the king, but in a group or parliament, communication between its members came to be of central importance. How could the members of such a group think together in order to come to agreement on issues of public policy? For Locke this meant that all needed to have equal access to the same sources of knowledge.

To this end Locke designed his historical plain method. He proposed that we suppose the mind to be a white paper, and then follow the way in which it comes to be furnished by ideas. These he traced from external things, through the senses, to the mind. To keep this knowledge public, he could recognize only those ideas which followed the route either of sensation or of reflection upon the materials derived thereby.¹⁵ On this basis David Hume reduced all knowledge to either matters of fact or formal analytic tautologies derived therefrom. They could concern neither the existence or actuality of things nor their essences, but could be simply the determination of one from a pair of sensible contraries, e.g., red rather than brown, sweet rather than sour.¹⁶

The resulting ideas would be public in the sense that they could be traced back to their origin and thus could be replicated by anyone who would so situate himself in order to make the same observation. The mind could proceed to make all kinds of combinations with such ideas, and

¹⁵ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (New York: Dover, 1959), Book II, chapter I, vol. I, 121-124.

¹⁶ David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960).

Locke eventually worked out the intricate pattern of such possible associations and dissociations.¹⁷ But all ideas, no matter how complex, were always subject to a test of verification, namely, that in principle all content could be traced back to an origin in the simple ideas drawn directly from the senses. As no distinct intellectual knowledge was recognized, substance remained only an unknowable supposition soon to be dismissed by Hume. This 17th century epistemology was adopted broadly in the following century not only in England and in America, but in France where it became the context for the Enlightenment proper.

Thus knowledge sedulously avoided any consideration of the nature of one's own reality or of other persons and things. Interpersonal bonds of human comity based on an intimate appreciation of the nature of the person and on respect for one's dignity were replaced by external observations of persons as single entities wrapped in self-interests. This lent itself to the construction only of external utilitarian relations based on ultimately diverse self-interests. The public order in the resulting common law tradition consisted merely of instrumental relations assured by the legal judgements rendered by the courts. In this way there came to be established a system of rights and of justice to protect each one's field of external material and basically economic self-interested choices and of action against incursion from without. This field was progressively defined through legal judgements and legislation and enforced by the coercive power of the state. By legislating these private interests into public law and engaging thereby its coercive power the state created a legal pattern of self-interest which has defined the meaning of justice for modern time.

The restrictions implicit in this appear starkly in Rudolf Carnap's "Vienna Manifesto" which shrinks the scope of meaningful knowledge and significant discourse to describing "some state of affairs" in terms of empirical "sets of facts." This excludes speech about wholes, God, the unconscious or *entelechies*; the grounds of meaning, as well as all that transcends the immediate content of sense experience, are excluded. All of these are sedulously removed from the construction of the public order. Indeed, John Rawls would make their relegation behind "a veil of ignorance" a condition for political discourse.¹⁸

Freedom as Choice

All of the above follows logically from the paradigm of diversity radically applied by nominalism and its accompanying empiricism. This needed however to face the test of life. But if the primacy were upon the multiple individuals and their freedom was the assertion of their individuality, then what could be the meaning of freedom? Just as

¹⁷ Locke, *An Essay*, Book II.

¹⁸ John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York : Columbia University Press, 1993).

knowledge had been reduced to external matters of fact (red or brown), freedom was reduced to choices between external objects. In empirical terms, it is not possible to speak of appropriate or inappropriate goals or even to evaluate choices in relation to self-fulfillment. The only concern is which objects among the sets of contraries I will choose by brute, changeable and even arbitrary will power and whether circumstances will allow me to carry out that choice. Such choices, of course, may not only differ from, but even contradict the immediate and long range objectives of other persons. This will require compromises and social contracts in the sense of Hobbes; John Rawls will even work out a formal set of such compromises.¹⁹ Throughout it all, however, the basic concern remains the ability to do as one pleases.

This includes two factors: The first is execution by which my will is translated into action. Thus, John Locke sees freedom as “being able to act or not act, according as we shall choose or will”;²⁰ Bertrand Russell sees it as “the absence of external obstacles to the realization of our desires.”²¹ The second factor is individual self-realization understood simply as the accomplishment of one’s good as one sees it. This reflects one’s personal idiosyncracies and temperament, which in turn reflect each person’s individual character.

In these terms, one’s goal can be only what appeals to one, with no necessary relation to real goods or to duties which one ought to perform.²² “Liberty consists in doing what one desires,”²³ and the freedom of a society is measured by the latitude it provides for the cultivation of individual patterns of life.²⁴ If there is any ethical theory in this, it can be only utilitarian, hopefully with enough breadth to recognize other people and their good, as well as my own. In practice, over time this comes to constitute a black-hole of self-centered consumption of physical goods in which both nature and the person are consumed; it is the essence of consumerism.

This level of freedom is reflected in the contemporary sense of “choice”. As a theory, this is underwritten by a pervasive series of legal precedents following Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes’ notion of privacy, which now has come to be recognized as a constitutional right. In the American legal system the meaning of freedom has been reduced to the arbitrariness of this choice as an end in itself. It should be noted that this

¹⁹ *The Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971).

²⁰ *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, A.C. Fraser, ed. (New York: Dover, 1959), II, chapter 21, sec 27; vol. I, p. 329.

²¹ *Skeptical Essays* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1952), p. 169.

²² Mortimer J. Adler, *The Idea of Freedom: A Dialectical Examination of the Conceptions of Freedom* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1958), p. 187.

²³ J.S. Mill, *On Liberty*, ch. 5, p. 15.

²⁴ Adler, p. 193.

derived from Locke's politically motivated decision (itself an exercise of freedom), not merely to focus upon empirical meaning, but to eliminate from public discourse any other knowledge. Its progressively rigorous implementation, which we have but sampled in the references to Hume and Carnap, constitutes an ideology in the sense of a selected and restrictive vision which controls minds and reduces freedom to willfulness. In this perspective, liberalism is grossly misnamed, and itself calls for a process of liberation and enrichment.

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

The result was not at all what had been expected. Rather than opening a new era of freedom and human fulfillment, by the 1930s the world was dominated by the oppressive ideologies of fascism, communism and colonial capitalism. The remainder of the 20th century was essentially a process of eliminating these in a process that led to a radical crisis. For beyond the Cold War and the bifurcation of humanity into opposing camps, we enter now upon the new unity of a global age in which the paradigm of individualism turns unbearably vicious.

In the economic order individualism could generate only an aggressive global capitalism in which the rich exploit and enslave the poor. In the political order this economic capital is converted into coercive military power which is sent into hegemonic preemptive campaigns of subjugation. These engender conflict rather than harmony and, as greater cultural self-awareness emerges, the world situation degenerates beyond the set of conflicts between nations restrained at least by the Geneva conventions, to Hobbes' war of all against all, in which mega power becomes weakness and lightly armed individuals or groups play the major roles.

Obviously there is urgent need for a new paradigm which will respond to the new global unity and promote the multiple persons and peoples therein.

A NEW PARADIGM: THE COMPLEX WHOLE

In the longer overview of paradigms for human life we have seen the two that mark ancient and modern times, namely the paradigms of unity and diversity, of the one and the many. We have seen also that we come now to the new juncture of globalization. This calls for a new synthesis of the previous two paradigms. In the present post-Cold War times there emerges the new all inclusive unity of global times. At the same time, there is a new interior self-awareness of a people emerging from colonialization and suppression by totalitarian ideologies. It is necessary now to search for a new paradigm capable of embracing both.

Martin Heidegger provides theory which can orient such a search. He points out that at a time of crisis one direction is pursued in the human search while others are left fallow. As the problem implicit in this direction mount, progress along this path becomes increasingly difficult and is limited to arithmetic increment. In that case, the road ahead may lie rather in a step back to the path not chosen but now pregnant with possibilities for geometric progress as it responds to accumulated need.

In this light, two factors now converge to suggest a new paradigm: one is the sense of the whole as articulated long ago by Nicholus of Cusa, the other is the discovery of subjectivity within the last century. Nicholus of Cusa was considered both the last of ancients, in that he saw all as oriented on the One, and the first of the moderns, due to such scientific insight as that of the revolution of the earth around the sun a century before Galileo. His suggestion for the reunion of the two was to focus less on the analytic disagregative procedure than on the unitive and synthetic. Rather than building an unstable unity from our partial grasp of the many, he centered his view on the whole, the meaning of which is shared by each of the parts.

For this, not unexpectedly, his approach is opposite to the empiricism of Locke and in some contrast even to discursive reasoning.

Knowledge

Discursive Reasoning. In his study of thinking,²⁵ Cusa distinguishes three levels of knowledge, the first two are discursive reasoning, the third is intellection. The first begins from sense knowledge of particular material objects. This is incremental as our experiences occur one by one and we begin to construct a map of the region, to use a simile of L. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.²⁶

But for Cusa the knowledge of the multiple physical things by the lower powers of sensation and imagination raises the question of the unity of things which must be treated in terms of the concepts of reason and intellect.²⁷ For the forms in things are not the true forms, but are clouded by the changeableness of matter.²⁸ The exact nature of anything, then, is unattainable by us except in analogies and figures grounded essentially in the global sense grasped by our higher powers.²⁹

Whereas sense knowledge is inadequate for a global vision, Cusa does not turn to innate knowledge or to a separate world of ideas, considering these to be unnecessary and distractive. Hence, he concludes (a) that sense knowledge is required; (b) that both the physical object and

²⁵ *Idiota de Mente / The Layman: about Mind*, tran. and ed. Clyde Lee Miller (New York: Abaris, 1979), pp. 53 and 55.

²⁶ Miller in *De Mente*, intro., p. 24.

²⁷ *De Mente*, 7, p. 63.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

the mind are active in the assimilation or shaping of the mind, (c) that in this process the mind with its global matrix is superior in that it informs or shapes the work of the senses, and (d) that it is unable fully to grasp the nature of the object in itself.

As a result discursive reasoning as regards physical objects is limited in a number of ways. First, it is piecemeal in that it develops only step by step, one thing at a time, in an ongoing temporal progression. Hence, on the macro level discursive reasoning can never know the entirety of reality. But neither, on the micro level can it comprehend any single entity completely in its nature or quality. This is true especially of the uniqueness which for humans is their personal and cultural identities. The paradox of attempting to think globally in these terms is that as we try to form overall unities we abstract more and more from what distinguishes or characterizes free and unique persons, so that the process becomes essentially depersonalizing: hence the excruciating character of the drama of the globalization as the central phenomenon of the present change of the millennia.

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

Cusa recognized also a second type of discursive reasoning, namely, that of mathematics, which does not share the limitations noted above. But here the objects are not living beings, but mental objects of the same nature as mind. Hence the mind can pivot on itself, using its own resources to construct and process concepts and to make judgments which are exact because concerned with what is not changing or material.³⁰ This is Hume's world of relations between ideas.³¹ But, as it deals only with the formal, rather than the existential, it cannot resolve the above-mentioned human problems but exacerbates them to the degree that its mode of discursive reasoning becomes exclusive.

Intellection. Hence Nicholas of Cusa turns to a third mode of mental assimilation, which is beyond the work of discursive reason, namely, intellection. Eugene Rice contrasts the two approaches to knowledge by likening discursive reasoning to a wayfarer walking through a valley and encountering things one by one, whereas intellection is like

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

³¹ *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Regnery, 1960), pp. 14-21.

being on a hill whence one surveys the entire valley at once.³² The latter view is global, and the particulars are understood as component parts; each thing has its proper reality but is also an integral constituent of the whole. It is important to note that the unity of the scene, as known by intellection, is constituted not by a mere assemblage of single entities juxtaposed in space or time, but by multiple participations in a unity. (As we shall see in the next section, these multiple things in the physical order also are limited images of the whole.)

Were we to express this in terms of modern thought, the distinction of analytic and synthetic modes of thought would help, but not at all suffice. With Descartes the moderns undertook a search for knowledge that was clear in the sense of identifying the simple natures of each thing and distinct in the sense that such knowledge should be sufficient at least to be able to distinguish one type of thing from all others.³³ This gave primacy to the analytic process of distinguishing all into its component set of simple natures. The supposition was that these were finite in number, that they could all be identified clearly and distinctly by the mind, and that they could then be reassembled by equally clear and distinct links in a process of synthesis.

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

For Cusa in contrast, intellection is knowledge in terms not of the parts, but of the whole in which all participate. Here the intellect grasps the meaning and value of the whole. By the imagination and reason, it works out the full range of possibilities and grasps how the many fit together: it “depends not upon the number of things which are known, but upon the imaginative thrust of the mind” to be able to know “all the multifarious possibilities which are open to being.”³⁴ Finally it is guided by the senses to discover which of these possibilities are actual. The significance of the actual beings then is not merely what we can garner by the senses, but what is known primarily by the intellect in terms of the whole.

The Aristotelians build knowledge from concrete, changing and hence limited things. Cusa's more Platonic heritage has him build knowledge rather in the global terms of the whole and ultimately of the One

³² Eugene Rice, “Nicholas of Cusa's Idea of Wisdom,” *Traditio* 13 (1957), 358.

³³ Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 2.

³⁴ David J. De Leonardis, *Ethical Implications of Unity and the Divine in Nicholas of Cusa* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1998), p. 60.

of which the mind as well as things are the images. Where these were but form for Plato, for Cusa they are existent, sharing in the active power of being.

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

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

Knowledge of the Absolute, in contrast, cannot be improved upon, but it is basically unreliable, for there is nothing to which the Absolute can be compared.³⁵ Hence, the negative way of saying what God is not and the recognition of our ignorance in that regard, constitute the relevant real knowledge, for which reason Cusa entitled a major work: *On Learned Ignorance*.³⁶

Here the issue of knowledge and belief become particularly central. For faith is defined classically as an act of intellect directed by the will. Before the absolute unity the intellect reaches its frontier. For as the human intellect is unable to compare it to anything else, it is unable to speak of it in positive terms. Hence its predications are essentially negative or what it is not: again a *docta ignorantia*.

Yet it is not engaged here by accident. The whole thrust of reason which brings one to the divine is, as Kant would later acknowledge in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, logically correct. Only because he had inextricably linked intellect to sense did Kant conclude that reason had exceeded its limit. When Cusa reaches this level and enters into a *via negativa*, his intellect is propelled further. As with convergent lines which extend beyond one's field of vision, one realizes that they will, and, indeed, must, meet. Similarly the intellect takes one beyond the field of reasoning regarding contraries to the One or absolute unity of which the great monotheism speak in faith. Knowledge then is perfected in belief affirming the point of convergent unity. This echoes the first paradigm of unity reflected in the totem, in Parmenides and Plato's One and in Aristotle's "life divine".

³⁵ Henry Bett, *Nicholas of Cusa* (London: Meuthin, 1932), p. 180.

³⁶ Trans. G. Heron (London: Routledge, Kegan, Paul, 1954).

We have seen the limitations of knowledge constructed on the basis of multiple limited beings understood as opposed one to another. Unity constructed thereupon not only never manages to grasp such beings fully but simply discards what is not known. Thus the uniqueness of the person cannot be recognized and is lost. Conversely, the unities which can be constructed of such contrasting reality remain external and antithetical so that, to the degree that it succeeds, discursive reasoning is in danger of oppressing the uniqueness of the participants. This is the classical dilemma of the one and the many; it is the particular challenge of globalization in our day and the basic reason why it is feared as a new mode of (economic) imperialism and oppression.

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

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

Metaphysics

If the particular means for conflict are now so powerful as to be capable of overwhelming the means for survival, we are faced with the imperative of finding how to proceed in terms of a capacity to grasp the whole. This calls for Cusa's power of intellection, joined with that of the imagination, to project what we cannot clearly conceive of the individual person and the divine, to protect what we can only acknowledge of our creative freedom and that of others, and to promote the growth of which we are capable, but which lies hidden in a future which is not yet.

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

In response to these questions, Cusa would begin by identifying four types or levels of unity:

1. Individual unity—the identity in which each exists as itself in contrast to others.

2. The unity of each individual being as within the whole of being. This is important in grappling with the issue of globalization in our times and is within the focus of the remainder of this chapter.

3. The unity of the universe by which the individuals together form not merely a conglomeration of single entities, as with a pile of rocks, but a unified whole which expresses the fullness of being. This may be the central contribution of Cusa's thought for a study of globalization.

4. Absolute unity—the One which, being without distinction, plurality or potentiality, is all that being can be, the fullness of being, and hence not subject to greater or lesser degree.³⁷

The fourth is central and foundational for a metaphysics of the issue of globalization, but, as there is nothing to which the absolute can be compared, knowledge here is more negative, i.e. saying what God is not and, by recognizing our ignorance, this becomes a learned ignorance, as Cusa would call it.³⁸ Here, we shall focus rather on the ontology and its ethical implication. This directs our attention to the second and especially the third of Cusa's senses of unity to which the recent development of a global awareness also corresponds, namely, to the whole or total universe in which we have our being, live and intersect with nature and with others.

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

Contraction: Diversity in Unity. The situation is delicate however, for in so doing it is imperative to avoid the kind of abstractive thinking described above, in which personal uniqueness is dismissed and only the universal remains. Cusa's solution is found in the notion of contraction, that is, to begin from the significance of the whole and to recognize it in the very reality of every individual, so that the individual shares in something of the ultimate or definitive reality of the whole of being. One is not then an insignificant speck, as would be the case were I to be measured quantitatively and contrasted to the broad expanse of the globe. Rather, I have the importance of the whole as it exists in and as me—and the same is true of other persons and of the parts of nature.

³⁷ G. McLean, *Plenitude and Participation: The Unity of Man in God* (Madras: University of Madras, 1978).

³⁸ *Of Learned Ignorance*, trans. G. Heron (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1954).

The import of this can be seen through comparison with other attempts to state this participation of the part in the whole. For Plato this was a repetition or imaging by each of the one ideal form. Aristotle soon ceased to employ the term participation as image (*mimesis*) because of the danger it entailed of reducing the individual to but a shadow of what was truly real. Cusa, too, rejected the separately existing ideas or ideal forms. Instead what had been developed in the Christian cultures was a positive notion of existence as act³⁹ whereby each participant in being was made to be in itself. This is retained by Nicholas of Cusa.

But he would emphasize that the being in which this person or thing participates is the whole of being.⁴⁰ This does not mean that in a being there is anything alien to its own identity, but that the reality of each being has precisely the meaning of the whole as contracted to this unique instance. To be, then, is not simply to fall in some minimal way on this side of nothingness, but rather to partake of the totality of being and the meaning of the whole of being. Indeed, it is to be a realization of the whole in this unique contraction or instance. It retains its identity, but does so in and of the whole.

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

After the manner of the medievals, Cusa saw the plurality of beings of the universe as constituting a hierarchy of being. Each being was equal in that it constituted a contraction of the whole, but not all were equally contracted. Thus an inorganic being was more contracted than a living organism, and a conscious being was less contracted than either of them. This constituted a hierarchy or gradation of beings. By thinking globally or

³⁹ G. McLean, *Tradition, Harmony and Transcendence* (Washington: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994), pp. 95-102.

⁴⁰ *Of Learned Ignorance*, pp. 84-88.

in terms of the whole, Cusa was able to appreciate the diversity of being in a way that heightened this ordered sense of unity.⁴¹

This internal relationship is made possible precisely by a global sense of the whole.⁴² For this Cusa may have drawn more directly from the Trinity, but this, in turn, is conceived through analogy to the family of which individuals are contractions. In a family all the persons are fully members and in that sense fully of the same nature. But the father generates the son while the son proceeds from the father. Hence, while mutually constituted by the same relation of one to the other, the father and son are distinct precisely as generator and generated. Life, and all that the father is and has, is given from the father to the son. Correspondingly, all that the son is and has is received from the father. As giver and receiver the two are distinguished in the family precisely as the different terms of the one relation. Hence each shares in the very definition of the other: the father is father only by the son, and vice versa.

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

⁴¹ Lovejoy wrote classically of *The Great Claim of Being* (Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (New York: Harper, 1960) in which each being was situated between, and in relation to, the next lower and the next higher in the hierarchy. We had, in other words, our neighbors with whom we shared, but there was always the danger that we were correspondingly distanced from other beings. Thus the sense of the human as “lord of nature” could and did turn into exploitation and depredation. Cusa's sense of beings as contractions of the whole unites each one intimately to all other realities in one's being, one's realization, and hence one's concerns. This converts the sense of master into that of steward for the welfare of the parts of nature which do not possess consciousness or freedom. These become the ecological concerns of humankind.

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

Moreover, both these metaphors of a chain of being and of a mosaic are static. They leave the particular or individual beings as juxtaposed externally one to the other. Neither takes account of the way in which beings interact with the others or, more deeply, are even constituted internally by these relations to others. What Cusa sees for the realm of being is relationships which are not external juxtapositions, but internal to the very make-up of the individuals.

⁴² *Of Learned Ignorance*, I, 9-10.

of the father and of the son, each of whom are particular contractions of the whole.

Cusa speaks of this as an *explicatio* or unfolding of the perfection of being, to which corresponds the converse, namely, a folding together (*complicatio*) of the various levels of being by which the perfection of the whole is constituted. Hence Cusa's hierarchy of being has special richness when taken in the light of his sense of a global unity. Cusa continues the sense of overall gradation, seeing it in terms of mutual inclusion rather than of exclusion. Plants include the perfection of the material order as well as life. Animals are not self-conscious, but they do integrate material, animate and conscious perfection. Humans include all four: inorganic, animate, conscious and spiritual life and, thus, are truly the nucleus of a unity that is global.

A Dynamic Global Order. Thus far we have been speaking especially in terms of existence and formal causality by which the various beings within the global reality are in specific degrees of contractions of the whole. To this, however, should be added efficient and final causality by which the ordered universe of reality takes on a dynamic and even developmental character. This has a number of implications: directedness, dynamism, cohesion and complementarity.⁴³ Cusa's global vision is of a uniquely active universe of being.

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

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

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

⁴³ De Leonardis, pp. 233-236.

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

3. *Cohesion and Complementarity in a Global Unity*: Every being is then related to every other in this grand community almost as parts of one body. Each depends upon the other in order to survive, and by each the whole realizes its goal. But a global vision, such as that of Cusa, takes a step further; for if each part is a contraction of the whole, then, as with the DNA for the individual cell, “in order for anything to be what it is it must also be in a certain sense everything which exists.”⁴⁴ The other is not alien, but part of my own definition.

From this it follows that the realization of each is required for the realization of the whole, just as each team member must perform well for the success of the whole. But in Cusa's global view the reverse is also true, namely, it is by acting with others and, indeed, in the service of others or for their good that one reaches one's full realization. This again is not far from the experience of the family, but tends to be overlooked in commercial relations. It is by interacting with and for others that one activates one's creative possibilities and most approximates the full realization of one's being. Thus, “The goal of each is to become harmoniously integrated into the whole of being and thereby to achieve the fullest development of its own unique nature.”⁴⁵

A NEW PARADIGM: THE COMPLEX WHOLE INTIMATELY INTERRELATED

The Challenge

Going back to the point of transition from ancient to modern has made it possible to discover there as the path not followed Cusa's sophisticated approach of thinking in terms of the whole. As we enter upon global times this becomes newly important.

But is it sufficient? If the modern period was one of intense individualism and if human experience is cumulative then it is unlikely that this sense of freedom will be abandoned. This raises two further questions, not previously resolved by the paradigms of unity and diversity, namely, can Cusa's vision of unity be enriched in terms which enable a deeper and more fulfilling sense of the person, and can the self awareness of the person

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

escape solipsistic self-centeredness by benefiting from the new sense of the global whole in which we live.

This would not be possible by returning to the atomistic isolates of the past whose highest goal is competition first for scarce resources and then for competition's sake. This was the sense of self that emerged from nominalism and empiricism, but which now has made for an ever more violent and repressive world. Indeed, projected onto the political order the attempt to live individualism on a universal scale can lead only either to the chaos of Hobbes' war of all against all, or to individuals taking on the burden of imposing a universal order.

This proposal was put forward in the document "The New American Century"⁴⁶ which set the pattern for the American international policy of the last decade. What is proposed was a sole superpower whose first obligation is to see that it can never be challenged from without, and whose obligation is to impose a political order on the rest of the world. Without escaping from the modern paradigm of individualism, this has meant a world run in terms of the culture and self-interest of America, which then set out to impose democracy on the vast Islamic civilization.

The resulting destabilization of the Middle East, at first seemingly intentional and then unstoppable, makes manifest the end of the feasibility of the individualist paradigm at this turn of the millennia. The fatal isometric is that the greater the 'hard power' which can be brought to bear the greater the resistance, till the might of the USSR is checkmated by the lightly armed Mujahadin of Afghanistan and of the US is equally powerless in Iraq. In between, Russia complains that it is suffering from the 'hard power' of the West while it in turns exercises similar force against countries in its own sphere of influence. The problem then is not one of tactics or even of basic strategy, but "that things now fall apart: the center will not hold." This calls for an additional dimension to the new paradigm, i.e., for one that enables the multiple to be essentially complementary not only in fact, but in intent. It must allow for the recognition of the freedom and dignity of self and other and achieve human fulfillment, not by suppressing but by promoting them.

Response

This may be newly possible, for now humankind is not restricted to thinking only in objective terms whereby each being stands over against all others. In the last three quarters of the 20th century, there has gradually emerged a new appreciation of the human interiority of mind and heart.

Indeed, earlier a few philosophers did point to this new dimension of human awareness. Shortly after Descartes, Pascal's assertion "*Que la raison a des raisons, que la raison ne comprend pas*" would remain famous

⁴⁶ Statement of Principles, Project for the New American Century (www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm).

if unheeded, as would Vico's prediction that the new reason would give birth to a generation of brutes—intellectual brutes, but brutes nonetheless. Later Kierkegaard would follow Hegel with a similar warning. None of these voices would have strong impact while the race was on to “conquer” the world by a supposedly omni-sufficient scientific reason. But as human problems mounted, the adequacy of reason to handle the deepest problems of human dignity and transcendent purpose came under sustained questioning and new attention was given to search for additional human capabilities.

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

There has been a strikingly parallel development in philosophy. At the beginning of this century, it had appeared that the rationalist project of stating all in clear and distinct objective terms was close to completion. This was to be achieved either in the empirical terms of the positivist tradition of sense knowledge or in the formal and essentialist terms of the Kantian intellectual tradition. Whitehead wrote that at the turn of the century, when with Bertrand Russell he went to the First World Congress of Philosophy in Paris, it seemed that, except for some details of application, the work of physics had been essentially completed. To the contrary, however, like the experience of Augustine and Descartes described above, the very attempt to finalize scientific knowledge with its most evolved concepts made manifest the radical insufficiency of the objectivist approach and led to renewed appreciation of the importance of subjectivity.

Wittgenstein: He began by writing his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*⁴⁷ on the Lockean supposition that significant knowledge consisted in constructing a mental map or picture corresponding point to point to the external world as perceived by sense experience. In such a project the spiritual element of understanding, i.e., the grasp of the relations between the points on this mental map and the external world, was relegated to the margin as simply “unutterable”. Later experience in teaching children, however, led Wittgenstein to the conclusion that his empirical mental mapping was simply not what was going on in human knowledge. In his *Blue and Brown Books*⁴⁸ and in his subsequent

⁴⁷ Tr. C.K. Ogden (London: Methuen, 1981).

⁴⁸ (New York: Harper and Row).

Philosophical Investigations,⁴⁹ Wittgenstein shifted the human consciousness or intentionality, which previously he had relegated to the periphery, to the very center of concern. The focus of his philosophy was no longer the supposedly objective replication of the external world, but the human construction of language and of worlds of meaning.⁵⁰

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

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

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

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

⁴⁹ Tr. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1958).

⁵⁰ Brian Wicker, *Culture and Theology* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1966), pp. 68-88.

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

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

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

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

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

It is in this very direction that we might find the roots of traditional doctrines seemingly so foreign to minds conditioned to think in terms of sensorially observable objects: doctrines like Plotinus' world-intelligence, Aristotle's agent intellect, Augustine's divine illumination, German Idealism's Absolute Spirit are somehow necessarily related.⁵¹

Yet there remains a gulf between the agent-intellects of the medieval philosophers and the *atman-Brahman* of the Hindu on the one hand, and Husserl's transcendental ego, on the other. Husserl is looking for the essence or quintessence of consciousness. As this must be a consciousness of consciousness he is in danger of entering as it were into a hall of mirrors and becoming trapped in an idealism.

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

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

Heidegger: The step from consciousness to being was taken up in phenomenological terms by Husserl's successor, Martin Heidegger (1889-1976).⁵² In pursuit of the transcendental ego as the quintessence of conscious life Husserl bracketed the concrete existential reality of engagement in the world, thereby losing actual life in search of the essence of life. To correct this Heidegger advanced the phenomenological project from the order of consciousness to that of being.

He focused concretely on the human being living in the flesh and through time who experiences. But this is twofold. In his earlier work, which culminated in *Being and Time*, the perspective was not that of single things, or even of these as beings, but of the being of these beings. For this

⁵¹ Robert E. Wood, pp. 140-141.

⁵² Gadamer, pp. 225-234.

he turned to the being which is conscious of itself, that is, to the *dasein*, or the human being who is not only given but aware of his givenness. Here the major point of insight which frees the mind and takes it beyond the isolated singularity of things is their temporal character. On the one hand, we are creatures of past decisions which create this world which we did not make but in which we find ourselves thrown. On the other hand, we act in terms of a future toward which we project ourselves.

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

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

The difference is important for the work of hermeneutics. The earlier Heidegger provided rich insight into our temporal conditions and how this could be a mode of awareness of being and of its realization in our lives. Thus, the earlier Heidegger sees the special role of hermeneutics to be that of questioning being—almost calling it to account for itself in history; for the earlier Heidegger this is the essence of the human person. Only in questioning does man become truly himself, and correlatively only as answer does being disclose itself. Indeed, by this questioning Being becomes history and in a sense depends upon man as the place of its manifestation.

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

In this later state, a whole new terminology appears in Heidegger's later writings. Man does not summon Being at will by his questioning, but is himself more fundamentally gift. He must wait upon Being to manifest itself, not only in the sense of awaiting the time of *kyros* or manifestation, but of responding to, waiting upon, and *shepherding* beings in time. Hence, the properly human attitude is not one of questioning, but of thanksgiving.

This most deeply inspires and gives dynamism to human life, as it is thanksgiving for the gift of one's very being. This gift of life can never be repaid in kind; it must be received and treasured, interpreted and shaped; and in turn creatively passed on to others. This itself is a hermeneutic process; indeed, it is the essence of all hermeneutics.

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

In the New Paradigm: Justice Implemented by Love

This bespeaks, then, not only a whole in which all the components are rich with the meaning of the whole, but the ability of some of the parts in their higher, i.e., their human realization, to be self-aware and self-relating. This is truly a new paradigm for the global age. By economics and communications we are cast into a new mega or global age in which the whole as the unity suggested by Nicholas of Cusa comes to the fore. This, however, need not be a submersion or suppression of the uniqueness of the person, as would be the case if this were seen only in material terms, i.e., as a matter of parts outside of parts, the definition of quantity. Instead, appreciated in terms of the human integration of matter and spirit, these relations can have both the independence and freedom of the self-conscious subject and the breadth and intimacy of a human heart able to reach out without limit and have the concerns of others without restriction.

Such a paradigm was not possible for the ancients who stressed unity at the cost of multiplicity, for Locke who had individuals without unity, or even for Cusa who had unity without subjectivity. But neither is it possible now for the liberal who would value freedom at the expense of unity or for the neo-conservative who can envisage only the unity of the hegemon at the cost of the freedom and dignity of all others.

What is proposed here is rather that the ancient paradigm of unity and the modern paradigm of diversity can now be integrated and superseded in a paradigm of unity that is constituted by Cusa's sense of the whole enabled by the phenomenologist sense of human interiority. In this light, the global unity can be the place for personal emergence and by the same stroke for an intensification of community that will bind together in a mutual reinforcing manner person and community with both nature and God.

Here it is important to return also to Cusa's contrast of two levels of knowledge, reason and intellect. To review, earlier our investigation took us from the ancient paradigm of unity to the modern paradigm of diversity. In turn, the present challenge of globalization called us to go beyond toward the development of a new paradigm which would recognize the whole and in its terms understand in their full value the complementary nature of the

parts. The philosophy of Nicholas of Cusa did this well, and contemporary phenomenologies enable us to see these complementary dimensions from within in terms of the intentionality by which they relate to one another. In addition, we saw how belief can carry this sense of unity deeper to a convergent integration of all on the basis of an ultimate unity.

But it is possible to go further still. Above we took into account not only knowledge but belief in order to open not only in negative but in positive terms to the ultimate unity in which all can be appreciated as complementary in the global whole. It is important now to appreciate as well the conscious attitude of one to another of the complementary components of the whole. For this we must return to belief or faith and note that it is intimately associated not only with intellect and knowledge, but also with will and love. Indeed, Augustine and his tradition would put the final emphasis upon the latter, and upon Plato's Good as diffusive by being attractive. But even Thomas, while defining faith as an act of the intellect, would recognize that it is ordered by the will of which the proper virtue is love or charity.

For the new paradigm this is of fundamental importance for conjoining and transcending the previous two paradigms of unity and multiplicity. For if the multiple persons and peoples of our global whole are still to be fully recognized as remaining unique and free they must be oriented positively one toward another. To be seen speculatively as complementary in nature is not enough for a global unity. Rather, the possibilities of complementarity and mutual help must be actuated by a dynamic unitive force. This is charity or love.

Mohamad Iqbal has stated this well in contrasting philosophy and religion:

The aspiration of religion soars higher than that of philosophy. Philosophy is an intellectual view of things; and as such, does not care to go beyond a concept which can reduce all the rich variety of experience to a system. It sees reality from a distance as it were. Religion seeks a closer contact with Reality. The one is theory; the other is living experience, association, intimacy. In order to achieve this intimacy thought must rise higher than itself, and find its fulfillment in an attitude of mind which religion describes as prayer—one of the last words on the lips of the Prophet of Islam.⁵³

Metaphysics is displaced by psychology, and religious life develops the ambition to come into direct contact with the ultimate reality. It is here that religion becomes a matter of

⁵³ Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religions*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (Lahore, Pakistan: Iqbal Academy and Institute of Islamic Culture, 1984), p. 143.

personal assimilation of life and power; and the individual achieves a free personality, not by releasing himself from the fetters of the law, but by discovering the ultimate source of the law within the depths of his own consciousness.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

PART II

HUMAN ACTION, MEANING, AND STORY

CHAPTER 3
ON CONFUCIAN PHILOSOPHY
OF HISTORY

VINCENT SHEN

GOD'S REVEALING: JUDEO-CHRISTIAN VERSUS CONFUCIAN

In this discussion of Confucian philosophy of history, I'll not try to analyze the methods or terms used by historians or the nature of historiographical inquiry and its place in the map of knowledge. Rather I will be studying what is revealed as meaningfulness through history. Since there is no universality pure and simple in the human historical world, to think philosophically is not only to elaborate a purely philosophical argument, but rather to reveal meaningfulness in the historical and local context. By this I mean philosophical analysis should go always with, but not without, historical and local knowledge.

One thing that has always intrigued me is whether there is something in Chinese culture that is similar to the idea of God's revealing through the Holy Scriptures, as in the Judeo-Christian tradition. For example, in Confucianism, which is the dominant current of thought in Chinese culture and in which we find texts characterized as Scriptures (*jing*), can we find something similar to God's revelation? This discussion on Confucian philosophy of history gives me a good chance, and, indeed, the pleasure to answer this question right from the beginning and to give a comparative context for making explicit the Confucian sense of revealing meaningfulness.

The name "Confucius" was the latinization of Kong Fuzi (Teacher or Master Kong 551-479 BCE) by the early Jesuits in China in the late 16th century. The term Confucianism was used to name the school of thought founded by him. However, in China, we call him simply Kongzi (Kong 孔 is the family name, Qiu 丘 his first name, also known as Zhongni 仲尼). We call his school *rujia* (school of *ru*) instead of Confucianism. But it should be noted that, historically, *ru* (儒) existed much earlier than Confucius. Most of them came from the Yin people of Shang dynasty (1766-1122 BCE) which was replaced by the Zhou dynasty (1122-221 BCE). The *rus* were familiar with all the details of practice in the funeral, sacrificial or other rituals. They helped the Duke of Zhou in establishing the Zhouli, the Rites of the Zhou Dynasty, from their Shang legacy and served, in the time of the Western Zhou (1122-771 BCE) in ancient China. They were officials of the middle class and related to education and public and private rites. In the Spring and Autumn Period (722-481 BCE), some of them lost their offices and earned their living as teachers of rites and ritual coordinators. What

they taught were the six arts: ritual, music, archery, driving, writing and calculating. Confucius, whose ancestors were Yin people from Song State and moved from there to Lu State, in the Shandong area, served more or less the same function as one of the *ru*. He was the most famous and influential among the *rus* by teaching the largest number of students (3000 students), and systematically organized his teaching materials into six parts, which later became the Six Scriptures: *Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, *Books of Rites*, *Book of Changes*, *Book of Music*, *Annals of Spring and Autumn*. These were the founding scriptures of Confucianism. Most importantly, he had given a philosophical foundation to his teaching by a transcendental derivation from *ren* (humaneness) to *yi* (rightness) to *li* (rituality). Although the term *rujia* (Confucian school) appeared only in the *Shiji* (Record of the Grand Historian) of Sima Qian in 100 BC, Confucius had earlier formed a community that had a very strong consciousness of belonging to a school, though later divided into several sects.

Since the *Book of Music* was lost during the First Qin Emperor (221-207BCE) who threw Confucian books into the fire¹, more realistically we have only the Five Confucian Scriptures (*wujing*): *Book of Odes*, *Book of Documents*, *Books of Rites*, *Book of Changes*, *Annals of Spring and Autumn*. Among them, *Book of Documents* and the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* are properly historical books, although all of them supply us with precious historical documents concerning the history of that period, as well as ideas and practices that have profoundly determined all later generations. In this sense, we can say as Zhang Xuecheng (1738-1801) said that “All Six Scriptures are history” (六經皆史).

In fact, as we will see, there is a movement of thought from the revealing of God’s will to the revealing of meaningfulness of existence in Chinese religious and philosophical history. Before I enter into the details of this exploration, I’ll first put it into a broader and comparative context by referring to Paul Ricoeur’s analysis of the concept of “revelation” in the Bible². For Paul Ricoeur, the Bible, conceived as revealing the word of God, contains various forms of discourse by which revelation is to be expressed: prophetic discourse, narrative discourse, prescriptive discourse, sapiential discourse and poetic discourse.

First, the Biblical prophetic discourse: this could be characterized by first, its predictive visions or unveiling of the future, even that of the “last days”, therefore including apocalyptic predictions, as revealed by God, in the *Revelation to John*; and second, the structure of double authorship shown in all the *Prophets*, such as “Listen, you heaven, earth, attend, for

¹ The *Yueji*, *Notes on Music*, in the *Book of Rites* could be seen as a residual part of it.

² Paul Ricoeur, “Herméneutique de l’idée de Révélation”, in *La Révélation*, par P.Ricoeur, E. Levinas, E. Haulotte, E. Cornélis, Cl. Geffré, Bruxelles: Publications des Facultés Universitaires Saint-Louis, 1977.pp.15-54

Yahweh is speaking...” (Isaiah 1:2)³ or “The words of Yahweh were addressed to me...” So, the Lord Yaweh says this...” (*Ezekiel*)⁴. Behind the prophet’s mouth, there are God’s words. In comparison with these, we don’t find prophetic discourse in the sense of double authorship in the Chinese classical text. But, since the diviner predicted the will of God in the future, he was somehow playing the role of a prophet. This is especially true in the *Fragments of Shang Divination* and the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes* where the final results of divination may be seen as representing the Will of *di* or *shangdi*. This is most clear in the *Fragments of Shang Divination* where we read texts such as, “The King divined as such...With the approval of *di*” (帝若)”*di* does not approve” (帝不若).” The King makes the divination, and says: “the result is auspicious, with the approval of *di*.” (王占曰：吉，帝若). Note here that *shangdi* approved passively the demand of kings and diviners but never took the initiative to reveal Himself, as in the case of the *Bible*. Also we can’t find apocalyptic literature in the Confucian Scriptures, although it is true that we can find some cyclical eschatological idea of catastrophe (*jie*劫) in Religious Daoism. This is worthy of further comparative study of the Chinese and Christian concepts of eschatology.

Second, revelation is also expressed by the narrative genre of discourse in the Pentateuch, the Deuteronomic History, the synoptic Gospels and the Book of Acts...etc. God’s revealing here is done through those “history-making events”, or in Jacques Ellul and Paul Ricoeur’s terms, the founding events(*événements fondateurs*), such as the election of Abraham, the Exodus, the anointing of David,... etc., in the Old Testament, and the birth, teaching, death and resurrection of Christ for the early church. The idea of revelation then appears as connected to the very character of these events and the plots that connect many events into a unity. The faith of Israel and that of the early church are tied up here in the confession of the transcendent character of such nuclear founding and instituting events, seen as the imprint, mark, or trace of God’s act.

In comparison, we can find this kind of narrative revealing also in Chinese history; those *événements fondateurs* of Chinese people recorded in the *Books of Documents*, *Annals of Spring and Autumn* and the three *Commentaries of the Annals*, themselves became later also as *jing* in the Confucian *shisan jing* (Thirteen Scriptures of Confucianism). Chinese people are in particular fond of looking into historical founding events as the revealing of *dao* (the Way) and the meaningfulness of individual and collective existence.

The third form of expressing God’s revelation in the Bible is the prescriptive discourse. It corresponds to symbolic expression like “the will of God” or covenantal rules as prescriptions to be brought into practice. According to Ricoeur, the translation, beginning with the Septuagint, of the

³ *Jerusalem Bible*, London: Darton, Longman & Todd Ttd., 1985 p.880

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.1022-1055

word *Torah* by *nomos* or “law” is misleading. It had the effect of enclosing the idea of an imperative from above within the idea of a divine law. Even worse, if viewed from the perspective of Kant’s moral philosophy of autonomy, the revealed laws such as the Ten Commandments are seen as kind of heteronomy. In contemporary China, this creates also some misunderstanding between modern Neo-Confucians and Christianity. The modern Neo-Confucians always criticize Christian ethics as *heteronomy*, while they presume Confucian ethics as *emphasizing autonomy*. For Ricoeur, Biblical laws are to be understood as part of the Covenant that designates a whole complex of relations, the core of which is love and justice. For Jesus, in the Kingdom of love the Law would be fulfilled to its last iota. For Him, the Law and the Prophets were summed up in the Golden Rule from Deuteronomy: “So always treat others as you would like them to treat you; that is the meaning of the Law and the Prophets.” (Matt. 7:12). All laws could be summarized in this: “Love God and love others as yourself.” In other words, all laws are completed and subsumed under the infinite generosity and unconditional love.

In comparison, we find in Confucian Scriptures, the ideas of cosmic regulation based on the concept of the Heavenly *dao* and codes of human behavior based on the concept of *li*, the ritual. Both reveal in a prescriptive sense the way to a meaningful life. In Confucianism, even if virtue has priority over obligations, still the meaningfulness of life cannot go without *li*. Reciprocity is also its golden rule, either negatively as “Do not impose on others what you yourself do not want” (*Analects* 15:24), or more positively as “A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes others, wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others.” (*Analects*. 6: 28) However, even if the inner dynamism of humaneness could be extended to all human beings and all things, still in Confucianism we don’t find the infinite generosity and unconditional love.

For Ricoeur, revelation is expressed also in the form of wisdom, in the Wisdom Books such as the *Job*, the *Proverbs*, the *Ecclesiastes/Qoheleth*, the *Book of Wisdom*, the *Ecclesiasticus/Ben Sira*, etc. Wisdom fulfills one of religion’s fundamental functions in binding together *ethos* and *cosmos*, the sphere of human action and the sphere of the world. This most important in the very point of their discordance: suffering, and more precisely, in unjust suffering. Wisdom teaches us how to endure, how to suffer, suffering. For Ricoeur, this is the most profound meaning of the book of *Job*, the best example of wisdom.

In comparison, we can say that all Confucian Books like the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, the *Zhongyong* (Doctrine of the Mean) and the *Daxue* (Great Learning) are all books of wisdom. But their wisdom consists in self-cultivation and harmonization of relationships, dealing with the essential problem of how to lead a harmonious life in the society and with the universe. There were not many words touching on the problem of suffering. We have to wait until the Buddhist Scriptures to come in China to tell us about suffering in its doctrine of Four Noble truths, but these were

later replaced by Chinese Mahayana Buddhism's interest in Enlightenment and the One Mind. The *Yijing* (*Book of Changes*), especially the *Yizhuan* (Interpretations of the *Yijing*) puts emphasis on the harmony and creativity of the universe and human working as assisting the cosmic creativity.

Finally, the biblical revelation is manifested in the form of hymnic or poetic discourse, like the *Psalms* and *Song of Songs*. For Ricoeur, the Psalter may be said to be revealed in the sense that the sentiments or affections expressed in praise, supplication, thanksgiving, supplication, and celebration are all engendered by what the heart allows to exist and become manifest in surpassing *pathos* and suffering discerned in wisdom transforming suffering. As Ricoeur says, "Revelation is this very formation of feelings that transcends the everyday modalities of human feeling."⁵

In the Confucian Scriptures, it is in the *Book of Odes* and *Book of Music* (or its residue in the *Notes on Music/Joyfulness*). The *Book of Odes*, like the *Psalms* and *Song of Songs*, expresses and thereby interprets through poetic language human affectivity as the original mode of human existence, thereby revealing the truth or authenticity of life itself. The recently unearthed manuscripts, *Confucius on the Book of Odes*, start by saying "Poetry could not be without willing; music could not be without feeling; literature could not be without wording."⁶ Also, in the unearthed *Guodian Bamboo Slips*, a text entitled *Xing Zhi Ming Chu* (Human Nature comes from Mandate), now attributed to the so-called "Zisi-Mencius school", says:

Dao begins with human feeling,
Human feeling is born from human nature,
Those who begin with human feeling,
Will end up with righteousness."⁷

Dao starts to reveal itself through human feeling and accomplishes itself in ethical relations. A careful reading of the *Book of Odes* shows that affective relations between men and women, subjects and kings, human beings and Heaven, are identified sometimes with love, sometimes with joy, sometimes with anxiety, sometime with bitterness, sometimes even with hateful blame, depending on the situation. Relations are affected by situations and are often expressed through poetic language. Confucius' comment of the function of poetry seems to have grasped this web of existence, constituted by relations as can be found in the *Book of Odes*. It evokes in us an image of Confucius as a great thinker, not that of a stringent

⁵ Paul Ricoeur, "Herméneutique de l'idée de Révélation", p.30

⁶ *Kongzi Shilun*(Confucius on the Book of Odes), in the *Shanghai Museum's Chu Bamboo Books of the Warring States*, Vol.1, edited by Ma Chenyuan, Shanghai: Shanghai Museum, 2001, p.123

⁷ Jinmen Museum, *Bamboo Slips of Guodian Chu Tomb*, Beijing: Wenwu Press, 1998 p.179. My English translation.

political and ethical philosopher, but first of all a human person in whom we could recognize the authenticity of existence, the primacy of affectivity over discourse, and the primacy of existence over thinking.

Even if all Six Scriptures are imbued with historical meaning in the broad sense, I'll focus, in the following, only on history in the strict sense and discuss the revealing of meaningfulness that constitutes the main content of Chinese philosophy of history. I'll focus, therefore, only on the *Fragments of Shang Divination*, *Books of Documents*, the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* and its three *Commentaries*, and the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes* that contains also a philosophy of history. In fact, as I see it, the *Fragments of Shang Divination* and *Books of Documents* contain a philosophy of history as *political theology*; the *Annals*, its *Commentaries* and the *Yijing* or *Book of Changes* contain a philosophy of history as historical ontology; but the *Gongyang's Commentary to the Annals of Spring and Autumn* and its later interpreters such as Dong Zhongshu, He Xiu and much closer to us, Kang Yuwei, have developed it into a progressivist ideology.

WU—HISTORIAN AND HISTORY AS POLITICAL THEOLOGY

The earliest form of historians in China were *wu* (巫), whose functions were very similar to those of a shaman, supposed to be capable of communicating with ghost and spirits, who served as professional diviners, using objects, dream contents and astronomical phenomena as revealing messages from God or the spirits. Therefore we may call the Chinese earliest historians *wu*-historian (*wushi* 巫史): *wu* conducted and recorded the results of divination. This in itself was an important part of the state ritual, and what was asked in each divination was an important event for the state. This is to say that Chinese history started with divinatory records, or records of God's revealing, usually found on the shoulder bones of bigger animals such as cows and sheep, or on tortoise shell. Such inscriptions were also found on bronze stencils, or inscriptions on the bronze tripods. These records showed first, the time and place of the divination and the name of the diviner(s); second, the intended question for the divination; third, the divinatory explanation concerning the revealing of good fortune or misfortune of the act in question. This was based on the interpretation of the revealed signs on the bones or tortoiseshell; words of verification that recorded the facts that verified the revelation of God's will.⁸ These, indeed, were the first historical records in China.

The meaning of history in the Chinese tradition could be revealed also by the etymological composition of the word "history" and "historian", *shi* 史, which was related to two things, first the idea of messenger and

⁸Wu Haoshen, Panyu, *Zhong Guo JiaguXue Shi*, Shanghai: Shanghai Renmin Press, 1985: pp. 86-87 (吳浩坤、潘悠, 《中國甲骨學史》, 上海人民出版社, 1985, 頁 86-87。)

ambassador, somehow like Hermes in ancient Greek mythology, in the sense of a messenger mediating the divine and the human. This was the role *wu* played by the shaman-historian. Also the term historian 史 was related to the idea of “centrality”, *zhong* 中 in Chinese—in the sense of impartiality.

Historically speaking, the Shang people had a very strong faith in a Supreme God on High, named as *di* or *shangdi*. This notion arguably evolved from their cult of ancestry, that dominated over a pantheon of divinities composed of natural powers (like the sun, the Yellow River, mountains, etc.), former lords, and pre-dynastic ancestors. Clearly, the Shang people were very religious. Their kings and princes always practiced divination before any major action was taken. Special officers were in charge of the ritual, named as *buren* 卜人或 *zhenren* 貞人 (diviners). As we read in the chapter, “Great Model” (*Hongfan*) of the *Book of Documents*, the legacy was supposed to come from the Shang Dynasty, as told by Shang’s Viscount of *Ji* to King Wu of Zhou. In the Seventh Category we read:

The Seventh Category is the Examination of doubts. Select and appoint officers for divination by tortoise shells and by stalks, and command them thus to divine...The calculation of the passage of events is the function of experts whose duty is to perform the divination. If you have any doubt about important matters, consult with your own heart, with your ministers and officers, with the common people, and the tortoise shells and stalks.⁹

So, in the Shang legacy, divination was used in the decision making of any important action or policy. It played a major role in achieving consensus. The results of divination were seen as revealing the will of *di* or *shangdi*, as shown in the *Fragments of Shang Divination* where we read texts such as, “The King divined as such...With the approval of *di*” (帝若) “*di* does not approve” (帝不若). The King makes the divination, and says: the result is auspicious, with the approval of *di*.” (王占曰：吉，帝若).

In fact, this legacy was retold by the Zhou historian in the *Hongfan* of the *Book of Documents*. This is an historical narrative representing a political theology, in which was reported the Nine Categories. It was said there that, King Wu of Zhou, in 1121BCE, the thirteenth year of his reign, after his conquest of the Shang, went to inquire Shang’s Viscount of *Ji* about the principle of achieving good relation among people. The Viscount of *Ji*, though refused to serve Zhou by reason of his fidelity to Shang,

⁹Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969, pp. 9-10.

nevertheless told King Wu the wisdom of the Grand Model, as a legacy from the Emperor Yu of the Xia dynasty. He stated:

“I have heard that of old (Great Yu’s father) Gun dammed up the flood and thereby created a chaos among the Five Agents. The *di* was aroused to anger and did not give him the Great Nine Categories. The various virtues and their relations declined in due course, and Gun was executed. Yu thereupon rose to continue the heritage. Heaven gave him the Great Norm with its nine categories. And the various virtues and their relations were regulated.”¹⁰

The *Hongfan*, seen as a revelation of God to Yu, gives us a somehow structural vision of the universe in nine categories constituting the earliest Chinese vision and concepts of Nature (including the first category of the five agents or five dynamic elements, namely Water, Fire, Wood, Metal and Earth; the fourth category of five arrangements of time, which concern the divisions of time, namely, the year, the month, the day, the stars, planets, zodiac signs, and calendar calculation; the eighth category of confirmation from seasonable weather, namely, rain, sunshine, heat, cold, wind, and seasonableness), of self-cultivation (the second category of five activities, which concern moral and intellectual conduct and their virtues), politics and governance (the third category of eight governmental offices, which concerns branches of administration; the fourth category of five arrangements of time; the fifth category of the Grand(Royal) Ultimate; the sixth category of three virtues, which govern response to different people and times), of divination (the seventh category of the examination of doubts) and of happiness and misfortune of life (the ninth category of five happinesses and six misfortunes). The most important, central to all these nine categories, is the fifth, which concerns the category of the Royal(Grand)Ultimate, which reads:

Fifth, concerning the Royal Ultimate, the highest, having established his highest standard of excellence, accumulates the five happinesses and diffuses them to be bestowed on the people. Then the people will keep the ultimate standard.

Without deflection, without unevenness,

Pursue royal righteousness;

Without any selfish likings,

Pursue the royal way.

Without any selfish likings,

Pursue the royal path.

Without partiality, without deflection,

The royal path is level and ease.

Without perversity, without one-sidedness,

The royal path is right and straight.

¹⁰ *Source Book*, p.9

Seeing this perfect excellence,
Turn to this perfect excellence.¹¹

As central to all nine categories, the Royal Ultimate was theological in the sense that it was bestowed and revealed by *di*, as said, “These words stated in the Royal Ultimate were an instruction not from the kings but from the *di*”, to become the ultimate principle of the royal power, that is to become impartial and universalizable, without partiality, without deflection, without selfishness. As told by a Viscount belonging to the conquered ethnic group to the conquerer, it might be a demand of fairness and impartiality of the conquerer to the conquered. But, beyond that, the idea of centrality or the middle interpreted by impartiality or fairness has its universalizable meaning for all individuals and all social groups. With it, royal power or political leaders would be able to bring the five blessings, as indicated in the ninth category, “longevity, wealth, physical and mental health, cultivation of excellent virtues, and an end crowning a good life”¹², These blessings have long been the core values of the Chinese people.

The words of Viscount Ji marked also the transition from Shang to Zhou. He first used the term *di*, but later changed to the term *tian* (heaven). That’s why we should see the *Hongfan* as already a perception of the Shang legacy by the people of Zhou. In the Zhou dynasty, the concept of *di* evolved into *tian*, a more universal divine power was not limited to the ancestral divinity but rather as the supreme ruler of both human society and the whole universe, though still not independent of the surrounding multiple divinities, such as those of mountains, rivers, ancestral spirits, and even those of the stove and the household shrine.¹³ In the period of transition from the Shang to the Zhou, the concepts of *di* and *tian* were sometime used and even confused without making distinctions between them. However, the direction was moving toward the more universal idea of *tian*.

THE DECLINE OF POLITICAL THEOLOGY

The idea of history as revealing God’s will had declined in the process of changes in the concept of Ultimate Reality, first from *di* or *shangdi* to *tian*, then the idea of *tian* itself had changed to a more humanistic understanding. In addition, institutionally, in the Zhou dynasty,

¹¹ *The Shoo King, or the Book of Historical Documents*, translated by James Legge, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1893-1895, pp.331-332

¹² Source Books, Chan, p. 10

¹³ As evidenced by Wan-shun Jia’s dialogue with Confucius: “It is better to pay homage to the spirit of the stove than to the spirits of the household shrine. What does this mean?” The Master replied: “It is not so. A person who offends against *tian* has nowhere to pray.” *Analects* 3.13, see R. Ames and H. Rosement, *The Analects of Confucius, A Philosophical Translation*, New York: Ballantine Books, 1998, p. 85

the division of work made diviner and historian two different jobs. Also, divination itself became more technical and full of uncertainty concerning God's revelation. These explain the fall of history as political theology.

First, in the Zhou dynasty, the division of work became more differentiated and complicated. In the *Zhouli* (周禮), a book on Zhou institutions, distinctions were made among diviner (bu 卜), priest (zhu, 祝), shaman dancers (wu 巫, again divided into male wu and female wu) and historian (shi 史). The *shi* was again divided into the great historian (*dashi*), who was in charge of tracing the past of the six models, eight laws and eight principles for the governance of the state, all those who discern the application of laws should inquire about them; and the "small historian" (*xiaoshi*), who was in charge of the records of state and country, to trace the genealogy and generations, and to discern distant and close relatives. In addition to these changes, there is mention of the internal historians (*neishi*), external historians (*waishi*), and royal historians (*yushi*). All these institutional distinctions and functions might argueably be an idealist viewpoint rather than a factual description of the Zhou Institution. At least we can say that from the Zhou dynasty on, the historians were separated from the diviners, and they were in charge of royal books and records, including laws, genealogies and calendar records...etc. When divested of their religious function of divination, historians in the Zhou dynasty were royal book keepers. They gave advice to kings and political leaders, based on the experience of the past as shown in textual records. The revealing of God's will, therefore, changed to the revealing of meaningfulness through the interpretation of events, plots and textual records. The narrative itself is an illustration of meaningfulness by way of interpretation.

Second, not only the *di* or *shangdi* had changed to *tian*, the idea of *tian* itself had changed from Confucius' (551-479BCE) religious meaning as God on High. From Zisi (493-406BCE), Confucius' grandson, to Mencius (371-289BCE), it became more like the highest but immanent principle of morality immanent and therefore accessible to human nature. In the *Zhongyong* (*Doctrine of the Mean*), *cheng* (sincerity) on the psychological and ethical level, means also True Reality on the metaphysical level. For Mencius, if one could unfold fully one's mind/heart, one should be able to understand one's nature, and when one understands one's own nature, one understands Heaven. This means there was a humanistic tendency in Confucianism that turned the transcendent God into a principle immanent to and accessible by human subjectivity, in the process of which political theology would fade out.

Third, the decline of political theology was also caused by the uncertainty of God's revelation as the results of divination, sometimes contradictory among themselves, sometimes depending on the king's favorable choice. When a king, following his own desire, did not listen to the results of the divination, or listened only to the results in favor of his own desire, such as narrated by the *Zhuo's Commentary to the Annals of*

Spring and Autumn, that, in the 4th year of Duke Xi's reign (655BCE), Duke Xian of Jin State desired to marry Liji (a very famous beautiful woman). The tortoise shell predicted that this would be unlucky. But the milfoil predicted it lucky. The duke said, "I'll follow the milfoil." The diviner of tortoise shell said, "The milfoil is inferior to the tortoise shell. Better follow the latter." Also, the diviner added, if the duke marries Liji, there will be catastrophic consequences. Nevertheless, the duke would not listen to this advice, and he did marry Liji.¹⁴ This is a case of a king listening only to the advice that favored his own desire, which means, despite the necessity of practicing the ritual of divination, the king wanted to hold his fate in his own hands.

In other cases, the results of divination might be contradictory; that would make the revealing of Divine will uncertain. For example, in the seventh month of the sixth year of Ai Duke's reign (489 BCE), the King Zhao of Chu, while settled in Chengfu, intended to succor Zheng State, and consulted the tortoise shell about fighting, and got an unfavorable answer. Then he consulted the shell for retreating, again another unfavorable answer. Facing these contradictory results, King Zhao said, "If it's to die all the same, it's better to die rather than defeat the Chu army. It's better to die than to turn back to our ally and evade the enemy. If I have to die in both cases, I'll die at the hands of my enemy." Then he made the decision to attack.¹⁵

The contradiction of divinatory results manifest the uncertainty of God's revealing, and pushed political leaders, as holder of collective destiny, to appeal to either more humanistic values, as in the aforementioned case, or a more rational explanation. For example, on the fifth month of the 24th year of Duke Zhao's reign (518 BCE), an eclipse of the sun occurred, to which Xinzi said, "There will be floods." However, Zhaozi said, "There will be drought." The reason given by Zhaozi was that "The sun has passed the equinox, and the yang influence has not predominated. When it does so, it will be to a very great degree, and we must have drought. The yang influence, not getting vented, will be accumulated."¹⁶ This is a much more rational, meteorological explanation, based on the movement of stars, like that of the sun over the equinox, and the interchange of the forces of yin and yang, against the divinatory prediction.

Sometimes the reaction was somehow more humanistic and against any blind belief in God's intervention. Here is the case of Zichan's humanistic response to divination: According to the *Zhuo's Commentary to*

¹⁴ James Legge, translator, *The Ch'un Tsew, with the Tso Chuen*, reprint in Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1949, pp. 139(for Chinese text) 141-142(for English translation), This and the following quotations sometimes with my modifications as to pinyin spelling and wording.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.808(Chinese), p.810(English)

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.701(Chinese), p.702(English)

the Annals of Spring and Autumn, in the month of May of the 18th year of Duke Zhao's reign (522 BCE), it was narrated that, "the Star Huo made its first appearance at dusk, on Binzi there was wind, and Zisheng predicted that fire would break out in seven days,...In a few days, messengers from Song state, Wei state, Chen state and Zheng State all reported cases of fire. Bei Zhao said, "If you don't do as I said, Zheng will suffer from fire again." The people begged that his advice be taken.... Zichan replied, "The Way of heaven is distant, while the Way of Man near. We cannot reach the former, what means do we have of knowing it? How should Zhao know the Way of Heaven? He is a great talker, and we need not wonder if his words sometimes come true."¹⁷

Zichan's comments that the diviner was a great talker, and thereby his words sometimes come true showed a certain probabilistic view on the fulfillment of divinatory prediction. This was also related to the feeling of the uncertainty of God's revealing and the contingency by which a diviner's prediction might happen to come true. Also, Zichan's thought that the Way of Heaven is far and the Way of Man near would lead also to the reasonableness of human words and deeds rather than God's will. It's in this spirit that, in the 25th year of Duke Xiang's reign (546 BCE), Zhao Wenzi, after listening to one of Zichan's discourse, said, "His speeches are reasonable. To go against reasonable speeches is inauspicious." Now the good or misfortune seemed to depend on human reasonableness rather than Divine Will.

Note that all these three records happened in Confucius' life time. Confucius, who was troubled by the difficult years of his exile, later studied deeply the *Yijing*. He did a philosophical commentary on it, and practiced the divinatory method using milfoil rather than tortoise shell. He knew that all these evoked a more humanistic attitude towards divination. In comparison with the use of tortoise shell, the divinatory method, of the *Yijing*, said to be developed by King Wen, the founder of the Zhou dynasty, was technically more manipulable and thereby gave a sense of human participation in knowing the revealing of propensity of things and control over his own destiny.¹⁸ To consult the *Yijing*, people used stalks of milfoil, a divining yarrow plant. They depended on the interpretative function of human reason and choice made in accordance with the rules of divination. Human beings want to refer to their own reasoning and judgment. In the divination by tortoise shell there was less space for the intervention of human subjectivity, whereas in the divination by yarrow stalks there was more possibility for such an intervention. This led to a more humanist construction of a meaningful world. Divination, even still in use, became

¹⁷ Ibid., p.669 (Chinese), p.671 (English)

¹⁸ This method was used first only in the court of Zhou, before it became more popular in the other states, to the last by Qin state in the West and Chu State in the south.

more a technique for making decisions and attaining consensus rather than revealing God's will as such.

All these reasons explain why political theology was replaced by the ontology of history. For sure, something true and meaningful must be revealed in existential time as constituted of events and human actions, not in time as an abstract form of succession and continuity. The meaning of history is not the revealing of a substantial spiritual Being having his will imposed on human beings, but rather the non-substantial "Creative Act of Existence", always manifesting itself in the process of universe as well as human creativity.

In this context, Confucius, founder of Confucianism, tended early towards the humanization of history. The Confucian philosophy of history has two sides: one conservative, in the sense of a strong intention to conserve all essential values, as the intelligible structures and basic values revealed in the *Hongfan*; the other creative, seeing human actions as creative of values in time. Confucius himself authored the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*, which is a chronicle of events showing his own value judgments by carefully using terms that described and classified those actions and events. Because of this, all rebellious officers and unfaithful sons were afraid of Confucius' *Annals*. Moreover, Confucius also built a vision of creativity in the universe as well as in human history in his *Yizhuan* (Interpretations of the *Yijing*).

A PHILOSOPHICAL BREAKTHROUGH: CONFUCIUS

The time in which Confucius appeared could be properly characterized, in Karl Jaspers' term, as the first "Axial Age", or in Talcott Parsons' term, as an epoch of "philosophical breakthrough". Living in the late Spring and Autumn period, Confucius' thought evolved from a philosophy of *li* (rituals) to the philosophy of *ren* (humaneness), then from the philosophy of *ren* to the philosophy of *yi* (changes). He himself indicated the evolution of his thought as follows:

The Master said, "At fifteen, My heart and mind were set upon learning; at thirty, I established myself; at forty I had no perplexities; at fifty, I knew the Mandate of Heaven. At sixty, I was at ease with whatever I heard. At seventy, I could follow my heart's desire without transgressing moral principles." (*Analects* 2:4)

In my understanding, what Confucius learned at fifteen was *li*; he said, "One should establish oneself on *li*" (*Analects* 8:8), he should have established himself at thirty by becoming a *ru* teaching *li* and serving in the public and private *li*; at forty, he had founded *li* on *ren*, and therefore had no more perplexity. During his fifties, there was a period in which he and his disciples suffered from his unstable, troublesome and dangerous years of exile. At this time, Confucius studied closely and consulted regularly the

Yijing.¹⁹ That would lead to his deeper understanding of his own destiny (Mandate of Heaven) and his spiritual freedom in later years. From this interpretation of Confucius' short bio-data, the evolution of his thought could be divided into three stages.

First, from fifteen to his thirties, Confucius' main concern was learning, teaching and practicing *li*. Second, from his thirties to forties, his major concern was *ren*, taking this as the transcendental foundation of *li*, so as to revitalize Zhouli. Third, from the mid-fifties on, Confucius focused on the *Yijing* and History. Sima Qian (c.145-90 BCE) told us in his *Siji (Record of the Grand Historian)* that Confucius in the later years of his life, after a whole life's effort, said to himself, "A *junzi* would not pass away without a dignified name to remain in the world. Since my Way would not spread in the world, how could I show my self to the future generations?" Upon that, he proceeded to write the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*, in putting down chronologically and judging the major events of history.

Since Confucius' vision and judgment of the meaning of events always referred to his most basic ideas of *li*, *yi* and *ren*, a philosophical understanding of these meta-concepts as standards for the judgement of major historical events is necessary and evident.

Etymologically, the Chinese character *li* 禮 is composed of both 示 and 豐, in which the sign 示 signifies the enlightening or signal coming from *shangdi* or *tian* (Heaven) to reveal as a good or bad omen of individual and collective destiny. The sign 豐 represented two wine cups used in the ceremony of libation—a mainly religious sense. Religious rituals were overwhelming in the Shang Dynasty. Notice that, from Shang to Zhou, different people in the social hierarchy performed different religious ceremonies: for example, the emperor or Son of Heaven performed the sacrifice to Heaven, princes and marquises sacrifice to mountains and rivers, and the commoners sacrifice only to their ancestry. They each had their codes of behavior. Thus, in its actual meaning, *li* has three essential aspects, first, the sacrificial ceremonies; second, the social and political institutions; and third, the codes of daily behavior. As I see it, sacrificial ceremonies were ways to communicate with the divinities or deities; social and political institutions were organizational structures

¹⁹ The silk text manuscript *Yao* (要) discovered at Mawangdui in 1973 said, "Kongzi is fond of *Yijing* when [as he gets old] getting old. When he stays at home, the book *Yijing* is always on his mat; when he travels, it is in his hand bag. Zigong the disciple says to him, "In the past you taught us that "if one loses virtue whereupon ghost and spirit grow; if one is far from wisdom and deep considerations, he practices divination more often." I thought this was correct, and [I] made effort to live up to it. Why, you're getting old to love it?"..."Do you believe in its divination?" Confucius says, "Out of my hundred divinations seventy were fulfilled. As to *Yijing*, I look behind the divination and regard more its virtue and meaning." (Guo, p.276) my translation.

establishing a social order from human beings' chaotic and conflictual tendencies. Codes of behavior regulated human action, but they had also the function of attributing value to the action in question. All together, we can say that the functions of *li* were to communicate, to establish order and to evaluate. In this sense we can relate these three meanings to the ideal dimensions of *li*. In its ideal meaning, *li* in the Zhou Dynasty, or Zhouli, represented an ideal of the Zhou civilization established by the Duke of Zhou. This was part of the process of communication with the divine and among human beings, according to which a cultivated society should develop in a good order imbued with sense of beauty or harmony.

It is clear, then, *li* was not created by Confucius, and it never came to his mind to create a new system of *li*. He himself admired the rich meaning and content of Zhouli, saying that "The Zhou dynasty looked after and surpassed the preceding two dynasties. How splendid is it in cultural meaning. I prefer to follow Zhou." (*Analects*, 3:14) What Confucius had endeavored to do was to revitalize Zhouli by rendering it again meaningful in basing it on the self-awareness of each and every person's inherent ability.

Confucius tried to revitalize Zhouli by tracing its origin back and basing it on *ren*, which signified the sensitive interconnectedness between a human being and other human beings, with nature and with Heaven. *Ren* manifests human being's inner self and responsibility, in the original sense of the ability to respond, in and through his sincere moral awareness. Also, it means the intersubjectivity giving support to all social and ethical life. As I understand it, with *ren*, human being has an inner dynamism of generously going outside of one's self to multiple others. Meanwhile he does not lose his/her own self. That's why Confucius said that *ren* is not remote from or difficult for any human being. When an individual is aware, *ren* is already there in him/her. By this, Confucius laid a transcendental foundation to human being's interaction with nature, with society and with Heaven.

Moreover, from *ren*, Confucius derived *yi*, rightness, which represented for him the respect for multiple others and the proper actions toward multiple others. Not much was said by Confucius about *yi*, though what was said was very essential to Confucianism: "A wise and good man makes rightness the substance of his being; he carries it out with ritual order. He speaks it with modesty. And he attains it with sincerity.—such a man is really good and wise!" (*Analects*, 15:18) Notice here that *li* is that which a wise and good man uses to carry out *yi*, which is the substance of his own being. For him, rightness is also the criterion by which good men are distinguished from base guys (*Analects* 4:16). On rightness was based all moral norms, moral obligations, our consciousness of them, and even the virtue of always acting according to them.

Now, from *yi*, Confucius derived *li*, the ritual or proprieties, which represented the ideal meaning of harmony with a sense of beauty, and the actual meaning of codes of behavior, social institutions and religious

ceremonies. Youzi, a disciple of Confucius, once said, “The most valuable function of *li* is to achieve harmony. This is the beauty of the way of ancient kings, who followed it in all occasions, large or small” (*Analects* 1:12). It is in this sense that I understand *li*, an overall concept of the cultural ideal, as harmony with a sense of beauty, or a graceful order leading to beauty and harmony. With it, past human life is worthy of being kept in memory, the future is worthy of expectation, and the present becomes full of meaningfulness.

As I see it, there are two concurrent dynamic directions in the Confucian moral experience. One is the dynamic direction of manifestation, in which *ren* manifests into *yi*, and *yi* manifests into *li*. Another is the dynamic direction of grounding, in which we trace back and ground *li* in *yi*, and *yi* in *ren*. Confucian ethics constitutes a model of interactive exchange between these two dynamic directions.

In my understanding, it was through these two procedures that Confucius would revitalize and thereby re-contextualize the ethical and social political order in Zhouli. He also found the meaningfulness of human existence in it. His judgment on historical events referred always to these basic values and visions. We can characterize, therefore, his philosophy of history as an ethical and moral reading of history. It is also a culturalist philosophy of history.

MEANINGFULNESS REVEALED IN EVENTS: THE ANNALS OF SPRING AND AUTUMN

Scholars agree that *the Annals of Spring and Autumn* went well beyond Confucius in his later years. In those days, historians of each states recorded their own important events and therefore their own Annals. Confucius seemed to have consulted all the records of the past, especially those of the Lu States. He said of himself, “To transmit but not to create. I am trustful and devoted to antiquity.” (*Analects* 7:1). Since in his *Annals* Confucius not only recorded facts, but more importantly he gave his judgments out of his own understanding of moral standards based on *ren*, *yi* and *li*. That’s why it was said that the rebellious ministers and the usurpers of power all dreaded of him. Therefore, by “transmit”, he means not only organize the historical material to transmit the facts, but also to transmit facts with value implications as the way they should be. This seemed a very laborious work that he had put a lot of energy into with the composition of the *Annals*. Most likely, that is why he said that “In the future generations, it’s by the *Annals* that people will know my merit; it’s also by the *Annals* that people will blame me.”

Since the wording of Confucius’ *Annals* was very succinct and rigorous, there were three interpretations of Confucius’ *Annals*. These interpretations were done by the disciples of his disciple(s): The *Zuo’s Commentary*, the *Gongyang’s Commentary* and the *Guliang’s Commentary*. All were done in the Warring States period, most probably by

developing the teaching of history and Confucius' *Annals* by Zixia, one of Confucius' disciples. These three commentaries were so classical that they became themselves part of . Together with Confucius' *Annals* they made clear history with moral judgement. For example, in November of the 22nd year of Duke Xi's reign (637 BCE), Confucius wrote:

In winter, in the eleventh month, on the jishi day, the first day of the moon, the Duke Xiang of Song fought with an army of Chu near the Hong River, when the army of Song was disgracefully defeated.²⁰

Zuo's Commentary on this is:

An army of Chu invaded Song in order to relieve Zheng. The Duke of Song being minded to fight, his Minister of War remonstrated strongly with him, saying, "Heaven has long abandoned the House of Shang. Your Grace may wish to raise it again, but such opposition to Heaven will be unpardonable." The Duke, however, would not listen to advice, and in winter, in the 11th month, on the jishi day, the first day of the month, he fought with the army of Chu near the Hong River.

The men of Song were all drawn up for battle, before those of Chu had all crossed the river, and the Minister of War said to the Duke, "They are many, and we are few. Pray let us attack them, before they have all crossed over." The duke refused; and again, when the minister asked leave to attack them after they had crossed, but when they were not yet drawn up, he refused, waiting they were properly marshalled before he commanded the attack.

The army of Song was shamefully defeated; one of the duke's thighs was hurt, and the warders of the gates were all slain. The people of the State all blamed the duke, but he said, "The superior man does not inflict a second wound, and does not take prisoners with gray hair. When the ancients had their army in the field, they would not attack an enemy when he had been injured. And though I am but a poor representative of a fallen dynasty, I would not sound my drums to attack an unformed [unorganized] host[army]."²¹

²⁰經：冬，十有一月己巳朔，宋公及楚人戰于泓，宋師敗績。（僖公二十二年）

²¹ James Legge, trans, *The Ch'un Ts'ew with the Tso Chuen*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949, p. 183

Note that the commentary of Zuo had the special hermeneutical concept that by narrating the story, without giving any explicit argument using abstract terms, it gave already its own interpretation of the meaning of Confucius' very succinct *Annals*. This means that in Zuo's commentary, telling the story itself is already doing interpretation or rendering meaning to a text difficult to understand. However, the reader, through reading the events put together in a plot narrating the Duke of Song's behavior in war, could already feel strongly his morality, his humanness, and his rightness as expressed in the rituals of war.

Now, let's compare this with the *Gongyang's Commentary*, about the same text of Confucius:

It is necessary to date a declared war. Why does it mention the first day of the moon? When the *Annals of Spring and Autumn* used more words generously and did not save words. It means the action itself is upright. In what sense is it upright? The Duke of Song had an appointment of war with the Chu army to fight at the Hong River. When the Chu men were crossing the river to come to him, his officers reported to him, "Pray to attack them before they all cross the river." The Duke of Song said, "No. I heard that a superior man does not put others in danger. Even if I am only a representative of a fallen dynasty, I cannot bear to do it." When the Chu men all crossed the river, but had not yet drawn themselves up, the officers again said, "Pray attack them while they are not drawn up." The Duke of Song said, "No. I heard it said, the superior man does not attack a not yet drawn up army." When the Chu army was well drawn up, and the duke of Song sounded the drum for attack, thereupon the Song army was disgracefully defeated. Therefore, a superior man puts the emphasis on not attacking an army that is not in formation. He will not forget the *li* in facing a crucial event. He has the attire of a king but without good ministers and subjects under him. We can say that even a war done by the King Wen is not more moral than this one.²²

²²傳：偏戰者日爾，此其言朔何？《春秋》辭繁而不殺者，正也。何正爾？宋公與楚人期，戰于泓之陽。楚人濟泓而來。有司復曰：「請迨其未畢濟而擊之。」宋公曰：「不可。吾聞之也：君子不厄人。吾雖喪國之餘，寡人不忍行也。」既濟，未畢陳，有司復曰：「請迨其未畢陳而擊之。」宋公曰：「不可。吾聞之也：君子不鼓不成列。」已陳，然後襄公鼓之，宋師大敗。故君子大其不鼓不成列，臨大事而不忘大禮，有君而無臣，以為雖文王之戰，亦不過此也。Gongyang's *Commentary on the Annals*

This commentary composed of two kinds of text, is mixed into one: a narrative part and a moralizing part in the form of textual explanation. The story-telling part is similar to the Zuo's commentary; but the explanation part renders explicit the moral meaning of it. That is Confucius' admiration of the uprightness of the act of the Duke of Song. The text allows more words that make precise the time in which the event happened, and compares Duke Xiang of Song to King Wen. It is in fact a general style of Gongyang to mix up the moralizing discourse with the story-telling part of history. In fact, a sensitive reader, in reading the story, as told by the Zuo's commentary, could already understand clearly the moral implication of it. Gongyang would be helpful for those who are not sensitive enough to recognize the morality in it. Also, it gives a clearer and stronger Confucian moral philosophy of history to the story. The text of *Gongyang's Commentary* started with the idea of *Dayitong* (Great Unification) under the leadership of King Wen. That's why, in the above text, the same idea is repeated by saying that "even a war done by the King Wen is not more moral than this one."

For reasons of space, I will not delve into the *Guliang's Commentary*, which is constituted by a narrative part and a moralizing or explanatory part. In the moral section, Guliang presented the comment that, "Human beings as human depend on language ... Language as language depends on its being trustworthy ... Being trustworthy depends on the *dao*. The most precious in *dao* is its timeliness, and its implementation depends on situational power."²³ This comment praised on the one hand, Duke Xiang of Song's trustworthiness in his discourse on war. Nevertheless, it blamed him for not knowing the situational power for implementing the *dao*.

Let us take another example from the Zuo commentary:

In the 30th year of Duke Xi's reign, on the day of Jiawu, the Marquis of Jin and the Earl of Qin laid siege to Zheng. This was because of his need for courtesy from the Marquis of Jin, and because of his double-mindedness toward Chu. The army of Jin took a position at Hanling, and that of Chin at Fannan. Yizhihu said to the Earl of Zheng, "The state is in imminent peril. If you send Zhuzhiwu to see the Earl of Qin, his army is sure to be withdrawn." The Earl took the advice, but Zhuzhiwu

of *Spring and Autumn*, in *Duanju Shisanjing Jingwen* (Punctuated Texts of Thirteen Scriptures), Taipei: Kaiming Bookstore, 1965, p. 28.

²³ *Guliang's Commentary on the Annals of Spring and Autumn*, in *Duanju Shisanjing Jingwen* (Punctuated Texts of Thirteen Scriptures), Taipei: Kaiming Bookstore, 1965, p. 24.

declined the mission, saying, “When your servant was in the prime of age, he was regarded as having no equals. But now he is old, and unable to render any service.” The Earl said, “I was not able to engage you earlier, but in difficulties, I now beg your help. I acknowledge this to be my fault but if Zheng perishes, you also will suffer loss.” On this Zhuzhiwu agreed, and undertook the mission.

At night he was let down from the civil-wall by a rope; and when he saw the Earl of Chin, he successfully persuaded the Earl of Qin to withdraw.”[The main argument went like this: if you attack and colonize Zheng with Jin, then the insatiable Jin will become your menacing immediate neighbor, and will inevitably proceed to take you for its interest.]

The Earl of Qin was pleased with this speech, and made a covenant with the people of Zheng, appointing Qizi, Fongshun, and Yang Shun to guard the territory, while he himself returned to Qin. Zifan asked leave to pursue and smite him, but the Marquis of Jin said, “No. But for his assistance I should not have arrived at my present state. To get the benefit of a man’s help, and then to injure him, would show a lack of *ren* (benevolence). To have slight those with whom I was to cooperate would show my lack of *zhi* (knowledge). To exchange the orderly array in which we came here for one of disorder would show a want of *wu* (bravery). I will withdraw. “ And thus he left Zheng.²⁴

This story shows, besides the eloquent analysis of Zhuzhiwu, the relation between a king and his subjects, with some tension, but nevertheless a tension that could be solved by their common concern for the public interest and common good. Similarly, the relation among political and military alliances and friends, though not without the possibility of hurt allowed each part to hold to the principle of *ren* (humaneness), *zhi* (wisdom) and *yong* (bravery). These utilitarian considerations, though accepted by all, should always be subsumed under moral considerations. The concept of *ren* was interpreted here in terms of reciprocity, not in terms of original generosity. To this text the *Gongyang Commentary* did not add discussion.

CREATIVITY MANIFESTED IN NATURE AND HISTORY

The *Annals of Spring and Autumn*, shows meaningfulness and the

²⁴James Legge, trans, *The Ch’un Ts’ew with the Tso Chuen*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949, pp.216-217. With my corrections.

role human agents play in the event. There the *dao*, or the Way, is to manifest itself through events and the narrative that combines different actions and events into an understandable totality. Implicitly, there is already an historical ontology, which shows the *dao* in history, but it's only in the *Yijing* that it is made explicit. The *Yijing* (*Book of Changes*), one of the most important scriptures in Confucianism, contains a first part named *Zhouyi*, which was the book of divination of Zhou people, and a second part named *Yizhuang*, is attributed mainly to Confucius. It is in this latter part that *the Book of Changes* becomes a book of philosophy, not limited to divination, but extended to all the realms of existence. As the *Xici* (*Great Appendix*) says:

In the *Yi* there are four things characteristic of the way of the sages. We should set the highest value on its explanation to guide us in discourse, on its becoming for our actions, on its emblematic figures for the construction of implements, and on its prognostications for our practice of divination.²⁵

Here divination is only one of the four functions of the *Yijing*. In addition to the functions of guiding discourse, taking action, and technological invention, it touches upon all aspects of human existence and all things in the universe. In the *Yizhuang*, the construction of elementary representations of basic forces in nature and directions of action in the nexus of space and time; it proceeds to the construction of human relationships, especially ethical relationship, with cosmological and ontological implications. Here human beings are in the process of forming their histories. Human beings never act and live as isolated individuals, but always act and live in ethical relationships, since they exist always in a dynamic ontology of relation

In the *Yijing*, the whole universe and human existence could be traced back to their ontological origin, the *Taiji* (太極 the Ultimate), which is creative of myriad things and human history. On the ontological level, *Taiji*, or the Great Ultimate, represents the Original Creative Act that gives birth incessantly to all beings. This is an ontology of creativity in which "To be is to create." On the logical level, this is also the order by which all hexagrams are produced by a process of logical derivation or production. According to the *Xici*, "Therefore in the *Yi* there is the Great Ultimate which produces the two elementary forms. These two elementary forms produce the four emblematic symbols, which again produces the eight trigrams."²⁶ Or again, "The eight trigrams having been completed in their proper order, there were in each the three emblematic lines. They were then

²⁵ *The Text of Yi King, Chinese Original with English Translation*, by Z.D. Sung, Taipei: Culture Publishing Co., 1973, p.294, With my corrections.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p.299 my corrections.

multiplied by a process of addition till the six *yao* appeared.”²⁷ “The *Yi* is a book in which the form of each diagram is determined by the strokes from the first to the last, which must be carefully observed. The six *yao* are mixed together, according to the time and their substances.”²⁸ The *Yi* is, therefore, a book of wide comprehension and great scope, embracing everything.

It was from this ontological, cosmological, and logical foundation that there is derived a universal norm of action: After the construction of representations, a universalizable standard of action must be established in order to guide the praxis. The Way of *Yi* is universalized in the sense made precise by the *Xici*: “The Way by which these things come about is very comprehensive, and must be acknowledged in every sphere of things. If at the beginning there be a cautious apprehension as to the end, there probably will be no error or cause for blame. This is the Way of *Yi*.”²⁹ Here the terms “comprehensive” and “in every sphere of things” mean “universalizability” on the pragmatic level. That is why the *Xici* says, “A later sage was able to survey all actions under the sky. He contemplated them in their common action, in order to bring the universal standard and proper tendency of each. He then appended his explanation to each line, to determine the good or evil indicated by it.”³⁰ The wisdom contained in the *Yijing*, is therefore, the result of a concern with individual and collective destiny based on practical universalizability, somehow different from the search for theoretical universalizability in Western philosophy. Both are interested in the universal, but the one practical, the other theoretical.

The factor of timing is most important in the *Yizhuan* when deciding the good fortune or misfortune of an action: the good fortune or misfortune of a hexagram depends on the proper or improper character of the time in which it appears. The fact that a stroke is in the proper position, or with corresponding *yin* or *yang* stroke, or in the central position, does not necessarily make it good fortune. It is good fortune when action is done in its proper time, and misfortune when in an improper time. This follows what the *Xici* says, “The strong and soft lines have their fixed and proper position; their changes, however varied, are according to the requirement of time.”³¹

The *Book of Changes*, in its philosophical project of constructing a meaningful world, introduces the dimension of meaningfulness into the logical structure of hexagrams by subjective interpretation, and it also proposes a vision of dynamic contrast that targets the development of human historicity. By “dynamic contrast” I mean the interplay between the continuity and discontinuity in the process of time which leads to the

²⁷Ibid., p.306

²⁸Ibid., p.330

²⁹Ibid., p.334

³⁰Ibid., p.285 with my corrections.

³¹Ibid., p. 307

evolution of history. The *Yijing* not only contains structural contrasts constituted of difference and complementarity, but it is also full of dynamic contrasts and takes the historic movement, by way of dynamic contrast, as the essence of change. Thus the *Xici* says, “The rhythmic interchange of *yin* and *yang* constitutes what is called the Way of things. That towards which all things are directed in their successive development is goodness. That which could be realized in its completeness is the nature of all things.”³² The rhythmic dialectical interplay between *yin* and *yang*, strong and soft, etc., constitutes the basic dynamic contrast in the concept of historical development in the *Yijing*. This constitutes thereby a universal principle of the cosmos. *Yin* and *yang*, strong and soft...etc., represent dynamic contrasts that evolve by way of communication and interchange. When one state of affairs comes to the extremity of its development, it goes naturally to its opposite state of affairs. The fulfillment of *yang* goes to the emergence of *yin*; that of *yin* to the emergence of *yang*. The culmination of the strong goes to the generation of the soft. That of the soft to the generation of the strong. The maximization of suffering goes to the beginning of the happiness; and vice versa. As the law of nature as well as of human history, the movement of dynamic contrast rules over the process by which the ultra maturation of one state of affairs goes to the commencement of its opposite state of affairs. That’s why the *Great Appendix* says, “He who keeps danger in mind is he who will rest safe in his seat; he who keeps ruin in mind is he who will preserve his interests secure; he who sets the danger of disorder before his own eyes is he who will maintain the state of order. Therefore the superior man, when resting in safety, does not forget that danger might come; when in a state of security, he does not forget the possibility of ruin. And when all is in the state of order, he does not forget that disorder might come. Therefore his person is kept safe, and his country with all its clans can be preserved.”³³ This text shows also a very deep concern with the destiny both of the individual and the collectivity. The positive direction of human destiny for the *Yijing* is the wholesome unfolding of human potentiality and the realization of goodness in human historicity.

Concerning this, we can say a few words about the function of interpretation in the *Yijing*. There are three kinds of interpretations.

First, textual interpretation, by which he/she who consults the *Yijing* grasps the meaning of a particular text related to his/her situation. The reading of texts and the subjective reconstruction of its meaning are therefore essential to the tradition of the *Yijing*’s philosophy.

Second, logical interpretation, by which the intervention of human affairs into *Yijing*’s logical structure is to be seen as a concrete interpretation of these formal structures. In other words, human action and its meaning are seen only as a concrete example of the formal structure in question.

³²Ibid., p.280

³³Ibid., p.320

Third, existential interpretation, by which human creative intervention into the physical and social reality is lived as the unfolding of human destiny in the historical process. The function of interpretation does not limit itself to textual and logical interpretations. It concerns also the way human beings commit themselves to the becoming of Reality itself and thereby to the unfolding of human historicity in a meaningful existence.

The *Yijing* has a kind of pragmatism that concerns itself with human action and its good or bad fortune. Since the direction of good or evil is most crucial in human affairs, the *Yijing*'s concern with the fortune or misfortune of human action touches upon the heart of all human concerns. But, even in these human concerns, the *Yijing* would still keep a profound religiosity in its faith in the Great Ultimate, the Origin of all things, despite the uncertainty of God's revealing. *Yijing*'s philosophy is a philosophy of action, and a philosophy that brings action to the betterment of human beings in the process of history, all in keeping itself open to the Ultimate Reality and Origin of all things.

In the philosophy of *Yijing*, with its faith in the Great Ultimate and its optimistic trust in the creative creativity, human beings are invited to participate in the process of cosmic advancement and to lead a meaningful life, by emphasizing the responsibility, in the sense of the ability to respond, of the human agent and his/her creative interpretation. This understanding is applied to the laws and structures in nature and history and in the unfolding of human historicity of all meaningfulness.

PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY AS PROGRESSIVE IDEOLOGY

Confucian philosophy of history, not only has shown itself in the form of political theology, historical ontology, but also in the form of a reformative ideology. This line of thought was developed from the *Gongyang's Commentary of the Annals of Spring and Autumn*. In particular, Gongyang's idea of *dayitong* (大一統 great unification) was developed in the Han Dynasty, during the time when Dong Zhongshu (179-104BCE) was making Confucianism the state ideology of Han, exclusive of all other schools of thought, under the reign of Emperor Wu (158-87BCE). This became a progressive vision of history as developing towards the "great unification". Dong Zhongshu interpreted Confucius' *Annals of Spring and Autumn* as divided into three ages, the transmitted-oral age (of the past), the passed on age (of the present) and the envisioned age (in the future), taking already a progressively evolutionary vision of history. Also, he saw Confucius' *Annals* as promulgating historical laws for future dynasties as well as embodying natural laws. This interpretation of history as developing through Three Ages was developed in the later Han Dynasty again by He Xiu (129-182AD). In *the Gongyang's Commentary*, in the 15th year of Duke Cheng's reign (593BCE), we read:

In the Spring and Autumn period, all states make the distinction of inside one's own state and others Chinese states ; later they will view all Chinese states as inside and other states as outside and barbarian; If a king wants to unify all under heaven, why is he still talking in terms of inside and outside? The reason for this is that he starts with what is close to him.³⁴

He Xiu, in his *Notes and Explanations of Gongyang Commentary* (春秋公羊傳解詁), continued to develop this “theory of Three Ages”. He said, in the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*, Confucius has proposed three stages of historical development. First, the Age of Disorder (*juluan shi* 據亂世): in which one is only familiar with one's own and taken other states as foreign: from what is closest to one's own state, taking other Chinese states as foreign. Second, the Age of Rising Peace (*shengping shi* 升平世), in which all highly civilized Chinese states become one, taking the uncivilized countries as foreign. And, in the end, the Age of Great Peace (*taiping shi* 太平世), in which all *under heaven*, including the close and the far away, the small and the great, are as if forming one country. Therefore, the vision for the end of history is that “All under heaven are but one family; China is but one person” (天下為一家，中國為一人). This is pointed out in the *Liyun* chapter of the *Liji* (Book of Rites). In the final stage of history or at the end of history, the virtues of *ren* and *yi* will prevail in all societies; there will be no need of violence and therefore violence will not exist any more. This idea of Great Peace had influenced the Daoist movement of Great Peace in the later years of the Han dynasty, a movement that was based on the *Taiping jing* (Scripture of the Great Peace), in which the ultimate realization of history was the Great Peace. But this idea came from Confucianism and was properly Confucian. The ideal state of the Great Unification and the vision that the whole process of history is proceeding to it could be found in the most famous passage in the *Liji*, where the Great Harmony or Great Commonality is described as follows:

When the Great Way is practiced, the world will be shared by all alike. The worthy and the able will be promoted to office and men practice good faith and live in affection. Therefore they don't regard as parents their own parents, or as sons only their own sons. The aged found fit lives, the robust their proper employment; the young are provided with an upbringing, and the widow and widower, the orphaned and the sick, with proper care. Men have

³⁴Gongyang's *Commentary on the Annals of Spring and Autumn*, in *Duanju Shisanjing Jingwen* (Punctuated Texts of Thirteen Scriptures), p.44, My translation.

their tasks and women their hearths. They hate to see goods lying about in waste, yet they do not board them for themselves. They dislike the thought that their energies are not fully used. Yet they use them not for private ends. Therefore all evil plots are prevented and thieves and rebels do not arise, so that people can leave their outer gates unbolted. This is the Age of Grand Commonality.³⁵

This vision was very inspiring both philosophically and politically for all Chinese, taking the Great Peace, Great Commonality or Great Harmony as the Ultimate Age of history. It has long since become a deep faith among Chinese people. In fact, it has become an ideology in the sense of inspiring ideals, but neither in the Marxist sense of “camera obscura” nor in the dominating sense of upper classes over lower classes.

In late Qing period, Kang Yuwei (康有為1858-1927) attempted to reform the Qing government. The government was inefficient, corrupted and menaced by European imperialism as well as science and technology. Like Dong Zhongshu in Han dynasty, Kang was the leader of the Modern Script school, for which Confucius was the “uncrowned king” and the Reformer. The Scriptures contained “esoteric discourse and great principles” to support his project of reform. He re-interpreted Confucius’ philosophy of history to serve as an ideology of reform. For this purpose, he deliberately re-described the image of Confucius as a prophet/religious founder who was able to foresee the future development of human society. Confucius was thus the founder of Confucianism which, thereby, became a religion instead of merely an ethics or a way of life.

For Kang, when Confucius wrote the *Annals of Spring and Autumn*, he foresaw already the eventual development of history, and embraced in his writings the Three Ages. Similar to He Xiu, Kang understood the Three Ages as follows: During the Age of Disorder, Confucius considered his own state (of Lu) as native and all other Chinese feudal states as foreign. In the Age of Rising Peace, he considered all Chinese feudal states as native and those outlying barbarian tribes and states as foreign. And in the Age of *Great Peace*, he considered all ethnic groups and states, far or near, big or small, as one. Under the impact of Darwinism, Kang conceived all this in applying the principle of evolution. He said, (Source, p.726)

³⁵大道之行也，天下為公。選賢與能，講信修睦。故人不獨親其親，不獨子其子。使老有所終，壯有所用，幼有所長，矜寡孤獨廢疾者皆有所養，男有分，女有歸。貨惡其棄於地也，不必藏於己；力惡其不出於身也，不必為己。是故謀閉而不興，竊切亂賊而不作，故外戶而不閉。是謂大同。(English translation see de Bary, *Source of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. I, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p.343, I modify all past tenses into present and future tenses.

Confucius was born in the Age of Disorder. Now the communications have extended throughout the great earth, and important changes have taken place in Europe and America, the world has entered upon the Age of Rising Peace. Later, when all groups throughout the great earth, far and near, big and small, are like one, when nations will cease to exist, when racial distinctions are no longer made, and when customs are unified, all will be one and the Age of Great Peace will have come. Confucius knew all this in advance.

However, within each age there are Three Rotating Phases. In the Age of Disorder, there are phases of Rising Peace and Great Peace, and in the Age of Great Peace are the phases of Rising Peace and Disorder. Thus there are barbarian red Indians [Native Americans—Ed.] in progressive America and primitive Miao, Yao, Tung and Li tribes in civilized China. Each age can further be divided into three ages. These three can further be extended (geometrically) into nine ages, then eighty-one, then thousands and tens of thousands, and then innumerable ages. After the arrival of the Age of Great Peace and Great Unity, there will still be much progress and many phases.³⁶

At the end of his vision, as described in his *Datong Shu* (Book of the Great Unity), published eight years after his death in 1927, Kang completely transcended all kinds of distinction, and called for the total abolition of all borders, such as nations, families, classes...etc. He even goes too far in proposing in detail the organization and program of his ideal society, such as communal living, public nurseries for all children, cremation and use of cremated ashes for fertilizer. Nevertheless, Kang's idea of extending *ren* (humaneness) and *zhi* (wisdom) to go beyond all borders is still worthy of reconsideration in this time of globalization.

CONCLUSION

As we can see, in Confucian philosophy of history, the revelation of meaningfulness is always related to the manifestation and interpretation of Ultimate Reality. In its form of political theology, the Ultimate Reality is God on high, the *di* or *shengdi*. In its form as historical ontology, the Ultimate Reality is the *Taiji* (Great Ultimate) as the Original Creative Creativity to be realized in all creative events and actions. In its form as

³⁶ Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, pp.726-727

progressive ideology, the Ultimate Reality is the Great Peace to come at the end of history by crossing all borders.

We have to note here that, in Confucian philosophy of history, there is no hint of the Ultimate Reality taking the initiative to reveal itself to human beings. There is only the quest of its revelation or manifestation through various procedures, such as divination, action and events, or the act of (philosophical) thinking. In all cases, the manifestation of the Ultimate Reality is to be expressed in a metaphorical way, not in a descriptive language or an argumentative discourse.

Let me conclude by summarizing this essay in philosophy, especially philosophy of history. Generally speaking, Chinese philosophy, when grasping the Reality Itself in an enlightening insight by human speculative reason tends to form a kind of Original Image-Idea, something between a pure idea and an iconic/sonoric image, keeping thereby the holistic characteristic of the manifestation or the intuitive reception of Reality. This Idea-Image is seen as expressive and evocative of, though never exhausting thereby, the richness of Reality Itself and therefore has merely the status of a metaphor.³⁷ Chinese philosophers, by their function of speculative reason, grasp intuitively the Ultimate Reality and call it the *shangdi*, the *Taiji*, the *dao*, *ren* (humaneness), *xin* (mind/heart), *cheng* (sincerity/true reality), *kong* (emptiness), or *yixin* (One Mind)...etc.. All these are but metaphorical interpretations of the Ultimate Reality thus grasped. In Chinese artistic creativity, by the imaginative function of reason and its poetic transformation, artists would render this Idea-Image into a sort of concrete iconic/sonoric image and thereby materialize it. In moral

³⁷ In comparison, in Western philosophy, as I see it, the pre-Socratic philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus...etc., still kept a very intimate relation with the original Ideas-Images, in relating, for example, the idea of Arché and Physis to water, to the unlimited, to air, to fire,...etc. But the main stream of Western philosophy from Parmenides and Plato on consists in pushing the Idea-Image into pure ideas, and then, with intellectual definitions, conceptualizing it and relating one concept with other concepts in a logical way. Concepts are detached deliberately from images, things and events, and are defined and related one to another logically in descriptive and argumentative sentences and discourses. By this detachment, concept and argumentation could help the human mind to develop the critical function of his reason, in not limiting itself to the particularity of images, things and events, by paying attention to the abstract universalizability of concepts and the rigor of their logical relation. Although the validity of concepts and argumentation might be absolutized in a way so as to claim for universality and rational structure *per se*, in fact, they can only allow us to see Reality and its structure in an abstract way. On the other hand, metaphors, mostly related to one another by poetic phrases and stories, are different from abstract concepts and well-structured argumentation yet still keep an intimate relation with images and events. On the other hand, the Bible always uses metaphors and tells stories, both in the Old Testament and New Testament.

and ethical actions, the practical function of reason would bring the Idea-Image into the judgment of events and the intervention of one's own action into the course of events and thereby take responsibility. In the function of historical reason, the Ultimate Reality manifests through human actions that constitute events and events that constitute, by way of narrative, stories. Stories bring us hope because somehow or other, the meaningfulness of existence is to be revealed or manifested through the telling of stories, although always in a metaphorical way. Through our stories of of and those of others, we might be getting closer to Ultimate Reality.

CHAPTER 4

XUAN ZANG: A MONUMENTAL FIGURE IN CHINA'S HISTORY OF TRANSLATION

CHEN MEI

It is generally accepted that Xuan Zang (602-664), the most famous Buddhist monk in Chinese history and often referred to as Master San Zang, contributed substantially to Chinese culture, literature, and language. He was most remarkable in two aspects: the first being his pilgrimage to India to retrieve and study the Buddhist Scriptures, which covered 25,000 kilometers and lasted seventeen years, and the second being his extraordinary translation of Buddhist scripture from the original Sanskrit into Chinese, a remarkable task both in quantity and quality. During the 19 years before his death after he returned to China from India, he translated a total of 75 sets of Buddhist Scripture, comprising 1,335 volumes amounting to 130,000,000 words.

There were four most famous translators of Buddhist Scripture in Chinese history. Apart from Xuan Zang, the others were Luo Shi (Kumarajiva, also called Jiu Mo Luo Shi, 344-413), Zhen Di (Paramartha, 499-569), and Bu Kong (Amoghavajra, 705-774). Even among them Xuan Zang stands out distinctively because the Buddhist Scriptures he translated turned out to be 600 volumes more than those done by the other three putting together. Thus Xuan Zang's translations amount to more than half of the total Buddhist Scripture volumes (2,476 volumes translated altogether by 46 persons) undertaken in the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In addition, Xuan Zang's translations are, for the most part, considered exact, fluent and consummately skillful. It is only natural that historians and scholars regard him as representing "the summit of Buddhist Scripture translation" (Fan Wenlan, 1979:34) which no one had matched. He has been called the "internationally outstanding translator" (Yang Tingfu, 1986:6).

I.

When going over the major facts about Xuan Zang's life, one cannot help but be impressed by his aspiration for knowledge and his determination to realize that aspiration. He overcame all difficulties in his incredible devotion to the cause he chose.

Xuan Zang, born in the present Henan Province, was originally called Chen Hui before he was ordained as a monk. He came from an elite family. His that his ancestors (great grandfather and grandfather) were either officials or intellectuals. His father, too, was once a county

magistrate, but later gave up office and lived in seclusion. Xuan Zang, the youngest of four brothers and very handsome and clever, began to learn Confucianism at the age of eight. Owing to the gradual impoverishment of the family, Xuan Zang was raised in the Clean Soil Temple, the Jingtu Monastery, in Luoyang (an important metropolis at that time and now a medium-sized city in Henan Province) with his brother, then already a monk. Later, he became a monk at the age of 13. His innate inquisitiveness and superb intelligence and earnestness were then brought into full play. He not only read and studied the Buddhist texts diligently, but also went to various places in China to call on as many of the most prominent monks who were versed in Buddhist texts as he could hear of and find. In this way, his knowledge of Buddhism soon reached the level that could hardly be matched by those around him.

However, Xuan Zang was never satisfied with his rapidly accumulating knowledge in Buddhism, but aimed at greater achievement. In the process of consulting various prominent monks who were accomplished in Buddhist texts, he found there were a lot of contradictions and discrepancies in the texts owing to incomplete translations, and language and comprehension problems. He sought to get to the bottom of the matter and to clarify the various contradictions and discrepancies that no one in China at that time seemed to be able to explain. He thought it necessary to go to India and study in the cradle of Buddhism. His encounter in Chang An (the capital city of China at that time, today called Xi'an) with a disciple of a high Indian monk who lectured on Yogacara at Nalanda, the great ancient university of India, he made up his mind to go to India. To get prepared for his intended journey, he learned Sanskrit and then sent a formal application to the emperor asking for permission. His application was not accepted because Emperor Tang Taizong forbade travel to foreign countries. Yet, since he was so determined, Xuan Zang would not give up. He set out on his famous "journey to the West," in spite of the royal ban.

Xuan Zang first went with a monk friend who returned from Chang An to his original home—Qin Zhou (the present-day Tianshui in Gansu Province) located in western China. From there he found another group with whom to go further west to reach Liangzhou (the present-day Wuwei in Gansu Province—much westward since Gansu Province in China is long and narrow, extending from west to the east), where he was invited to give a lecture on Buddhist texts, which attracted a large audience and made a great impact in western China.

Although Xuan Zang was subsequently helped by sympathetic friends and others on his long travels across borders, he was finally left alone for the seemingly insurmountable long journey largely on foot. In the endless desert in the far west of China, Xuan Zang endured unbearable hardships. He once lost his way in the desert and was not be able to find anything to eat and drink for four days and five nights, but still he persevered. All the difficulties he faced and the deaths of travelers he discovered on the way only served to further harden his determination to

continue his march. He was willing to die in pursuit of his aim rather than retreat for a safer life. When he reached the kingdom of Gaochang (the present-day Tulufan County in Xinjiang, China), the king there liked Xuan Zang very much and asked his eighty-year-old master monk to persuade Xuan Zang to stay. Xuan Zang declined the invitation and undertook a hunger strike for three full days to show his determination to go on his journey and said that if the king would not change his mind, he would end up with only his corpse. His firm resolution was immovable. In the end, it was the king that gave in. Xuan Zang could go on with his journey if he would lecture for a full month. In return, the king gave him many valuables to cover his expenses on the journey. It was in similar ways that Xuan Zang overcame all the obstacles he met on his way westward. He passed through more than 20 kingdoms and a year later finally reached India as planned.

In India as in China, he traveled all over the continent, stopped for months, even years, to study in the monasteries along his path and called on prominent Indian monks. The monastery in which he stayed longest was Nalanda, where he studied logic, grammar, Sanskrit and the Yogacara school of Buddhism. He also visited the sites of the major events of the Buddha's life, his birth, his death and his enlightenment. It is said that with his rapid improvement in the language, he made immense progress in his knowledge of Buddhism and accomplished so much that he became one of the four most prominent Masters of the monastery. At an eighteen-day religious assembly held at the beginning of 643, where 18 kings from India and 3000 monk scholars participated, Xuan Zang allegedly defeated five hundred Brahmins, Jains, and heterodox Buddhists in spirited debate and was held in honor by many schools of Buddhism in India.

After that Xuan Zang attended another great Buddhist conference, which lasted 75 days and was held about every five years. He later decided to return to China in spite of urges and invitations for him to stay in India. When he set off for China, he brought with him a huge library of Buddhist texts loaded onto horses and an elephant given to him by the king. At the time he reached the Tang frontier, which he had crossed illegally 17 years before, he wrote to the emperor asking for permission to return. The empire forgave him and arranged an imperial escort to meet him on the way back to Chang An, guaranteeing his safety and the arrival of the texts which he carried. Crowds met Xuan Zang at the gates of Chang An, hoping to see the now famous monk and the treasures he brought from the west.

According to historical records, Xuan Zang was offered the post of prime minister, owing to his popularity and high esteem held by many after his unprecedented pilgrimage, but he politely declined it, and instead devoted all his time and energy to translating the Buddhist Scriptures into Chinese. Also, at the request of the emperor, he did record his travels in a book called *A Record of the Western Regions*, which later became an important book both in world history and geography. The account has been memorialized and popularized in the multi-volumed classic by Wu

Chengen, *Journey to the West*, trans. By W.J.F. Jenner, (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1986, 1995).

II.

Xuan Zang's contribution to translation in China can be traced by the role he played in the development of translation methods.

Ever since Han Wu Di (an emperor of the Western Han Dynasty during 140-87 B.C.) began to trade with the Western regions (now Xinjiang and parts of Central Asia), and Han Heng Di (an emperor of the Eastern Han 146-167) began to encourage large-scale translation of Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit into Chinese, there were conflicting attitudes towards literal and free translation in Chinese translation practice.

In the initial stage of Buddhist Scripture translation, which lasted from the days of the later Eastern Han Dynasty to the Western Jin Dynasty (148 to 316), foreign translators (mostly Indians) and Chinese monks usually resorted to literal translation. This was due to their limited bilingual knowledge, inexperience with translation, lack of knowledge of sophisticated translation methods, and their reverence for the original Sanskrit Buddhist Scripture, which meant that they emphasized words and structures in the original. For instance, the pioneering Eastern Han (25-220) translator Zhi Chen (who came to central China and was active in Buddhist translation during 178-189) retained many words from the original texts and made much use of transliteration. Later, the translator Zhi Qian (active in Buddhist Scripture translation during 223-253) tended to go in for Chinese expressions, but unsystematically so that his translations were not exact.

During the second stage in Buddhist Scripture translation (in the Eastern Jin and Sui Dynasties (317-617)), Zhao Zheng, the manager of the Fu Qin translation workshop (357-385), advocated literal translation. The translations done under his supervision were mainly transliterations of the original words and structures except for minor adjustments in word order in Chinese. Later, the famous Luo Shi recommended free translation. Since he had an excellent command of both Sanskrit and Chinese, he thought that the original words and syntax need not be rendered on a one-for-one basis, as long as meaning of the original texts was conveyed. Luo Shi's free translation exerted considerable influence on Buddhist Scripture translation practice during the Northern and Southern Dynasties period (420-581). Though there were many translators and different translation schools at the time, free translation remained dominant.

However, the conflict between free vs literal translation continued. Seng You (445-518), a Qi Liang scholar in the Southern Dynasties, argued that a translation should be "faithful" to the original. The Tang Dynasty (618-907) began the third stage of Buddhist Scripture translation and was the period in which it truly flourished. In terms of translation strategy it was marked again by great faithfulness in translation. Xuan Zang was the most notable translator of this period.

There are comments on Xuan Zang's translation in many historical documents. Dao Xuan (596-667), a historian specializing in the Buddhist Scriptures, visited Xuan Zang's translation workshop and described his way of translating as superior to past practice in his *Biographies of Eminent Monks* (Volume 5. Second set). According to Dao, translation procedures previously comprised three steps: the first was a word-for-word rendition of Sanskrit into Chinese without any change of the original sentence structures; the second step was to re-form the literal translation according to Chinese syntax; the third and final step was to make the translation run fluently. Translations which had been through these three steps were often different from the original in terms of contents, since this type of translation would involve what we may term additions or losses of meaning. Conversely, Xuan Zang translated in an altogether different way: he began by thoroughly analyzing the meaning of the original and then rendered translations of paragraphs or even chapters of the original, which were in most times so perfect that they only needed to be written down when he spoke them out in spite of the then popular group translation. (A translation group at that time was usually composed of helpers respectively responsible for diction, localization, correction, polishing.)

Xuan Zang's translation has met with mixed response. Some critics find that Xuan Zang's translation could be regarded as literal translation compared with that of Luo Shi and as free translation in comparison with Yi Jing's (635-713). Although he recognizes that faithfulness is the hallmark of Xuan Zang's translation, the modern writer and thinker Lu Xun (1881-1936) finds his translation difficult to understand, especially at the first reading.

Throughout Chinese history, most critics have found that Xuan Zang's translations are the most faithful and exact Chinese translations of the Sanskrit originals, but a modern scholar, Lu Cheng (1896-1989), after careful analyses of Xuan Zang version of *Guan Suo Yuan Shi Lun* with those of others, declared in his article called "Characteristics of Xuan Zang's translation" (1928) that "The translation of Master Xuan Zang should be called a fluent free translation rather than faithful literal translation." However, in general terms, Lu also pointed out that the translations of Xuan Zang show "his attention to the changes of the sources and schools of the original doctrines and his efforts to give a complete introduction to them," and that:

As far as the translation style is concerned, Xuan Zang surpassed every translator representing every school. His translation is generally called the 'New Translation'. As he had excellent command of both Chinese and Sanskrit, he attained both faithfulness and fluency in his translations. Moreover, since he was well aware of the shortcomings of the translators before him, he made improvements accordingly. Therefore, the quality of his translation

excelled that of all the other relevant translators. When we try to check his translations against the original in Sanskrit or Tibetan, we only find that all his translations are correct. (1979:185)

A monk called Shi Chexing at Da Ming Temple in Fufeng (a county not far from Xi'an) concluded in his article "On Xuan Zang's Apiration and Creation" presented at a Xuan Zang studies conference held in 2000 in Xi'an that Xuan Zang's "entirely new translating method combining literal and free translation,. After more than a dozen years' practice, he became highly proficient and even perfect in his Yu Hua Temple period. Therefore, he could translate the long and abstruse scripture texts into natural and beautiful verses composed mostly of four character lines, or occasionally of fivecharacter or six character lines, thus making the 600 volume scriptures (meaning the scriptures called Da Ban Ruo Jing, the last set Xuan Zang translated) a smooth and vivid reading with every word the best equivalent and every sentence soundings musical and fluent."

III.

It is especially remarkable that Xuan Zang's translation practice in the seventh century somehow coincides with the present-day translation theories. It is my assertion that by applying Western translation theories, notably those of Peter Newmark, to Xuan Zang's translation we may gain a better and more scientific insight into the significance of Xuan Zang's translation.

In *Approaches to Translation* (1982), Peter Newmark put forward the notions of communicative and semantic translation: Communicative translation attempts to produce in its readers an effect as close as possible to that of the readers of the original; and semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original (1982: 39). Newmark also makes it clear that "the basic difference between semantic and literal translation is that the former respects context, the latter does not." (1982: 63) According to Newmark, communicative translation normally makes the translation fluent, idiomatic, and easy to read because communicative translation requires a bold attempt to clarify and reorganize the meaning, including to correct mistakes of fact and misuse in the original. Conversely, semantic translation attempts to recreate the precise flavor and tone of the original because form and content are one. In other words, communicative translation aims at being functional, whilst semantic translation is both linguistic and encyclopedic. This is the same way that "Bible translation should be both semantic and communicative" (1982: 45).

I believe that good translators should be familiar with both methods. In dealing with specific texts, translators decide which method to follow, semantic or communicative. However, choosing one as a main

thrust does not exclude the other one even with the same source text. I submit that Xuan Zang's translation strategy is much more understandable and easy to evaluate with the use of Newmark's theoretical frame work rather than the simple 'literal' vs 'free' translation dichotomy. Obviously, Xuan Zang's faithful translation can be classified as semantic translation, while Yi Jing's should belong to the literal translation category which pays little attention to context. The difference between Xuan Zang's and Luo Shi, who was mainly interested in conveying the main meaning of the original, further illustrates Xuan Zang's tendency to resort to semantic translation. This also explains Lu Xun's general impression of Xuan Zang's translation as difficult to understand at first sight since semantic translation "does not require cultural adaptation." (Newmark 1982: 52) Lu Cheng's assertion in *Fu Xiong Shi Li Shu Qi* that Xuan Zang's translation is free translation and is unfaithful to the original must refer to passages in which Xuan Zang primarily relied on communicative translation. Xuan Zang's proficiency in alternating between semantic and communicative translation in order to render every text adequately is, in all likelihood, the very feature that in the end makes Lu Cheng concede "To be fair, during the hundreds of years from the late Eastern Han Dynasty when Buddhism was introduced to China to the beginning of the Tang Dynasty, the only person who can really show us the true features of the original Indian doctrines is Xuan Zang." (1979:186) In this sense, it may not be an exaggeration to say that as early as 1300 years ago, Xuan Zang somehow already had mastered some basic translation principles that are part of modern translation theories and approaches.

IV.

Good translation requires highly qualified translators, as clearly stated by Peter Newmark. I find three points particularly important. 1) Translators must command large vocabularies, a thorough knowledge of idioms as well as syntactic resources and the ability to use them elegantly, flexibly, and succinctly. 2) They have to know the foreign language so well that they can tell if and to what extent a source text deviates from the language norms usually used concerning the topic. 3) Translators must master the craft so well that they move smoothly between comprehension which may involve interpretation, and formulation which may involve recreation. Translators must therefore master textual analysis, know the topic of the source text, and be familiar with all aspects and resources available in the target language.

It is my tenet that Xuan Zang was eminently qualified as a translator according to these standards. There are three distinct stages in his life. The first covers the period from the time when he became a monk in Chang An at the age of 13 until he went abroad at the age of 27 (according to the traditional Chinese way of counting age) in 627. As mentioned above in Part I, during this period, he thirsted for knowledge, studied hard, and

visited all the famous scholars within China for advice in order to learn as much as possible about Buddhist Scriptures. However, the more he learned, the more he was dissatisfied with the many uncertainties resulting from an inadequate mastery of the theories involved with language and translation problems. Therefore he decided to go to India himself to pursue his studies. The second period began when Xuan Zang journeyed to India in 629 and lasted until he returned to China with many volumes of the Buddhist Scriptures.

In India, he read widely and studied with zeal. He acquired greater proficiency in Sanskrit, wrote some essays in this language, and translated some Chinese texts into Sanskrit. The third stage began in 645 and ended when he died in 664 at Yu Hua Temple to the north of Chang An. Xuan Zang then devoted all his time, thought, and energy to translation of Buddhist Scriptures. He worked conscientiously, incessantly, and was always meticulously attentive. Xuan Zang thus spent the first two stages of his life obtaining knowledge and command of Sanskrit, and used the third stage exclusively to translate as much and as well as possible.

Yu Chao Qing, a professor at Suzhou University, thinks that it is a typical case called “receiving and giving” (2002: 260); the more knowledge one can gain, the greater contribution one can make. Or, in other words, the greater the preparation, the greater the achievement. This certainly applies to Xuan Zang.

Xuan Zang’s achievement in translation is acknowledged by many scholars. Ge Weijun compared Xuan Zang’s Chinese version of *Xinjing* with the original Sanskrit and found that Xuan Zang not only fully and accurately conveyed the meaning of the original, but also made the text more lucid, smooth, and precise by making the necessary deletions or changes. (The source can be found in “Review of Xuan Zang studies during the past 100 years” by Huang Xianian at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, included in *Xuan Zang’s Spirit and the Western China Culture*. 2002: 108) Li Li’an examined Xuan Zang’s translations by checking the originals and also reached the conclusion that Xuan Zang’s translations are accurate and creative. He especially mentions Xuan Zang’s translation of *Jin Gang Jing* as an example. He points out that by resorting to the neat Chinese antitheses both in sound and in sentence structure, Xuan Zang’s translation of *Jin Gang Jing* reads very easily, gracefully and naturally. At the same time, it is the most faithful and complete translation compared with all other Chinese versions of this text. (ibid.. 2002: 108-109). Another scholar, Wu Baihui regards Xuan Zang’s translation of *Yin Ming Ru Zheng Li Lun* as faithful, concise, scholarly, and creative. (ibid.. 2002: 109). Lu Cheng summarizes Xuan Zang’s achievement: “It is owing to his great learning and thorough mastery of Chinese and Sanskrit that he could express the original argumentation with unrestrained accuracy”(1979: 339). Indeed, even today it is hard to find translators who are scholars of high achievement in the discipline they translate and know both the source language and the target language thoroughly.

Xuan Zang's qualifications as a translator lie not only in the excellence mentioned above, but also in his diligence, conscientiousness, and grasp of the relevant skills. In order to meet the translation standards he set for himself in translating faithfully and understandably, he regarded a full comprehension of the original as the first prerequisite. He would fully grasp the gist the original before translating it. He even checked all available editions of the same text for a word or sentence he was not sure of before translating them. It is therefore understandable that he always employed both functional and semantic translation methods in order to render the original adequately.

V.

Xuan Zang's translation techniques were thorough and systematic. According to P. Pradhan, an Indian scholar, and Zhang Jianmu, a Chinese scholar, Xuan Zang's strategies can be categorised into six types (This summary can be found in *A Short History of the Chinese Translation* by Ma Zuyi, 1984: 59-60): 1) supplement; 2) omission; 3) shifting; 4) dividing and combining; 5) borrowing; 6) restoration of pronouns, etc.

When these techniques are compared with those described in modern Chinese theories, they comprise nearly all modern translation techniques, sometimes with slight alterations. For example, Xuan Zang's "supplement" corresponds to "amplification" in *A Handbook of Translation* by Zhong Shukong (1980) and "word-adding" in *A Course of Translation between English and Chinese* by Zhang Peiji and others (1980); his "shifting" with Zhong's "Inversion"; his "dividing and combining" with Zhang's "Sentence division and combination" and "splitting" and "reorganizing" listed in *Writing Types and Translation* by Liu Miqing (1985).

According to Catford, the extent of translation falls into two categories, full and partial translations. According to him partial translation means that passages of the source text can be transferred directly into the target-language text rather than "translated properly". More than 1300 years ago, Xuan Zang listed five cases in which parts of the Buddhist Scriptures could not be translated into Chinese:

- 1) When the original is secret, such as incantations;
- 2) When a word is ambiguous in that it has many meanings;
- 3) When there are no equivalents in the vocabulary of the target language;
- 4) When there are already existing and widely accepted transliterations; and
- 5) When there are no stylistic equivalents.

Whenever this was the case, Xuan Zang used transliteration. This also explains why some of Xuan Zang's translations are difficult to

understand since there are some words with only the sound of the original transferred. However, some of the most frequently used Chinese loan-words are actually transliteration of foreign language words, e.g. “幽默” (*youmo*, transliteration of “humor”), “逻辑” (*luoji*, transliteration of “logic”), and “拷贝” (*kaobei*, transliteration of “copy”). Xuan Zang then also used this principle of “not translating”, that is to say, transliteration and it has served to enrich the Chinese language.

To conclude, it should be stressed that even to this day Xuan Zang is an exceptional example for his willingness to face all kinds of dangers and difficulties in order to to achieve his goal for the benefit of humankind. Moreover, his outstanding contribution to Chinese Buddhist translation, together with aspects of his approach that corresponding closely with modern translation theory and practice make Xuan Zang's achievement a monument to good translation. His approach to a text is still much admired and will serve as a challenge to later generations in their efforts to excel in translation.

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CHAPTER 5

COLLINGWOOD: THE RE-ENACTMENT OF PAST THOUGHT

JOHN P. HOGAN

INTRODUCTION

The elements which go into Collingwood's historical method such as the question and answer dialectic, presuppositions, and the imaginative reconstruction inferentially built up by interpreting evidence are widely accepted principles; indeed some have even become truisms of modern historiography. While critics abound, for the most part historians no longer seek some frozen, existing out-there, uninterpreted "real past." To a great extent they understand their task as Collingwood describes it: the imaginative reconstruction of the past based on evidence found in the present.

It is only when Collingwood moves beyond this theory of historical knowledge and describes with precision what, in his opinion, the historian does when practicing this theory that he runs head on into a major confrontation with both philosophers of history and hermeneutical theoreticians. Since the historian can neither confront the past directly nor rely on just any testimony about the past, he asks, "How, or on what conditions, can the historian know the past?" His outside-inside distinction and his views on the subject matter of history provide insight into his response: only thought somehow survives the flow of time. The answer to the above question constitutes his most controversial statement, ". . . the historian must re-enact the past in his own mind."¹ Seemingly lost in the clouds of idealism, this statement is perplexing and open to misunderstanding.

¹ *Idea of History* (IH), Ed. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1946), p. 282. Primary sources for the re-enactment theory include: IH, pp. 282—302; 302-15; A, pp. 95-106, 110-19; and RP, pp. 77-79; 262-64. The theory has spawned a large literature. See for example, Leon J. Goldstein, "Collingwood's Theory of Historical Knowing," *History and Theory* 9 (1970), pp. 27-34; Louis Mink, *Mind, History and Dialectic: The Philosophy of R. G. Collingwood*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1969), pp. 159-70; Alan Donagan, *The Later Philosophy of R.G. Collingwood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), pp. 192-96; William Debbins, "Editor's Introduction" in *Essays in the Philosophy of History*, (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1965), pp. xxii—xxix; Lionel Rubinoﬀ, *Collingwood and the Reform of Metaphysics: A Study in the Philosophy of Mind*, pp. 39-43; G. Buchdahl, "Logic and History: An Assessment of R. G. Collingwood's Idea of History," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 26 (1948), pp. 95-98; L. B. Cebik, "Action, Re-enactment, and Evidence," *The Philosophy Forum*, n.s. 2 (1970), pp. 68-90. [For the

W. H. Walsh's description of Collingwood's historical thinking as "the standard idealist account" has given direction to most of the misconceptions that have cropped up around the re-enactment theory.² According to Walsh, Collingwood's theory amounts to saying that history involves a direct and immediate form of knowledge. The thoughts of the past are grasped in a "unique way" which is non-discursive and non-inferential. Historical knowledge is reduced to a kind of "intuition". This misconception has dominated the interpretation of Collingwood's approach to history until relatively recently. The rethinking process has been misunderstood as a self-certifying and almost magical transference to a "real" past. Walsh's intuition—has been supported by other commentators who use such terms as "telepathic communication with past thoughts"³ and "empathic understanding."⁴ Buchdahl refers to the "miraculous power whereby we can, as it were, slide into the thought of the past."⁵

The received interpretations understand re-enactment as an intuitionist theory of historical verification. However, as both Donagan and Goldstein have demonstrated, Collingwood is not claiming some mysterious

discussions surrounding the 1990s findings in the Bodleian Library, see the introduction to the rev. ed. of *The Idea of History* by Jan Van der Dussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); see also, G. Browning, *Rethinking Collingwood*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave and New York, 2004). Most importantly, see *The Principles of History and Other Writings in the Philosophy of History*, ed. W.H. Dray and W. J. Van der Dussen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Fred Inglis, *History Man: The Life of R. G. Collingwood* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009). The last work cited is more than a biography; it also provides a series of valuable reflections on thinkers who have picked up Collingwood's mantle, including: Thomas Kuhn, E.H. Carr, Charles Taylor, Peter Winch, Quentin Skinner and Alasdair MacIntyre. For an updated overview of Collingwood, see the entry by James Connelly and Giuseppina D'Oro in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.]

² W. H. Walsh, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, 3rd rev. ed. (London: Hutchinson's Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 43; 48-58; 70-71; cf. Donagan, "The Verification of Historical Theses", *Philosophical Quarterly* 6 (1956), 193-95; Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing," p. 32, fn. 48.

³ Patrick Gardiner, *The Nature of Historical Explanation*, (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), p. 39. Gardiner later altered his position. Cf., *The Philosophy of History* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), p.5; *Idem*, "Historical Understanding and the Empiricist Tradition," in *British Analytical Philosophy*, ed. Bernard Williams and Alan Montefiore (New York: Humanities Press, 1966), pp. 267-84.

⁴ F. D. Newman, *Explanation by Description* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), p. 51. The text actually reads *emphatic* but *empathic* is meant.

⁵ Buchdahl, "Logic and History" 112; cf. Donagan, "Verification of Historical Theses," 195; Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing", 34-35, fn. 53.

cognitive power whereby the historian discovers past thoughts. He maintains rather than by the interpretation of evidence the historian is able to rethink past thoughts by imaginatively discerning them in the available evidence.⁶ Neither a theory of historical explanation nor a psychological or romantic interpretation is supported by a more rigorous analysis of Collingwood's own thought. Likewise, it is not supported by a hermeneutical interpretation of the same.

The analysis here will show that re-enactment of past thought is not tied to some immediate identification with the past. Past thought can be re-enacted only because it survives in the present. It is incapsulated in present thought. The re-thinking theory is born of a very existential concern for understanding in the present. A hermeneutical interpretation will demonstrate, in turn, that the misconceptions mentioned earlier fail to do justice to Collingwood's thought. Rethinking may then be understood as further articulating, in clearer language, the dialogic and conversational manner of the hermeneutical experience. A hermeneutical grasp of the rethinking process will serve to link the three elements in the hermeneutical experience: understanding, interpretation and application.⁷ All are implied in Collingwood's rethinking process.

Moreover, what Gadamer refers to as the "fusion of horizons" is expressed by Collingwood's re-enactment process and his incapsulation theory. Re-enactment of past thought corresponds to what happens when a reader is confronted by a text. The meaning of the text is not limited to the text but is constructed by being rethought in the historical process of transmission and interpretation.

HISTORY AS THE RETHINKING OF PAST THOUGHT

In spite of the fact that past events are not immediately knowable, the discipline of history is being practiced. This is possible because the historian ultimately is concerned with thought. Historical thinking begins by examining and interpreting the relics of the past. However the goal of that examination and interpretation is to understand past thought in the present. From the words in a historical text, the historian wants to find out what the person who wrote those words meant by them. This means discovering the thought which he expressed by them. To discover what this thought was, "the historian must think it again for himself."⁸

Here Collingwood adds parenthetically that he is referring to thought in the "widest sense of the word." His notion of the nature of thought demands further analysis. Thought or thinking is that which is able to

⁶ Donagan, "Verification of Historical Theses", 205.

⁷ H.G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1975; German ed. 1965), p. 274. See new edition, (rev 2nd ed.), trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall (New York: Continuum, 2004).

⁸ IH, pp. 282-83.

continue in existence in a way which cannot be said for physical, social or psychological events. Since past thought survives or is able to be revived, it can be rethought. While some commentators have tried to make the re-enactment theory part of a methodological solution, others have categorized it as an absolute presupposition for doing history. Collingwood seems simply to claim two points: that re-enactment is the central condition for knowing the past and that it is a description of what in fact historians do.

Collingwood's own language at times has led to the accusation that he limits history to thought. He does put much emphasis, perhaps too much, on the rationality of human behavior. However, his claim, as his historical works indicate, is that human action is behavior informed by thought, but not limited to thought. Moreover, while sensations, feelings, and physical states and occurrences influence behavior, they are carried away by the flow of consciousness. An idea or plan can be reconstructed from evidence, whereas anger, sympathy and fear are not retrievable in themselves.

In a long discussion introducing the re-enactment theory, Collingwood goes so far as to state that the historical actor's thought and the historian's thought can be one and the same. To use one of his own examples, the historian can re-think the same, identical thought of Euclid.

If he thought 'the angles are equal' and I now think 'the angles are equal,' granted that the time interval is no cause for denying that the two acts are one and the same, is the difference between Euclid and myself ground for denying it? There is no tenable theory of personal identity that would justify such a doctrine. Euclid and I are not (as it were) two different typewriters which, just because they are not the same typewriter can never perform the same act but only acts of the same kind. A mind is not a machine with various functions, but a complex of activities; and to argue that an act of Euclid's cannot be the same as an act of my own because it forms part of a different complex of activities is merely to beg the question. Granted that the same act can happen twice in different contexts within the complex of my own activities, why should it not happen twice in two different complexes?⁹

To the objector who claims that no two human beings can ever think identical thoughts, Collingwood responds that such a position could only lead to historical scepticism and ultimately to solipsism.¹⁰

Thought is an activity in which the succession of states of consciousness can be stopped, thus allowing the general structure of

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 287-88.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 288-89; cf. Debbin's "Editor's Introduction" in *Philosophy of History*, pp. xxiv-xxv.

consciousness to be apprehended. That structure is seen as a framework in which the past lives on together with the present and can be compared with it. Thought alone stands outside the flow of consciousness. For Collingwood, not only the object of thought is outside the flow, but the act of thinking also. It is possible that one act of thought may continue on through a lapse of time, be in abeyance and later revive.¹¹

It is apparent that Collingwood's own language, to some extent at least, is responsible for the misinterpretations which surround the re-enactment theory. In order to counteract the misconceptions, it will be necessary to study Collingwood's historical work. Rethinking is not a transhistorical leap into the past which provides an explanation for history. The reenactment theory should be understood as a hermeneutical contribution to historical knowing. Not a case of identifying psychologically with a past figure, rethinking is what happens as a result of careful interpretation of evidence.

We shall never know how the flowers smelt in the garden of Epicurus, or how Nietzsche felt the wind in his hair as he walked on the mountains; we cannot relive the triumph of Archimedes or the bitterness of Marius; but the evidence of what these men thought is in our hands; and in recreating these thoughts in our own minds by interpretation of that evidence we can know, so far as there is any knowledge, that the thoughts we create were theirs.¹²

Rethinking past thought, however, does not limit history to abstract theoretical reasoning. It involves the process of question and answer which, building on evidence, calls forth the past from the present. The "act of thought" is not some isolated "thing" that can suddenly be grasped by an observer. Rather past thought is woven together, admitting and even illustrating the complexities and circumstances that influenced past motives, intentions and plans. Although the historian can re-enact past thought, he cannot apprehend the individual act of thought as it really happened. What is apprehended of the individual is something that has been shared. "It is the act of thought itself, in its survival and revival at different times and in different persons: once in the historian's own life, once in the life of the person whose history he is narrating."¹³ Collingwood, then, is not claiming that the historian experiences the actual act of thinking of the historical agent. He does claim, however, and claims it as absolutely essential to historical understanding, that the historian can reconstruct the thought behind an historical event because that thought has been shared with others and is still manifest in forms of

¹¹ IH, p. 287.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 296.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 303; cf Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing," 31.

expression. Rethinking is possible because past thought has been mediated through evidence. Obviously, this rethinking takes place in a different context and perhaps a different language. Examining the process in which Collingwood was able to fashion purpose and motive out of archeological and written evidence dispels any hint of an intuitive gimmickry and reveals re-enactment as a sound interpretive and inferential theory of historical knowing. The present presuppositions of the historian are not ignored; they are necessary to the re-enactment. As with Gadamer, “rethinking” does not necessarily fall into the trap of a narrow conception of “original intention.” The time gap between thought in the past and its rethinking in the present must be bridged from both sides.¹⁴ To be historically effective, the historian should share a common tradition with the object of his study. His mind must offer “a home” for the revival of past thought. His thought needs to be “pre-adapted” to become the host of a past thought. The inquirer’s present interest must give him the openness required to enter into dialogue with the unfamiliar. Rethinking as a hermeneutical experience, involving an experience akin to Gadamer’s “fusion of horizons“, is indicated when Collingwood relates an experience that is familiar to most scholars concerned with historical studies.

A man who at one time of life finds certain historical studies unprofitable, because he cannot enter for himself into the thought of those about whom he is thinking, will find at another time that he has become able to do so, perhaps as a result of deliberate self-training. But at any given stage in his life the historian as he stands is certain to have, for whatever reason, a readier sympathy with some ways of thinking than with others. Partly this is because certain ways of thinking are altogether, or relatively, strange to him: partly it is because they are all too familiar, and he feels the need of getting away from them in the interests of his own mental and moral welfare.¹⁵

The past cannot be rethought in its immediacy. It is rather by questioning the evidence from one’s present horizon, supported by a tradition which extends back to the past horizon, that the investigator can reconstruct the thought inferred by the evidence. As the above passage indicates, both in spite of and because of its alienation due to pastness, the thought or purpose can be grasped, because it is still a shared instance of thinking with which the present inquirer can identify.

Two illustrations from *Roman Britain* may be inserted here to put to rest the contention that rethinking is an immediate, intuitionist approach to

¹⁴ IH, p. 304.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 304-05.

history, bolstered only by a shaky idealism. The first concerns the interpreting of unwritten sources. Collingwood refers to an earthwork constructed to the south of Hadrian's wall, the so-called Valium. He sees in it a second obstacle running parallel to Hadrian's wall "and provided with a corresponding series of controlled openings for traffic, differing from it in its deliberately unmiitary design."¹⁶ The function of this second barrier long remained a problem for historians. Drawing on the full range of his knowledge of the Roman Empire, Collingwood offered a solution. Claiming no more than that his account "fits the facts,"¹⁷ he attempts to rethink Hadrian's thoughts, that is, those thoughts that determined the construction of such a frontier wall.

A Roman frontier has two principal functions, one military, the other economic. These are separate functions, for the sentries reported to the commandant and the customs officers to the procurator. The relation between the two operations was a delicate one, for they involved distinct jurisdictions. Before Hadrian's wall, frontier works had been separate from garrison forts. In the absence of proof, Collingwood conjectures that openings in the wall were controlled by customs officials, while sentries guarded their own gateways. Hadrian's wall presents an innovation in that the customs checkpoints and the military barriers formed one wall.

From a military point of view this new method of planning the forts in relation to the barrier was no doubt an improvement. If traffic crossing the line of the barrier was compelled to pass through a fort, the military control over such traffic was tightened. But the question must now have arisen, how to provide for the customs officers? Hadrian, a stickler for military discipline, may very well have thought it unwise to give the procurator's man an official position at fort gateways where the authority of the commandant should be undisputed. The simplest solution on paper; though a cumbrous and expensive one, would be to have a second barrier behind the Wall; to make this barrier look as un-military as possible, consistent with efficiency; and to provide it with a crossing opposite each fort, where the customs officers could do their work. The Wall as a whole would be controlled by the governor, the Valium by the procurator; the distinction between the two reflecting and

¹⁶ R.G. Collingwood, *Roman Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, rev. ed. 1934), p. 133; cf. Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing," 29.

¹⁷ Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, p. 134; cf. Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing," 29.

symbolizing the separation between the military and financial services.¹⁸

This passage is an instance of historical rethinking as Collingwood understands it. We notice there how dumb archeological remains handled carefully and deciphered in relation to Roman military, economic and administrative policy come alive and make statements as to purposes, motives and intentions. By scrutinizing the evidence, Collingwood is able to rethink the thoughts of which the evidence is the expression. Goldstein is right to observe: "The essential considerations which presumably passed through Hadrian's mind as he came to the decision to have the Valium built have passed through Collingwood's as well."¹⁹

A second example more directly concerned with written sources gives further support to the contention that rethinking is essentially a hermeneutical endeavor. The motives behind Caesar's invasion of Britain had long evaded the historian's grasp. Caesar himself never discloses in his writings what he intended to bring about by invading the island. And yet, unless his intent is known, "the mere narrative of his campaigns must remain unintelligible." Thus, Collingwood sets about to reconstruct Caesar's intent. In his account of the campaigns in Gaul, Caesar offers a clue to that intent as he complains that "in almost all his Gallic campaigns, contingents from Britain had been fighting on the side of his enemies."²⁰ The problem of keeping the peace in Gaul was uppermost in Caesar's mind. Rebellion on the part of the fiercely independent tribes was a constant threat. That threat was, to a great extent, the motive for the British expedition.

As the event of his expedition showed, Caesar was on the horns of a dilemma. So long as Gaul was restless, Britain, a refuge and reservoir of disaffection within a few hours' sail, was an added danger: for the sake of Gaulish security, therefore, Britain must be made harmless. But so long as the restlessness of Gaul was acute a campaign across the Channel was hazardous: it was an incitement to revolt in Gaul while the Roman armies were overseas. Either way there was a risk.²¹

Here is a perfect example of the logic of question and answer being applied, as well as the interpolative function of the historical imagination. Caesar's text, as well as collateral information, are put to the

¹⁸ Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, p. 134; cf. Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing," 30.

¹⁹ Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing," 31-32.

²⁰ Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, p. 32.

²¹ Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, pp. 32-33; cf. Donagan, "Verification of Historical Theses," p. 197.

question in order to extract from them that which they leave unsaid. Alternatives must be sought out, and the motives and intentions which best explain the evidence reconstructed. By means of a tightly argued case, Collingwood makes it obvious that the British invasion was not simply a large-scale raid, a punitive war to warn the Britons against interference in Gaul. Caesar meant much more. Again the rethinking process by means of interpretation of all the known evidence is carried out. The intention of annexing the whole of Britain is reconstructed.

[Caesar] knew the size of Britain with a fair degree of accuracy; he knew that its inhabitants were less civilized and less highly organized both in politics and in war than the Gauls; he meant in the following year to invade the country with five legions and to keep them there for the winter; and when all these facts are considered at once, it can hardly be doubted that his plan was to conquer the whole island.²²

²² Collingwood, *Roman Britain*, p. 34; cf. A, pp. 111-112. Theological examples of rethinking can be cited. Re-thinking or re-enacting past thoughts in a new context and different language would seem very much to be the task the theologian faces concerning for example, the meaning of the eucharistic celebration. A classic historical example of the need for rethinking is one which Collingwood himself refers to, the development of doctrine in the early church and the ensuing christological and trinitarian heresies. To understand those debates with any degree of accuracy, one must enter into them. Although Bernard Lonergan has misgivings about Collingwood's re-enactment, he offers an example of his own understanding of re-enactment which seems quite compatible with our interpretation of Collingwood. In *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), p. 165, Lonergan states:

Thomas Aquinas effected a remarkable development in the theology of grace. He did so not at a single stroke but in a series of writings over a period of a dozen years or more. Now, while there is no doubt that Aquinas was quite conscious of what he was doing on each of the occasions on which he returned to the topic, still on none of the earlier occasions was he aware of what he would be doing on the later occasion, and there is just no evidence that after the last occasion he went back over all his writings on the matter, observed each of the long and complicated series of steps. in which the development was effected, grasped their interrelations, saw just what moved him forward and, perhaps, what held him back in each of the steps. But such a reconstruction of the whole process is precisely what the interpreter does. His nest of questions and answers is precisely a grasp of this array of interconnections and interdependences constitutive of a single development.

Neither example contains a hint of an intuitive entering into the existential experience of a past situation by means of reproducing feelings or emotions. There is no dependence on a psychological transference; rethinking is done on the basis of interpretation of evidence. Our illustrations show how the rethinking process can cut through layers of historical evidence, written and unwritten. Thought, history's object, is that which "can be detached from the original context of action and be reproduced in the later context of historical inquiry, hence [it] ... is universal not existential."²³

Both examples manifest that the re-enactment of past thoughts is directly related to the questioning process in the present. Rethinking allows the historian to share the perspective of both Hadrian and Caesar, but it is only the distance of time which grants entry to that sharing. In order to revive Caesar's thoughts, the historian has to take into account the context of that thought and thereby grasp it in its "widest sense." It may be that Collingwood's approach affords the possibility of transcending the two orthodoxies in the history of ideas, and more closely relate text and context and thereby bring more cross-fertilization to history and hermeneutics.²⁴

Rethinking does not limit the meanings of an event to the straitjacket of original intention. Like Gadamer's hermeneutical experience,

²³ Goldstein, "Theory of Historical Knowing," p. 32. Goldstein goes on to show that, although Collingwood's primary concern was for historical knowing, he does become involved in historical explanation. "For history, the object to be discovered is not the mere event, but the thought expressed in it. To discover that thought is already to understand it. After the historian has ascertained the facts, there is no further process of inquiring into their causes. When he knows what happened, he already knows why it happened" (IH, p. 214). On page 34, Goldstein says, "When Collingwood knows what the Valium really is, he knows why it was built. When he knows what Caesar's strategy was, he knows the record of the ideal observer. . . not as behavior, but as the movement of troops. In sum, what is involved in the passage quoted from Collingwood is simply the claim that the object of the historian's research is human action, not behavior understood physicalistically." He concludes, "what Collingwood is trying to say is that the historian studies action—an 'outside' informed by an 'inside'—not behavior. Anything exhausted by its immediacy cannot be reproduced in the mind of the historian." Explanation as paradigmatic in the natural sciences and understanding as applicable to the human sciences is a discussion with a long history. Dilthey is central to that discussion. For a contemporary treatment Paul Ricoeur is most important, see for example, Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), pp. 71-88.

²⁴ Cf. Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," *History and Theory* 8, 3-53 and A. P. Simonds, "Mannheim's Sociology of Knowledge as a Hermeneutic Method," *Cultural Hermeneutics* 3 (1975), 81-104.

it is a description of how one knows the past. In response to Gadamer's misgivings about re-enactment of past thought, Collingwood would claim that the text itself does not necessarily expose the question horizon of the past; rethinking does.

Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the processive nature of human thought disallows a really restricted notion of original intention. Nonetheless, past thought, as part of an ongoing process, contributes in no small way to present meanings. While rethinking is neither a methodological tool nor an explanation of history, it contributes to both. It is more correctly understood as a transcendental reduction of historical understanding. Rethinking the past is the condition for understanding the past. The actual doing of history is methodologically accomplished when that condition is met by means of the imaginative and inferential process of interpreting evidence.

EVENT, PROCESS AND INCAPSULATION

The rethinking or re-enactment of past thought is Collingwood's description of historical understanding. In response to Gadamer, it might be indicated that rethinking takes us beyond a metaphorical description such as "fusion of horizons" but is essentially concerned with the same experience. The retrieval of the past as part of a shared tradition is a common concern of both Collingwood and contemporary hermeneutics. Rethinking happens by interpreting expressions of past thought. The "outside" of an event leads one to an "inside." Both together constitute a human action. However, until more is understood of Collingwood's conception of thought as an on-going continuous process, it remains somewhat obscure how precisely interpretation allows one to see "through" an event. The reenactment process is made clearer by the "incapsulation" theory presented in *An Autobiography*.²⁵

The past the historian wishes to know is one which, in some way, makes a claim on the present. As the examples from *Roman Britain* show, that claim might only be apparent to the trained historical observer. However, for the Christian reader of the New Testament, for example, a past which makes a claim on the present is essential to his very existence as a believer. We are historical beings. Our thoughts and experiences form a continuous process in which our present is formed, to a great extent, by our past. Our very ways of perceiving are affected by our own past experiences and those of our communities. Present actions and manners of thinking are the products of social habit dependent on tradition. Present, past and future are inextricably interwoven. Without a shared tradition, Caesar's campaigns, as much as the gospels, would remain unintelligible. The present needs its past in order to be

²⁵ R. G. Collingwood, *An Autobiography* (A), pp. 89-119.

understood, and the past cannot be made intelligible without the present on-going process of human questioning.

Tradition for Collingwood is like the dynamic functioning of a corporate mind. It is the process whereby the past is personally, although not necessarily consciously, brought into the present and opens up the future. As we have already seen, “The continuity of tradition is the continuity of the force by which past experiences affect the future; and this force does not depend on the conscious memory of those experiences.”²⁶

The “outside” of rethinking is accounted for by the interpretation of evidence. The function of tradition which Collingwood describes in his “incapsulation” theory presents the “inside.” It should be emphasized that terminology here is strictly metaphorical. Rethinking and interpretation are one process. However, interpretation penetrates to past thoughts because,

...historical knowledge is that special case of memory where the object of present thought is past thought, the gap between present and past being bridged not only by the power of present thought to think of the past, but also by the power of past thought to reawaken itself in the present.²⁷

The possibility of reawakening the past is dependent on a prior condition that the past is somehow present—even though dormant. This is what Collingwood means by the encapsulation of past thought in the present. The theory provides the foundation for history as the ongoing process of human thought, and for history as a discipline, as the plugging into that process. It is only within a process perspective that the past may be found thriving and exerting an influence on the present. The past that is of interest is a living past. Collingwood formulated his first principle of history thusly:

²⁶ R. G. Collingwood and J.N.L. Meyers, *Roman Britain and the English Settlements* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924) p. 252, as quoted in Goldstein, “Constitution of the Historical Past”, p. 258.

²⁷ IH, p. 294; Rubinoff, *Reform of Metaphysics*, p.281. commenting on the relation between perceiving evidence and rethinking states: “At the epistemological level this ontological distinction between an event and an action gives rise to the distinction between perceiving and what Collingwood calls ‘rethinking’: a. distinction, incidentally, which must be understood according to the terms not of propositional but of dialectical logic, so that what Collingwood calls rethinking, rather than being radically distinct and separate from the act of perceiving, is on the contrary, the becoming explicit of what is already implicit in perception. Perception and rethinking, in other words, do not mutually exclude one another, they overlap.”

...that the past which an historian studies is not a dead past, but a past which in some sense is still living in the present ... I expressed this by saying that history is concerned not with “events” but with “processes”; that “processes” are things which do not begin and end but turn into one another; and that if a process P_1 turns into a process P_2 , there is no dividing line at which P_1 stops and P_2 begins; P_1 never stops, it goes on in the changed form P_2 , and P_2 never begins, it has previously been going on in the earlier form P_1 . There are in history no beginnings and no endings. History books begin and end, but the events they describe do not.²⁸

The importance of this notion of process cannot be overestimated... Indeed, history as the re-enactment of past thought would be unintelligible without it. Material evidence provides the vehicle for rethinking, but for that rethinking actually to occur more than material evidence is necessary. Documents and potsherds are stimulants for the historical imagination but, according to Collingwood, rethinking of past thought would not occur unless past ways of thinking still existed and could be traced in present thought. In other words, past thoughts survive. However, the survival need not be continuous. “Such things may have died and been raised from the dead, like the ancient languages of Mesopotamia and Egypt.”²⁹ The reconstruction of the “inside” of the historical event is possible because past thought lives on in the present. The past is not ushered on stage as a problem-solver. It has been present, though unnoticed, all along. The practical importance of being able to recognize the presence of the past may be seen in the reluctance with which social change is met in a society. Only on reflection, after the fact of change, is the continuity between past and present revealed. Progress and change are rarely seen as good precisely because the past has not been studied and understood.³⁰ The function of history is to inform us about the present. It does so however, by means of its ostensible subject-matter, the past, which is incapsulated in the present.

How does this incapsulation of the past in the present relate to the rethinking and interpreting process? If, for example, a thought of Nelson’s is still somehow present in my thought, would not my identity be placed in

²⁸ A, pp. 97-98.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

³⁰ IH, p. 326; cf. Herbert McCabe *What Is Ethics All About?* (Washington, D.C.: Corpus Books, 1969), where he makes this same point with respect to the Irish rebellion of 1916. “We may, indeed, rightly assert after the event that the minority of active revolutionaries did in fact speak for the deepest desires of the apparently indifferent majority, but most people could not be aware of this at the time”(pp. 116-17).

jeopardy? Although Collingwood's language does open him to this objection, he proposes a way out of the dilemma. The thought I re-enact is the same as the thought of the historical agent. Yet, in some way, the thoughts are different. The difference, as we have seen, is one of context. For Nelson, his thoughts were present ones. For the historian, it is a past thought living in the present, and, as Collingwood puts it, "incapsulated, not free."

What is the meaning of an incapsulated thought? It is a thought, which does not form part of the question and answer complex in the present. It is not an everyday, "real" question. On a superficial or obvious level, one does not usually ask why Caesar invaded Britain or why Nelson made a particular statement. But even a superficial level of questioning may prompt the inquirer to switch into a deeper dimension. By more reflective questions, the historian stops merely thinking about his subject and is able to think with him. An intimate conversation with a historical text invites identification. "I plunge beneath the surface of my mind, and there live a life in which I not merely think about Nelson but am Nelson, and thus in thinking about Nelson think about myself." This identification is not some mystical taking leave of the present. It is immediately clarified and qualified by the incapsulation theory. The identification with a past historical agent Collingwood refers to as a "secondary life." However, this "secondary life," as a way to explain how one understands the past, does not include abandoning the present. "But this secondary life is prevented from overflowing into my primary life by being what I call incapsulated, that is, existing in a context of primary or surface knowledge which keeps it in its place and prevents it from thus overflowing."³¹ Another "proposition" of historical knowledge is thus formulated: "Historical knowledge is the re-enactment of a past thought incapsulated in a context of present thoughts which by contradicting it, confine it to a plane different from theirs."³²

This proposition sums up Collingwood's response to a focal problem for the philosophy of history and hermeneutics. On the one hand, unless the past can somehow be identified with the present, it can never be known. On the other hand, unless the past is differentiated from the present, knowledge of it is not distinguishable from knowledge of the present. In that case, historical knowledge is negated. The "sameness" and "difference" of the historical past is insured by the incapsulation theory. Rubinoff elucidates Collingwood's solution to this problem against the Hegelian background of *Speculum Mentis*. The present is conceived of as a synthesis of past and future. This implies a doctrine of time in which the past is both immanent in and transcendent to the present. The past, because it is

³¹ A, p. 113. While thought constitutes the universal medium for understanding for Collingwood, this does not greatly separate him from Gadamer's emphasis on language as the universal medium. Collingwood, too, realizes the closeness between thought and language. See, *Principles of Art* (London: Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 251.

³² A, p.114.

incapsulated in the present is existentially real. At the same time, it is ideal because it can be reconstructed and made an object of thought. The past is called into being by historical thinking which disentangles the past from the present where it actually exists and transforms it into the thought it was. “What prevents the past, so conceived, from becoming a mere mode of present experience is its quality of ‘transcendence,’ while what prevents it from being a mere object of ‘acquaintance’ is its quality of ‘immanence.’”³³

Re-enactment of past experience or thought entails two tasks which overlap and are carried out simultaneously: the interpretation of evidence and the reawakening of past thought incapsulated within present thought. Thus understood, re-enactment or rethinking provides a sound description of the historical-hermeneutical process. Incapsulated past thought is brought to a conscious level through the interpretation of evidence. Rather than an abandonment of the present, rethinking, which is an imaginative and inferential process, cannot happen unless the historian-interpreter is reflectively present to his own present. Without that, the past implied in that present will never surface. Only reflection on present meanings can provoke questions about past meanings and allow the “continuity of force” to affect the future. Rethinking and incapsulation provide a hermeneutical grasp of an historical tradition and help to account for Collingwood’s view that history is a self-knowing and self-making process.

RE-ENACTMENT AND THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS

The theory of re-enactment has its principal theological advocate in Rudolf Bultmann. He states, “The historian cannot *perceive* the thoughts as a scientist perceives natural facts, but must *understand* them by re-enacting the process of thought.”³⁴ While Bultmann and some of his followers make use of the theory, re-enactment of past thought in general does not seem to have endeared itself to contemporary theoreticians of hermeneutics. Lonergan’s position would seem to sum up much of the reaction, including Gadamer’s. While endorsing most of what Collingwood has to say about historical knowledge, Lonergan claims that the position on history as reenactment “is complicated by idealism.”³⁵ In biblical hermeneutics in particular, post-form-critical scholars are reluctant to accept an approach involving

³³ Rubinoff, *Reform of Metaphysics*, pp. 144-45; cf. Collingwood, “Some Perplexities About Time: With an Attempted Solution,” *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 26(1925-26), 135-50.

³⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *History and Eschatology: The Presence of Eternity* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1957), p. 131; for a summary statement see p. 135; cf. James M. Robinson, *A New Quest for the Historical Jesus*. Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 25, (London: SCM Press, 1959), pp. 66-72; Jasper Hopkins, “Bultmann on Collingwood’s Philosophy of History,” *Harvard Theological Review* 58 (1965): 227-333.

³⁵ Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, p. 175, fn. 1.

rethinking. The claim made there is that because of the nature of the New Testament texts for example, they simply cannot be said to “disclose thoughts of Jesus, let alone permit us the luxury of re-thinking them or re-enacting them.”³⁶ However, the examples cited throughout this study illustrate well the complex process of interpretation and rethinking which, by penetrating various layers of texts or remains, permits and even calls for the inferring of an event. Collingwood would readily admit that the redactive nature of the gospels makes rethinking an arduous and delicate task. He would hasten to add, however, that the remains of the Valium do not exactly furnish us with a verbatim transcript of Hadrian’s plans.

Without denying that Collingwood’s idealistic philosophy and language, as well as the exploratory and tentative nature of many of his writings, contribute greatly to misconceptions, we maintain that much of the disagreement with the re-enactment theory comes from identifying it with either a leap into past psychological states or a theory of historical explanation. Both interpretations, as our examples indicate, are oversimplifications.

By way of illustration, Van Harvey appears to fall into both traps. He rightly calls attention to the distinction between how we come to know something and how we come to certify the validity of that knowing. In terms of history, for Collingwood, the former relates to rethinking; the latter relates to the mutual confirmation which takes place between the imaginatively rethought picture and the available evidence. However, as we have seen, the two procedures go on together. Historical imagination is the criterion for truth, but it can never be divorced from evidence. Harvey uses Collingwood’s example of the reconstruction of a crime.” The imaginative reconstruction of the crime is only a hypothesis, and whether it is right or wrong can be justified by its accounting for what is certainly known.”³⁷ With the exception perhaps of the word “hypothesis”, for which he would have preferred perhaps “inference” or “conjecture” (from evidence), Collingwood would be in complete agreement. However, Harvey, returning to the need to distinguish between how historical knowledge is gained and the justification of that knowledge, makes an obvious, if misguided, reference to Collingwood:

This distinction is important, because some historians who insist that history is the re-enactment of past thought or experience sometimes talk as if the historian had some special intuitive powers by virtue of which he could “get inside” other minds in a self-authenticating fashion. They

³⁶ Lain Nicol, “History and Transcendence,” in *God, Secularization and History, Essays in Memory of Ronald Gregor Smith*, ed. Eugene Thomas Long (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974), pp. 77-78; cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, “Belief in Jesus Today”, *Commonweal* 101 (Nov. 1974): 140-41.

³⁷ Van Austin Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), p. 92.

argue that the historian does not infer what the agent is thinking or feeling but grasps it immediately and directly. Moreover, these historians sometimes insist that the historian does not have merely a thought or experience similar to the subject he is investigating, but an identical one. He does not only rethink the thought of a past agent but has the identical thought.³⁸

This assessment of Collingwood fails to take into account that a question is being asked in the present, that the context of the question is past, and that the answer emerges from an interpretation of evidence. Harvey's opinion, apparently heavily dependent on Patrick Gardiner, is that. The view expressed in the paragraph above "leads to insuperable problems." He maintains the problems stem not from the imaginative rethinking, but from the fact that the rethinking solution "confuses a highly useful and perhaps indescribable method for arriving at a hypothesis about the 'inside' of an event with the ways in which one would go about confirming that hypothesis."³⁹ The verification of an hypothesis, Harvey insists, would require that the event posited in the hypothesis be corroborated by other events, facts and data. Again, Collingwood would be in agreement. For him, rethinking the "what" of the historical event points to the "why", but corroboration is totally dependent on evidence. Our examples from *Roman Britain* indicate that Collingwood, too, would have "insuperable problems" with the view attributed to him in the passage quote above. Rethinking is not an immediate, self-authenticating getting inside of an event which would make justification through evidence superfluous. Harvey, too, falls victim to the received interpretation.

Implicit in the rejection of the re-enactment theory by hermeneutical thinkers such as Gadamer and Harvey is that Collingwood leaves out the function of the present, and therefore does not get to understanding as such. In view of the incapsulation theory this criticism is beside the mark. This theory manifests well the historicity of all understanding and the dialogue between present and past. All rethinking involves a dialogue between the self and the past. The past only becomes manifest in the present by passing through the screen of critical reflection. The historian re-enacts past thought but only in the context of his own knowledge. In re-enacting it, he criticizes it and passes judgment on its value. In rethinking the past, he "corrects whatever errors he can discern in it." Collingwood continues, "All thinking is critical thinking; the thought which reenacts past thoughts, therefore criticizes them in re-enacting them."⁴⁰

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ In *Historian and the Believer*, Harvey's reference (p. 101, fn. 49) is to Gardiner, *Nature of Historical Explanation*, pp. 120-33.

⁴⁰ IH, pp. 2 15-16; cf. Rubinoff, *Reform of Metaphysics*, p. 262.

In agreement with most of the contemporary hermeneutical thinkers, Collingwood was most certainly concerned with the critical appropriation of meaning in the present. Historical texts or remains are signs indicating past human actions whose meanings can be gleaned. However, those meanings only become available when there is sufficient shared experience between the historian-interpreter and the past he is attempting to understand. As in Gadamer's metaphor of conversation, there must be some degree of intellectual sympathy. Collingwood, like Gadamer, identifies understanding and interpretation. Understanding, in the German sense of *Verstehen*, as a personal involvement and sympathy which gets to the inside of a human action, is what Collingwood means by historical understanding.⁴¹ To understand the past means to share meanings with the past. Reenactment of past thought is for Collingwood the only route to that sharing.

While not necessarily directly dependent on Collingwood, Coreth is one scholar who apparently accepts re-enactment as integral to the hermeneutical experience:

...there will be no understanding unless I co-enact and re-enact the alien thinking in terms of its own grounds and context. I must strive to understand it in its own terms and in its entirety.... It does not concern the meaning that was meant. Co-enactment does not mean, to be sure, that I agree with all the assertions, and that they become my own convictions. But I have indeed understood an author only if I perceptively understand that, given his viewpoint and his reasons, one can think and speak as he does, and that it is possible for someone to arrive out of honest conviction to such judgements and to such a global view of things.⁴²

The Collingwoodian overtones in this passage are obvious. Similarity of expression and meaning are also apparent when Coreth describes tradition as the hermeneutical arch which makes understanding the past possible. The arch corresponds to the incapsulation theory. Coreth's interpretation of tradition as a hermeneutical arch serves to support Collingwood's claim that, "Incapsulation is not an 'occult entity,'"⁴³ but a description of how tradition functions. According to Coreth, the arch

⁴¹ Cf. Theodore Abel, "The Operation Called *Verstehen*," *American Journal of Sociology* 54 (1948-49): 211-18; S. Beer, "Causal Explanation and Imaginative Re-enactment," *History and Theory* 3 (1969): 6-29.

⁴² Emerich Coreth, *Grundfragen der Hermeneutik: Ein Philosophischer Beitrag* (Freiburg in Br.: Herder, 1969), pp. 132-33.

⁴³ A, p. 141.

...spans from the event that happened once in the past over the historical effects of it and of its interpretation and all the way to the understanding we have of that event today. It puts the past in touch with the present, and confers significance on the past in terms of the future.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it may be said that while Collingwood's philosophy of history maintains close ties to Hegel's unfolding of absolute mind, his mature thought about history and his practice of history, including the re-enactment and incapsulation theories, uncover an all pervasive concern for the hermeneutical question of meaning and understanding. Understanding history by the rethinking of the past is not a methodological solution nor an explanation theory but rather a description of how the mind works historically and what, in fact, an historian-interpreter does. It is interesting that Collingwood's response to his critics is not unlike that of Gadamer to his. Collingwood's claim in regard to re-enactment is: like it or not, that is what historians do. To do less than rethink the past is to accept something less than understanding.⁴⁵ Gadamer employs a similar rubric in his response to Betti. "Fundamentally I am not *proposing a method*, but I am describing *what is the case*. That it is as I describe it cannot, I think, be seriously questioned ..."⁴⁶ In spite of critical differences, Collingwood and Gadamer agree on many points. For both philosophers the "reality of history is essentially and vitally dialogical" and historical thinking "must always operate in critical awareness of its own historicity."⁴⁷

The key for Collingwood is the rethinking process. But that process, as we have seen, is closely interwoven with the hermeneutical understanding of tradition and the interpretation of evidence. Rethinking by means of interpretation of evidence provides the means for moving beyond the text or archeological remain to a hermeneutic of event. Collingwood's approach to history, interpreted from the perspective of contemporary hermeneutics, reveals the components in that approach as major contributions to the whole hermeneutical discussion.

⁴⁴ Coreth, *Grundfragen der Hermeneutik*, p. 147.

⁴⁵ IH, p. 263 and A, pp. 111-12.

⁴⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 465.

⁴⁷ Iain Nicol, "History and Transcendence," in *God, Secularization and History, Essays in Memory of Ronald Gregor Smith*, ed. Eugene Thomas Long, (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 1974), p. 85.

CHAPTER 6

HISTORY AS AN INCREASINGLY COMPLEX SYSTEM

CARLOS EDUARDO MALDONADO

INTRODUCTION

The study of complex systems stands at the cross-border of various sciences, disciplines, methodologies and even logics. It has given birth, indeed, to border sciences and precisely, border problems. Complex systems, however, have mostly been studied and understood as part of the physical, mathematical, biological and computer sciences. Even though little attention has been paid to social sciences as complex systems in precisely the terms of the sciences of complexity, the number of books and articles on human social systems as complex systems has been raising in the last few years¹. Nonetheless, there is almost no work concerning the relationship between complexity and history. Perhaps the most conspicuous text in this direction is I. Wallerstein's (1987), a short and cautious work. Even though we can encounter several articles and a few chapters in books dealing with history and chaos, there is no consensus so far as to the relation between history and chaos and, additionally and most important, there is no real and deep understanding of the relationship between chaos and complexity and, henceforth, between complexity and history. As for the rest, the links and matches between history and complexity are timid or avoid facing history as science vis-à-vis the question of complexity. At most, the writings available so far deal with history as a tool, for instance in treatments such as: "the history of complexity", "complexity and economic history," and the like.

¹ As an example, the first book on sociology and complexity was published in 2006; in fields such as anthropology and even archeology a recent strand of papers and discussions have started and are growing and being enriched. In politics the contributions from complex sciences is already considered steady. In economics various works can be cited after Arthur Brian's pioneer work; perhaps the most conspicuous work linking complexity and economics are the books by Paul Ormerod; among philosophers a couple of books by Mario Bunge and Nicholas Rescher should be mentioned. Yet, in most of the social and human sciences there still seems to be a reluctant if not a skeptical attitude towards approaches dealing with self-organization, dynamic equilibrium, chaos, fractals, catastrophes, non-predictability, and so forth. However, these are just a few indications of the work being done. My aim here is not to write a critical bibliography on complexity and the human and social sciences; that is still to be done in the near future.

Moreover, in some of the top centers around the world devoted to the study of complexity almost, no attention has been given to history as a complex problem in the terms used to speak about complex systems in various other domains². Perhaps the reason is that complexity sciences deal more with phase space (= imaginary spaces) and, philosophically speaking, much more with the possible rather than with past. Here I shall argue precisely that history can and should be considered as a complex dynamic system.

A good part of the reason for this sort of blindness regarding history and complexity has certainly to do with the normal understanding already set in the late 1980s, according to which complexity is a quantitative measure of nonlinear systems. If so, the problem for the social sciences is found in their (in)capacity to quantitatively measure their own systems, and behaviors. Several critiques run along this line, and, I believe very reasonably. However, I further believe that complexity is not to be reduced to just a quantitative measure or unpredictable and unstable phenomena and behaviors. Such an understanding of complexity provides a weak service to the task of grasping the kind of phenomena characterized as *complex and not just as complicated, hard, tough, or difficult*.

Thus very little, if any, attention has been put to the relations between history and complexity. With this text I shall argue that history can, indeed, be taken as a complex system, and I shall mention four arguments, all having an “if...so” structure; that is, they are conditional arguments. They are the following: i) History as science does not reduce itself to just human phenomena and scale. The human scale can indeed be taken as the scale one (1) and, hence, as the encountering point of both greater and lower scales. If so, then history can “dialogue”, so to speak, with complex sciences; ii) History can and should be viewed as an open system or field. More particularly, the past which is the proper domain of history is an open system. If so, then history is to be assumed by and as (a part of) the complexity sciences; iii) As is well known, history does not deal with human time as such, but only with historical time. However, historical time can and should be viewed in terms of time density. Time density, I argue, is nonlinear; iv) History is a shifting point between nature and culture. If true, then historiography, and more particularly philosophy of historiography enriches and complements the very philosophy of the natural, social and human sciences.

To be clear, my contention, when studying history as a complex system is against determinism, namely, the theory that the history of the world could only unfold as it did. As I shall have the opportunity to show,

² I particularly refer to the work being carried out at the Sante Fe Institute in New Mexico (www.sfi.edu) and the Necsi (New England Complex Systems Institute) in Massachusetts (www.necsi.org), the Technical Institute in Vienna or the Free University in Brussels. Even if we take a look at what is being done at the Max Planck Institute, the same can be said.

assessing history as a complex system means that we can and should take history as an open system. My own position here will be from an epistemological point of view but also from the standpoint of philosophy of history. I shall argue that history can be taken as a complex system, namely a system of *increasing* complexity.

THE PROBLEM CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF COMPLEXITY

In a specialized bibliography, we can find several articles dealing with a dynamic comprehension of history, including history and chaos. However, there is no clear understanding as to the relationship between chaos and complexity and most of the articles dealing with chaos and history miss the point. Perhaps the first and up until now the most complete study relating both history and complexity is I. Wallerstein, (1987). It is indeed an insightful paper, and yet short and cautious. Wallerstein deepens his comprehension of history in the frame of complexity in a collection of papers published in 2004 under the common denominator of *The Uncertainties of Knowledge*. But what he writes remains valuable as an indication of a path to transit through, rather than a sort of systematic development. It should be noted, however, that Wallerstein's own insights depend, to some extent on I. Prigogine's work. Be that as it may, Wallerstein remains the best source for a further development concerning the relationship between history and complexity.

McCloskey's article from (1991) bridges engineering, particularly the use of differential equations, to history and narration by showing that a chaos-like language and approach can be complementary. While engineers specialize in metaphors, historians focus on stories. His frame, though, is chaos and not complexity. G. Reisch's article from (1995) comes closer to chaos while criticizing a kind of inferiority complex some historians and social scientists may have vis-à-vis empirical sciences. Of a quite different take, R.K. Sawyer (2004) sheds some new light about emergence, a different approach to causality which is and remains the historian's most valuable task about past events and phenomena. M. Shermer, writing in 1995, produced a harsh attack against scientism and the need to relate chaos and history. In spite of his strong and inclusive critique, it is a valuable and clear analysis of problems about history and chaos.

In my view, after Wallerstein's works just mentioned, the most important work has been carried out by W. H. McNeill. McNeill (1998 and 2001) shows both openness and long range vision concerning history and historiography. The most salient feature in McNeill's two papers is, doubtless, his call to bring together history and evolutionary theory, as well as the importance of framing both history and the historians' own work within the ongoing scientific worldviews that are being developed and discussed by the scientific community. While he does not deal with

complexity directly, what he says remains completely valid within the frame of complexity sciences, whether or not he is aware of it.

Nonetheless, perhaps the best study regarding the use and interpretation of chaos and/in history is Lindenfeld's article (1999) in which he takes as a guideline Turner's *Hitler's Thirty Days to Power*". Valuable as it is, complexity sciences remains out of the scope of his concern. However, his work may be taken as an inspiration to move forward along the path that leads from history and historiography to complexity.

Three articles can be mentioned as a tentative and careful *rapprochement* between history and chaos, namely, Reddy's paper (2001) on the logic of action in which he highlights the importance of indeterminacy, a most valuable complex notion. Stewart's article (2001) does not consider directly history or historiography and, at the same time, is rather critical of the common usage of complex theory language, methodology and tools. Concerning the relationship between history and complexity, this paper remains vague. Further on, Tucker's article (2001) is full of insights for a study on complexity and history, even though it appears she is not directly concerned about chaos or complexity as such. And yet, what she says about the philosophy of historiography is, I believe, to be taken into account for further developments in the context of complex systems studies.

J. L. Gaddis's (2002) wants to be set in the same wave length, so to speak, as Collingwood's and Carr's major books on history and the philosophy of history. Gaddis devotes one chapter (pp. 71-89) to chaos and complexity. As it is, Gaddis acknowledges McNeill's clear understanding and insights as to the need to open history (very much as Wallerstein himself talks about opening the social sciences in his Gulbenkian Commission Report (2004)). The opening of history and, *en passant*, of historiography to the physical and mathematical sciences will certainly enrich and broaden mankind's own comprehension of time, the world, and of the very scientific endeavor, as it happens. However, Gaddis offers no clarity on the distinction or relationship between chaos and complexity, giving thus the impression of two common and non-distinct concepts or fields.

As for the rest, I may say that among the community of experts in complex systems, there has been little concern for the comprehension of history as a complex system. At most, there are works on history from an analytical point of view, gathering data, constructing and re-constructing periods, and the like. No attention has been set to what could be called as a reflective or even a speculative use of history. From this point of view, the use of history by researchers on complex systems has been an analytical rather than a reflective or theoretical one. With this text, I wish to go into what can be named as a complex comprehension of history in terms of a dynamic complex system. I shall argue that history can be viewed in terms of a complex dynamical system when taking complexity as a nonlinear system. Such a comprehension, however, brings to the fore a serious debate

against causality, regularity and continuity as being the common and dominant patterns of history. I shall argue in favor of an evolutionary approach to history.

When studying complex systems, one of the difficulties is that there is no one definition or comprehension of complexity. Instead, various comprehensions and approaches have been reached. However, the most basic understanding of what a complex system is comes out of the identification of some of the features of complexity. Complex systems stand at the edge of chaos, are sensitive to initial conditions and respond to a nearby strange attractor in the sense pointed out by chaos theory. They exhibit emergence and self-organization, with a high degree of connectedness and synergies, and, most important, the arrow of time plays a crucial role. Thus, we can safely say that complex systems are those systems marked by the arrow of time, namely irreversibility. In one word, complex systems are basically characterized by an *increasing* though unpredictable process of complexification. Such a complexification means that the more complex a system is the more degrees of freedom it has, as these have been defined in mathematical or physical terms, e.g. the number of independent pieces of information on which a parameter estimation is based. In other words, it is the measure of how much precision an estimate of variability has. *The more degrees of freedom a system has, the more complex it is.*

Even though there has been no agreement on the definition of a complex system, the most generalized comprehensions are the following: Gell-Mann defines a complex system by its capacity to adapt and, hence, he calls them “complex adaptive systems” (CAS). S. Kauffman claims complex systems to be self-organized systems, and thus, self-organization is believed to be the most salient feature of complexity. For Bar-Yam, a complex system can be best understood in a meso scale, i.e. neither big enough nor too small, but rather having enough elements so that what becomes relevant is not so much the elements that compound a system, but their interactions. Prigogine prefers not to talk about complex systems, but rather about complex behaviors, and they are characterized by a mixture, so to speak, of contingency and necessity. For Prigogine, complex behavior is characterized by a dynamic equilibrium, and he calls such a system far-from-equilibrium systems, i.e. complex behaviors.

Here I shall adopt a different perspective, more in accordance with history and historical processes and events. Thus, I shall prefer to take a complex system as a nonlinear system, a comprehension which somehow runs tacit in the works of Kauffman, Bar-Yam, Gell-Mann and Prigogine, to mention but some remarkable authors, but this issue is not explicitly considered by them.

Whereas an equation is said to be linear because it has one (and only one) solution, a problem is defined as nonlinear since it has more than one solution; for instance when a problem exhibits squares, bifurcations, and non-steady patterns. History and historiography are much more

concerned with critical events and encounters in the study of crisis arousing motives for study and interpretation, analyses and narrative, explanation and evaluations. Crises depict nonlinearity precisely due to a strong short-term and long-term connectedness, to the interaction of both constant and inconstant agents, and by the very recognition of some events as having definite beginnings whilst others have vague beginnings. Likewise, for example, some have clear endings whereas others have indefinite endings.

To be sure, nonlinearity entails unpredictability and low control of situations, at least during certain times. Nonlinear situations and circumstances may have the appearance that agents seem to be at odds and passive in front of several forces and other subjects, but in reality it simply means that the available cognitive tools are not sufficient for agents to understand and explain what is going on at that time. Hence, nonlinearity calls for creativity, imagination and new insights concerning the very capability of knowledge, i.e. science and life. Several examples, both contemporary and historical could be mentioned here as illustrations. As it is often said, that happens when history faces so-called “bottle-neck” situations. Complex systems and complex behaviors exhibit erratic motion.

After these clarifications, I now turn to the arguments supporting why history can be claimed to be a complex system.

THE HUMAN SCALE OF HISTORICITY AND MULTISCALE ANALYSES

Determinism is the philosophy according to which there is always a privileged standpoint over others and the world exhibits a necessary and, by definition, unique center out of which any other perspective is secondary and derivative. If true, then the world is meant to have a singular scale that determines and even undermines and makes impossible other perspectives, scopes and scales.

Complexity sciences, in contrast, have highlighted the very fact that the world both implies and leads to a multiscale approach, when appropriately understood. Put in simple terms, world history exhibits various levels, layers, nuances and perspectives which are to be taken even though the whole picture is not always coherent and ambiguous. Ambiguity is a central feature of human events that cannot be overthrown; such recognition is possible when studying history under the light of relevant and para-consistent logics. Ambiguity is a necessary and active feature in human history. It is not ambivalence which is negligent and passive.

History, indeed, does not exhibit any exact solution and certainly not a definitive solution. Over against postmodernist approaches that claim a kind of relativism and eclecticism, the complex approach to history is much closer to Heraclitean philosophy, rather than to the Eleatic school (Prigogine, 1980). History is, indeed, the realm of the unstable, dynamic and flowing experiences, whether viewed in short-term or in long-term scopes. Narrative as a valuable tool of both historians and philosophers of

history faces us continuously with open-ended explanations and provisory conclusions, as it were.

One way historians deal with multiscale analysis is by considering individual, social, and natural levels, the local and the foreign, the short-term and the long-term, the singular and universal, for example (this last in exactly the sense of the *Annales* school) always in their interdependence and reciprocal feedback. If so, where does the originality of multiscale analyses lie? Throughout the passage and combination of various scales a phenomenon that is being studied exhibits a wider, deeper and more enriched dimension, so much so that no scale is privileged.

The following can serve as both an illustration and an explanation of what I am referring to here. There is no one story in history, i.e. no one voice. On the contrary, history consists of a variety of voices, a polyphony, literally speaking or else also a polymorphy. Thus, for example, whereas it has been sufficiently stressed, history has been mostly the voice of the conquerors and the winners, there should be, though, also space for oral history—as, for example the not-yet-written-history-, for the voice of the excluded, the oppressed, the ones that suffer at the same time that there is a voice of the those who flourish and win. The play *Rosenkrantz and Gilderstein Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard is a fantastic example of what I mean here; one more good example is, of course, Akira Kurosawa's movie *Rashomon*. In music the recent explorations led by Yo-Yo Ma can be mentioned as outstanding examples where he combines both Western music along with traditional, non-Western or indigenous music. A relevant example in historiography is M. de Certeau's *La possession de Loudun*. Often the arts seem to be far ahead of the sciences—in this case Philosophy and the Social Sciences.

The consequence, though, is crucial and unavoidable: there is no one truth in history, no one past, no one future either. Instead, history is to be viewed as a crossing-up of experiences, all which compound a certainly complex fresco of human experience.

Such a polyphony of history, however, should and cannot be taken in any syncretic, relativistic or eclectic sense as if, then, “anything goes” in history, though it brings to the fore the question about human ambiguity³. In this sense, I believe, history can be taken as wise complementary tool vis-à-vis politics—taken in any wide and broad sense- which most of time claims the prevalence of one voice. Perhaps the sort of wisdom history brings about is possible when we consider events in and as a *longue durée*.

From a philosophical point of view, I would like to highlight here the Socratic dialogues of Plato in which it is clearly set that truth is not a property of any of the participants, but the outcome of interchange and openness to the others' questions and arguments⁴. Thus, truth comes, as it

³ See A. de Whaelen's book on Merleau-Ponty, *Philosophie de l' Ambigüité*.

⁴ See Guthrie.

is, at the end of the dialogue, if at all; for most of the time the result is an astonishment, a rejoice, a paradox or a feeling of pursuing the (everlasting) quest. In the age of globalization, this insight can set the conditions for further research projects. The historian's intelligence and sensitivity consists exactly in pointing out with the tools he or she has such a dynamics. Truth, indeed, is a movement and, why not, a tempo, in a musical sense.

Perhaps one of the most meaningful tasks historians may have consists in uncovering truths that have been silenced in history, while carefully appraising and reappraising the ones that have been already set and constitute valuable hints in the evolution of human culture. This does not mean, however, that they should not care for voices alive that strive to survive and indeed manage to succeed. In other words, historians must be capable of reaching an holographic view of history, so to speak.

Let me put it straightforwardly, even though in mathematical terms for the sake of precision and brevity, precisely what I refer to above as "polyphony" and the like is eventually simply a matter of combinatory analysis and of combinatory. If true, then we must turn our sight briefly to combinatory analysis, namely the understanding of those processes, structures and dynamics compound by many elements in such a way that from their interactions further new structures and forms emerge. Perhaps the most conspicuous historical essay in this research line has been set by Hölscher (1997), even though in his article, he seems to know very little about complex system.

Nevertheless, the past should be considered from a multiplicity of points of view in order to establish the coherence of all different features of a certain period, whether, for instance, these are social, cultural, political, philosophical or religious. Hence, the complexity of history consists in multiscale analysis.

As it is easy to see, expanding the scale of observation of a subject implies an integral cognitive approach that can be called by some as holism (Rozov, 1997, p. 342), and by others as complementary—taking in view Bohr's principle of complementarity, for instance. However, it is important to stress that complex systems study does not pretend to be a coherent approach, as it is in Ramsey's or in Rescher's philosophy. In this sense, it has nothing to do with systems theory approach (von Bertalanffy, von Foester, Bateson and others).

On a quite different note, Rozov (1997, pp. 343-44) traces several distinctions that can be taken into account in a wider study concerning multiscale levels of work related to history, thus:

Nominative scale, by which things are distinguished and supplied with names.

Scale of order, according to which objects are distributed in accordance with the relative degree of expression of a chosen parameter that can be assigned a number, but only the order is significant.

Scale of intervals, where numbers assigned to objects specify not only their order, but also “the distance” between them in a chosen parameter.

Scale of relations, that shows how much more a parameter is expressed in one object than in another.

The absolute scale which makes it possible to measure a parameter independently in single objects and to employ the entire series of real numbers.

The behavior of a system is governed by several factors being the most salient ones, its initial conditions, and the rules of transformation that govern the system’s behavior. (Now, the debate about the truth of some counterfactuals or other is a debate about the initial conditions which are obtained. Perhaps for this reason, the use of modal claims in history is often obscured. The debate may appear to be only about actual facts, but at stake are important modal implications (Bulhof, 1999, p. 165).

A multiscale analysis is, indeed, though it should by no means be reduced to, the recognition of the importance of counterfactuals. As one author puts it, “A counterfactual claim is the result of a mere manipulation of the initial conditions of a system, or of the outside influences of the system. We simply plug in different values, apply the same rules of transformation, and get certain results” (Bulhof, 1999, p. 168). The matter of multiscale and modal thinking is but the question regarding determinism in history from a quite different perspective and valuing it as a question rather than as a statement.

HISTORY AS AN OPEN SYSTEM

There are no closed or isolated systems. The belief that the world consists of closed or isolated systems is called a zero-games world in game theory. Such is a world in which when there is one player who wins, then the other player necessarily loses. A winner implies a loser, it is claimed in accordance to such a belief. Complexity sciences, instead, claim that all real systems are open—for they have an environment that both encompasses and disturbs the system. The traditional and common way of considering the environment is as a spatial dimension. In this section I shall argue that the environment is not just to be considered in its spatial dimension, but it also has a temporal dimension. History is a way of dealing with the temporal dimension of the environment, very much like paleontology, archeology, and paleobiology. In other words, the world can be viewed as a non-zero game according to which when someone wins somebody else wins, too, even with differences, and when someone loses others lose too, even with differences. That is what history is all about when understood as a complex nonlinear system, hence open.

The concept of environment is essentially indeterminate. Indeed, as part of my environment belongs not only to the airplane that is passing by

right now in the sky, the kids that are playing in the backyard with their shouting and laughing, for instance. This environment can go on depending on the influence, and disturbance or affection of spatial circumstances upon me. However, to my environment the Egyptians, the Summarians, the Mayans, for example, are also integrated to some extent. The very depth and width of history depends very much on my knowledge, my intelligence and my (historical) sensibility. History is a presence as large, deep and wide as both the spatial and temporal dimensions that can be seen, and intertwine with each other. Historical time affects me according to my historical sensibility, my intelligence and my knowledge⁵. If so, then a society, a culture or a nation's own intelligence and sensitivity to their temporal dimension of the environment depend very much on the very knowledge and care with which historians deal with the past.

Past is an open system, for it is always susceptible of being re-written, re-interpreted and re-signified, albeit not an open system as such or in itself. Past is an open dimension, indeed, depending on the actions and moves of the present, for it is the present which sees past as an open or a closed system. When it is seen as a closed system, history is reduced to one tradition at the cost of other traditions and experiences. It is also possible to find a fundamentalism towards the past and not only in past times. This, however, should not be understood as if the past was *just* susceptible of such re-interpretations, for historians can be viewed as the "carers", so to speak, of the past. Past is indeed only what historians define it to be and tell us the way it was. If so, then semiotics plays an important role in this sense.

If history can be said to be an open system it is because *we*, living human beings, make history complex. This assumption makes an important point, I believe. Complexity depends on the observer, who sees and introduces varieties, nuances, layers, scales into what is fixed or has been set to be fixed. From this perspective, complexity is a feature introduced by the observer into the historical time, and *then* history becomes complex, as it were, allowing us to see new structures and textures in the historical events. Thus, for example, we can retrospectively gain new insights into history and make it more complex by studying and discovering the everyday life of the Aztecs, or the Egyptians, or the Greeks, not to speak of the Middle Ages. From a different take, history can be seen retrospectively as a matter of genre, minority groups, and the like. The contributions by the *Annales*, from the *Past and Present* group or from the Bielefeld school are, in this sense, both illustrative and conspicuous, their disagreement and differences notwithstanding.

Historians, though, are that part of society that has the task, so to speak, of veiling and unveiling the past. In other words, society trusts to

⁵ I could even argue that future is included in my temporal dimension of environment as, for example, when we consider sustainability—but that is a different concern from a historical perspective. For history is human experience writ past.

historians the care for the past, even though it knows that historians construct a dynamic unity, as it were. Kuhn's concept of "scientific community" with its pros and cons is also to be found here and understood.

The various temporal modes of history are—in English and in fact in most Western languages—past tense, perfect tense, past continuous tense, including the modes past conditional, past subjunctive tense, and so forth. Indo-European languages know basically three modes: indicative, conditional and subjunctive. So far, we have to learn to speak of past in these modes. Time and logic have worked meaningfully on these tenses, and moreover on the distinction between time, tense and modality⁶. History and historiography are then a matter of how to write history "forwards", and not just "backwards", and certainly in a nonlinear way and scale.

I wish to highlight the consequences of environment as being both spatial *and* temporal, i.e. geometrical *and* historical. History implies and demands, henceforth, a cross-disciplinary approach. In other words, we find here the call, so to speak, for thinking beyond history and geography. When Hegel claimed that there were peoples with more geography than history—thinking about America, of course, most theoreticians have easily also found that the opposite can be true. Beyond that dispute, my point is that history can be conceived ecologically, namely as the articulation of a space and time that goes beyond the usual classification and work splitting natural sciences from social and human sciences. History, I claim, when appropriately understood, can be on the same wave-length, so to speak, as ecology. There is one name for such an encounter, namely evolutionary theory. Therefore, history focuses on men and mankind but in the frame of the intertwining of natural and human systems, which is what precisely defines a system as complex.

I want to make my point here: history is an open system, which means not only that history is made out of various traditions, some alive, some definitely past, and some others in emergency rooms. History is an open system that becomes increasingly complex as the flow of present enriches, widens and deepens it in accordance with the very evolution of science and culture.

If true, then history is revealed as the field of indetermination or indeterminacy, as it were, in spite of mankind's quest for roots, answers, identity and the like in past or backwards. History and evidence—historiography are therefore called to the fore, and the subject that immediately arises concerns history theory and philosophy of history as well as their relationship. The importance of a philosophy of historiography lies in how to make of history not just a story and a matter of interpretation—often wild, wish-full and subject to manipulation by fear, power, publicity and propaganda. The fact that history is an open system

⁶ Concerning modality, the crucial subject is the relationship between the actual world and the possible worlds. This point, however would take us too far afield for the present.

does certainly not undermine the importance of evidence and, hence, of historiography. Instead, the very claim of history as an open system means that the construction, study, and interpretation of the sources must not be regarded only as a matter of narrative and metaphor, but also of explanation and theory.

Thus, the old discussion about “Clio, muse or science?” can be re-framed as a complementary result of the dynamic balance between narrative and theory and, *à la limite*, logic; more particularly non-classical logics⁷. I think that we all must be concerned about the dilemma involving the two cultures (after Snow’s classic book) and the sincere effort of some to overcome that duality. There is, to be sure, no hierarchy of knowledge and discourse in spite of what traditional scholars have taught us. If history is open and hence a matter of both story-telling and explanation, then the question regarding the “two cultures” can be posed for history and historiography in terms of a complementary space between muse and science, but not as an exclusive either—or.

TIME DENSITY IS NONLINEAR

History, very much like life, is made up from different time structures and textures, different time rhythms and speeds. This is exactly what constitutes the complexity of history, namely the complexity—diversity of time and temporal orders. Such recognition, however, has not been sufficiently stressed or highlighted in the course of both history and philosophy of history. Instead, most of history has been presented as governed by a unique or a single time scale, reducing significantly the density of time, sometimes due to political, religious, and ideological interests. By reducing or eliminating the density of time, history has been conceived and worked out as a linear system where events have had one and only one voice, as it were. Often such a history and historiography is called “official” history leading to a canonical time interpretation and understanding.

The question of what an event means in history, I argue, can never be answered completely by telling a certain story about it, since there will

⁷ By non-classical logics—also known as philosophical logics and even as alternative logics—we can understand those logics that either are complementary or alternative to classical formal logic, and hence deal with problems left aside, but the classical formal logics that derive from Aristotle on, such as time, contradiction, context, multi-deductive systems, modality, the existence of many values, and so forth. Examples of such non-classical logics are: para-consistent logic, relevant logic, time logic, quantum logic, fuzzy logic, many-valued logic, modal logic. To be sure, it would be important for both historians and philosophers of history to cope with such alternative logics. The reasons are numerous and meaningful. Yet, they remain out of the scope of this paper. These themes are planned for discussion in a future volume.

be stories to be told about it in the course of time. One major task of the philosophy of historiography consists exactly in positing the polyphony of history, so to speak.

A matrix can be outlined as an indicator of the variety sketched above:

Historical Time Density	Rhythm	Speed	Direction	Intensity
Positive reinforcement				
Negative Reinforcement				

This matrix can be filled by assigning either arithmetical or algebraic values (as one pleases) to reveal an interesting, wonderful problem of combinatory analysis⁸, and as an exercise for valuing the various processes and paces in historical time.

History, like society, is compounded of people, institutions and practices some of which work slowly, whereas others work more quickly, some in one direction and others with a different vector, some having certain expectations and hopes, whilst others resign and give up, and so forth. The complexity of society consists in the variety of time orders, time scales and time speeds.

Let us take an analogy from ecology and biology: in the same way as we cannot assess whether there are key species and redundant species, we cannot affirm whether some time speeds and time orders are more fundamental than others.⁹ The best we can say is: “we do not know”—we do not know whether there are key species or not as, indeed, we learn from evolutionary biology or from ecology. In accordance, we do not know whether some time order is crucial or necessary at the cost of others. Therefore, a more prudent attitude can be outlined by stating that history is made of various threads, just as a rug is made of various textures.

⁸ Positive reinforcement and negative reinforcement can also be stated as positive feedback and negative feedback (more used by experts in complex studies), or even for increasing returns and decreasing returns, as economists might express it. The meaning of this footnote is to set bridges with various other approaches.

⁹ From an ethical point of view we should never forget that perhaps the most fundamental activities for mankind have been traditionally carried out by “inferiors”, such as cleaning and hygiene, feeding and cooking, transportation and vigilance (security). After all, complexity theory is very perspicacious against the Platonic-Aristotelian view of a hierarchy of knowledge, as well as society. Complexity thinking is nodal and non-centralized. See Y. Bar-Yam (1997) and K. Mainzer (1998).

The problem of history is the problem of change, i.e. evolution; more accurately the issue is about the change of history, and not just the change in history. How can history change? What is a historical change? This is where the three basic sides make up a jerky or fuzzy triangle: history, historiography, and philosophy of history (as well as philosophy of historiography). Most probably, historical change is to be found far more in the change of the way we observe the same object at two different points in time—for history cannot be changed *in re*, only *de dictum*. Throughout such a triangle, a liberation can occur. According to one author, “Liberation emerges out of being able to criticize the destructive myths of our ancestors without either ignoring the past, losing cultural depth and historical perspective on our lives, or just relativizing fraudulent narratives without really criticizing them” (Tucker, 2001, p. 56). An historical change, instead of being defined as the change of an “object” within a set of given parameters, has to be perceived as the change of parameters related to a given historical object (Hölscher, 1997). In other words, the change of history is carried out by our contemporaries, not by past human events.

As Marx has pointed out, men make history, but they do not always make it as they please. Moreover, most of the time, they cannot make it as they please. This becomes clearer the more we focus on change, i.e. historical change. For history, as opposed to politics, is made and read in the long run. (“Long run”, though, is a vague and indeterminate measure). This same idea can be stated differently, thus: “We are at one with our predecessors, immersed in a process we do not control and can only dimly understand—a process, nonetheless, that has made us and our agreed-upon systems of meaning the most disturbing, changeable, and quite extraordinarily power factor in upsetting the multiple levels of physical, chemical, and social equilibria within which we exist” (McNeill, 2001, p. 15).

Gould has insistently called our attention to the pace and the motives for change: “Do large effects arise as simple extensions of small changes produced by the ordinary deterministic causes that we can study every day, or do occasional catastrophes introduce strong elements of capriciousness and unpredictability to the pathways of planetary history?” (quoted in Shermer, 1995, p. 69). Whether we find or prefer small changes or catastrophes is precisely a matter of one of the components and the very matrix of time density. Historical time, therefore, is the outcome of a time density throughout which we can see events, processes, and phenomena in history that are useful as hints, landmarks or just tips of what can be overlapped from past to present.

If it is, indeed, hard to obtain a long-range view, the reason is based upon the pace and variations of the historical paths and motives we find or strive to encounter in history. Such is exactly the very complexity of

a universal history, for the more we dig into history, the more diverse and dense are the orders, scales, and rhythms of human experience¹⁰.

To be sure, history is not useful to predict events and processes, for its value is just as an indicator or a reference. But history does not necessarily tell us that things should be in such and such way. At most it can tell us how things might be possible—and that is already a matter of modal thinking. Modal thinking, though, leads us again to nonlinear time density—very much in the same tenure, for example, as counterfactual logic and time logic. The question then shifts to the relationship between history and the possible, and not just history and the past.

Thus, we go from history to politics and back to history in the sense that after acting, deciding, or organizing—or at least after considering what has been done, or what could have been done—we re-do, so to speak, history and change again. We bring, if you wish, its openness to the present. In other words, working on history becomes very much a matter of traveling in time backwards and then forwards to the future which is present. We travel in time towards the future when we decide—a decision is an action that is taken towards the future—but with the past in mind. Yet, this has not been sufficiently recognized and what mainly passes for history today is a variety of case studies from various parts of the world—Asia, Africa, East Europe, and Latin America, etc. We lack an integrative theory. History seems, in such a view, to be more a subject for government and international affairs schools¹¹.

HISTORY AS A SHIFTING POINT BETWEEN NATURE AND CULTURE

A shifting point in human knowledge is currently taking place. Such a turn goes hand in hand with the uncertainty, unpredictability and sort of indeterminacy of the present and the short-term future; let us say, the immediate foreseeable future. The long term consequences are being simulated, discussed, projected in as many ways, languages and modes as possible. We have discovered, for the first time in human history, that we have, indeed, put all our eggs in one and the same basket. Moreover, in

¹⁰ On this cross-point there is much to discuss, namely the relationship of information and memory as regards history. I believe memory has been taken more as a question and even as a sort of dialectics between memory and forgetfulness (as in Nietzsche's *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*). Indeed, we must see history more in terms of offering us information rather than memory. Moreover, history is the very story through which we gain information, but not from memory. However, this discussion is beyond the scope of this article.

¹¹ As a conspicuous example, see S. P. Huntington, "Political Conflict after the Cold War", in *History and the Idea of Progress*, ed. Arthur M. Melzer et al. (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995), 137-154.

historical terms, we have been playing with the basket. In social and political terms, we are still currently playing with the basket.

In similar circumstances human beings, specially in the Western world, have traditionally turned their heads to culture and to history. The examples and cases are numerous and well known. I shall leave culture aside for the time being. As for history, it can be useful only as a hint, a tip, or an indicator, nothing more, nothing less.

The course of human history is, indeed, strongly influenced by the growth of human knowledge, and human knowledge is a living system, indeed (Wallerstein, 1987; Maturana and Varela, 1990). Human knowledge not only evolves, it also develops¹². If so, then we ought to bring history into convergence with other sciences. I take this to be both an intellectual and a moral imperative in the future to come. History, historiography and philosophy of history, I would argue, can benefit from a cross-disciplinary approach¹³—which is indeed another way for understanding what complexity sciences are all about.

Yet, there is one important proviso here: History is but what historians think, do and write¹⁴. If true, then from this point of view the complexity of history would include the complexity of semiotics, hermeneutics and logic, not to mention archival research and the quest for “real” evidence, i.e. historiography. From all this, I believe, a clear consequence follows, namely a new concept of history arises: instead of history being a metaphysical unity of space and time (the destiny of mankind, the positivist’s world of facts), in which everything is linked to everything, it is instead the product of historical judgment carried out by those who design stories about their own past, present, and future, that is to say, historians.

We can speak of history as a system that changes continually and that knows equilibrium only in a few instances, for its very nature is change and non-permanence. When. Ionesco—the father of the so-called “theater of the absurd”-, complained that the only teaching of history he values, is that we never learn from it, he was referring to the fact that human memory is short-lived. We never seem to catch up to time. I think Ionesco is right in that we separate memory from information. In this sense the matter of history is like evolution, just as S.J. Gould said at the end of his life.

¹² This remark is to be understood in the way we have recently learnt to speak in terms of “Evo-Devo,” which stands for: evolution and development. Evo-Devo can be said to be a new science emerging from the intersection between evolution (and genetics) and genomics.

¹³ In this sense, see I. Wallerstein: *The Gulbenkian Commission and Report Open the Social Sciences*.

¹⁴ So it is and so it has been sufficiently known since history started as a science, around 1929-beginning of the 1930s, all the way long up to the 1970s, according to P. Chaunu.

Throughout history, I claim, we do not gain memory; we rather gain information.

If so, we are to distinguish history from tradition. Tradition is that realm of social reality through which we preserve and even gain memory. That is why tradition rests on rites, repetition, time cycles. History, on the other side, does not rest on rites and the like, but it focuses on continuities as well as discontinuities, time and space symmetries—for instance, geopolitics—as well as on the breaking of time and space symmetries. More particularly, history is about the arrow of time, and not just about time cycles (in spite of Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 1776, 1781, 1788)¹⁵ for instance.

The most important consequence of the assessment according to which history teaches us about information rather than about memory is that the very historical process is about the gaining of degrees of freedom. Freedom is studied by the sciences of complexity, but certainly to philosophers this may sound like a new type of Hegelian comprehension of history. Nonetheless, history is an increasingly complex system, thanks to the fact that we have been slowly, and exactly in a nonlinear way, gaining information. Information becomes the process of gaining new degrees of freedom in that time marks an irreversible arrow.

By claiming that history is not so much about memory as it is about information, I intend to say that history is not exactly about remembering, remembrance, recording, keeping records, etc. Such an interpretation of history is laden with preconceptions and conflicts of interests. That view can easily be called a conservative one, for it is supported by those who want to reduce history to a determinate tradition. Instead, I am saying that history is about communication—the basic stone for communicating is information. Moreover, my claim is that because history is about information and not so much about memory, history is, therefore, about knowledge. And as it has recently been pointed out by the new biology, knowledge is a biological feature rather than just an intellectual structure (Maturana and Varela, 1990; Kauffman, 1995; Kauffman 2000).

In other words, history, I argue, is not a cumulative matter. It is on the contrary a question about creating possibilities and reading and telling possibilities, albeit past ones.

Indeed, whereas memory implies a sense of permanence and even presence—particularly sketched out in terms of the *mémoire involontaire*—information theory reckons the importance of both information as such and of noise. Moreover, information is considered not as the “other side” of noise, but as the very outcome of there being noise. Finally, the problem emerging here is about information and entropy and how noise and entropy

¹⁵ Perhaps the most conspicuous example of history as consisting of stories about time cycles is E. Gibbon, *The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire*, The Penguin Press, 1994. With reference to a philosophy of history in this same line, we should mention Collingwood's and E. H. Carr's classic works.

sum up, as it were, the very information of systems, processes and behaviors.

Most of the considerations of history and what might be called the unstable deal only with chaos theory. In these terms, thinking in chaos and history means considering an event's sensibility to its initial conditions and the further long-scale, unpredictable consequences of that event and that sensibility. But this is only half of the story, so to speak. For the other half consists in identifying a strange attractor that deviates the normal "current" development of the event. Hence, unpredictability and the identification of a strange attractor produce large unpredicted and long scale consequences, indeed. The next step must be accomplished, I believe, from chaos to complexity, in order not just to stress the existence of chaotic moments in history but also, and mainly, to understand history as a process of increasing complexity whereby information and noise, information and entropy interact and act upon each other as a positive loop. That is to say, as a process through which history can be seen as a living system and not just as a reservoir of values, events, names, and data.

Complexity theory, i.e. science, does not explain everything, for the very same reasons that the world *is* not complex. (A theory that explains everything explains nothing, a fact well known from epistemology). Complexity theory deals only with complex phenomena or complex behaviors that exhibit (or consist in) unpredictability, emergence, self-organization, strong interaction, and so forth. As for the rest, namely causality, reductionism, control and predictability, etc., normal science suffices.

In other words, complexity arises when acknowledging the intersection of contingency and large tendencies, wherein contingency is but the action of non-rational and non-conscious forces and events in the individuals and groups forging history. Contingency refers to the everlasting presence of surprise and the unforeseen.

History, indeed, is made by human beings, although human beings do not always act or behave as they think they do, most people act in most situations in accordance with various forces: anger, love, hate, revenge, desire, angst, etc. Emotions are the hidden force of history. The difficulty for historians is to account for these emotions in the midst of evidence and circumstances. Past actors did not always appreciate, see, or adequately evaluate and channel their reactions. (Such is rather the working field of psychology). In other words, history is a human feature, but human features are not always susceptible of sheer logic, strategy, control, and plans. Along with these, there is also a sense of opportunity, a contingency with salient actions and reactions. As is well known, historians are aroused by studying and explaining the kind of individuals that either respond to a certain personal feature, or profit from social circumstances. They give to history a direction not previously expected. Historians do not predict, they "postdict." Nonetheless, perhaps part of the historian's intelligence consists

in predicting the “ex-post factum.” That is to say, in predicting in the past what the past exposes to the future.

In times of global speed and anguish when the pace of life and events seems to run amok—due to the rhythm of technology, finances, and the like—history can provide a sort of wisdom. This wisdom comes from acknowledging that while history is an open and nonlinear system, everything is settled calmly and gently in the *longue durée*, after all. As mentioned, history is made and read in the long-run as opposed to politics. If so, then by digging into history we can gain more than knowledge, memory and information. We can, indeed, gain wisdom: letting what will be.

This, however, does not lead to a passive attitude. Quite the contrary, it leads to a work of reflection, of thought, gratitude, and openness¹⁶ Let things be—that is, I claim, the call from history. If it is, indeed, true that for want of a horseshoe the horse was lost, and eventually the kingdom was lost, then we had better look for ultimate causes in history, which is not the same as looking for first causes, as the Aristotelian tradition claims. The quest for ultimate causes is, indeed, a subtle, quiet and thoughtful work, enquiring about nonlinear causes and effects. Diamond’s recent books on the collapse of cities and civilizations, as well as the reasons why some societies are more powerful than others (*Collapse: How Societies choose to Fail or Succeed*, 2005, and *Guns, Germs, Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*, 1999) are examples of the quest for ultimate causes. And yet, I think Heidegger also, for a time, at least, seemed sympathetic to this point of view.

Taking history as a complex systems, and hence as open and nonlinear, I should stress, calls additionally for a re-enchantment of the world, an expression first coined by I. Prigogine (1984). The re-enchantment of the world consists in the very polyphony of the past. For there is no one past, and no one gate to the past. There are, rather, various gates, passages and labyrinths, as well as avenues and country roads to the past. But also, there are various other ways of communication from past to the present. Perhaps one of the most astonishing ones—a favorite one of historians, writers and philosophers—is the *mémoire involontaire—presence*. As it were, there is present and also past. But somewhere lingering between the two is *presence*. Historians and philosophers know about that “presence” and treat it with care.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, a few short remarks are in order. To be sure, history is written history. Yet, history is not just writ past. There is also oral history, as it is well known. But when the historian encounters oral history,

¹⁶ I recognize a similarity to Heidegger on this point, related to *Was Heisst Denken?* Nonetheless, my own frame and aim are different from Heidegger’s.

he or she is open to anthropology to philosophy to archeology to art. Such is a good example of cross-disciplinary work on history, and an articulation of a kind of border/problems work.

Thanks to, and sometimes even in spite of, the various historical schools from *Annales* to Marxist historiography to the American social science historians to the *Past and Present* group, to the Bielefeld school, we have enriched, enlarged, and deepened history as never before. With each effort, we take away new scientific achievements and research¹⁷. History in fact has become more complex; an *increasingly* complex system, indeed. By the same tenure, quoting P. Anderson's famous paper from 1971 "More Is Different", history has gradually become different to us than what it was to our elders. History, as we can readily see, calls us again to be open, for history is a dynamic system—a living one, to be sure. No matter the discussions against evolutionary theory, history has evolved and thus calls our attention to information rather than to just memory.

With the previous arguments I claim the following: philosophers should deal with history, talking and working with historians—as to how they do research, how they write and come to decisions, etc. very much in the same sense as they should work with scientists of any range or specialty. Only, I argue, through this can a philosophy of history be productive and suggestive, and not just sheer speculation—as it has emerged over the centuries. One might think of Vico, Herder, Hegel, and others.

There are, to be sure, law-like events in history. There are large-large consequences, too. There are also events that were to be postdicted and even predicted in history. This is not, however, the history I am talking about here. My point here is that we can and must look for the importance of small events that had long-term effects—of contingencies that meant great shifts—of unpredictable situations that made the present difficult at that moment—of an unstable world that meant crisis and revolution.

History as a complex system is meaningful only when we understand the world in terms of crisis and revolution, namely, great changes and bottlenecks. In steady times complex analyses are not desirable and not even convenient. This, of course, implies that the regular scenario of history—birth, growth, and death- does not hold any longer. Instead, we now seem to exist with the astonishing knowledge that we have come to live in a non-zero sum world.

¹⁷ To mention but a few references, In 1650, James Ussher, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, established the age of the universe based on the Bible at nearly 6.000 years that result from summing up the years of the Exodus, plus the years of Mathusalem, and so forth. Moreover, he proved, based on the Bible the exact day of the creation: Sunday, 23 October, 4004 B.C. By the time of Kant and Laplace the universe was said to be a few million years old. Currently the age of the universe is estimated at 13 to 15 billion years.

Complexity—and chaos. Most of comprehensions have been so far related to chaos theory. There is a big difference, though, between chaos and complexity. To the question, What makes a system complex, there are various answers, ranging from chaos to catastrophe theory to fractals to non-equilibrium systems, and to non-classical logic. Hence, chaos (theory) is only one way of answering what makes a system complex. Here I have dealt with a different approach, namely nonlinearity, and I have argued that history can be taken as a complex system when viewed as an open nonlinear systems.

As opposed to the majority of the comprehensions of history in terms of a dynamic system linking just chaos theory, we can never assess that history *is* a chaotic system. At most we can safely say that history exhibits from time to time, and always in non-regular or periodic times, chaotic behavior. My concern here has not been whether history depicts chaos in various moments and places. Instead, I claim that history as a whole can and should be viewed as a complex system, namely a system of *increasing* complexity. The arguments for such a claim are: history is an open system, history is a nonlinear system, history implies a complex density of time, and history is a shifting point from social sciences to natural sciences and back to social sciences but in a positive, self-correcting feedback mode.

There remains, though, a serious difficulty, namely the fact that history deals with past events, whereas complexity deals with possible events. The question then becomes about the relationship between past over against possibility. Such a question, however, remains out of the scope of the present article.

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CHAPTER 7

NARRATIVE HISTORY AND SOCIAL INTEGRATION: STORYTELLING IN AFRICA, A NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE

IKECHUKWU ANI

INTRODUCTION: CHANGING ATTITUDES TO AFRICAN HISTORY AND CULTURES

Africa is fondly celebrated as the birthplace of *homo sapiens*; some would say that Africa is the origin of civilizations. The present day Sahara Desert is said to have been a fertile ground for agriculture that also provided profitable vegetation for rich hunting. What could have caused the type of migration that seems to have drained Africa of its wisdom, knowledge and wealth? Today the most underdeveloped and least civilized parts of the whole world are found in the continent of Africa. What could have caused a once rich vegetation to degenerate into a type of desert that has continued to expand its bounds, thereby becoming a great threat to human life? Perhaps these developments have contributed to the widespread negative history of Africa which has, in turn, generated negative attitudes to African cultural values and identities.

Historians make us understand that the early history of Africa is characterized by issues like colonization, Islamization, slavery and slave trade, imperialism and domination. During the last quarter of the 19th century, Europe became increasingly interested in exerting direct control over Africa's raw materials and markets. European heads of state laid down ground rules for the colonial conquest of Africa at the Congress of Berlin in 1884-5. Over the next twenty years, all of Africa, except Ethiopia and Liberia, was violently conquered, despite many instances of African resistance. The British and French established the largest African empires, although the Portuguese, Belgians and Germans claimed major colonial possessions as well.¹

Africans are said to be deeply religious people, but in fact, many Africans have maintained a negative attitude toward their traditional religious values. It was not too long ago that Africans who converted to Christianity were actually given permission to show a certain interest in their cultures, traditions and religions. This miracle was performed by Paul VI with his encyclical *Africae Terrarum* of October 29, 1967. This papal letter is known to be the first magisterial document to make mention of the

¹ <http://theatlantic.com/unbound/interviews/ba2000-08-02.htm>.

religious traditions of African peoples in a positive light. Contrary to the reigning views of the time, Paul VI came to realize that many customs and rites of African peoples, which were once considered strange are seen today, in the light of ethnological science, as integral parts of various social systems, worthy of study and commanding respect. The Pope therefore thought that it had become something profitable to dwell on some general ideas which typify ancient African religious cultures, since their moral and religious values now deserve attentive consideration².

This rather unprecedented optimistic view of African religious tradition was at the same time recognition of the worth of ethnological science in broadening the horizons of knowledge on African peoples. It was then a concrete demonstration of this reviewed appraisal of African culture and religion, when Paul VI, on African soil challenged African Christians to “have an African Christianity” based on African “human values and characteristic forms of culture ...”³ This spirit of Paul IV had some influence on the Second Vatican Council which established the changed attitude of the Church to all cultures and religions of the world.

Despite this positive appraisal of other religions besides Christianity, it is evident that the Second Vatican Council, a great landmark in the history of the Catholic faith, did not make an explicit statement on African religious cultures. Some authors would maintain that due to inadequate studies on African Traditional Religion at the time of the Council, it was not considered opportune to say anything on the subject. Having mentioned, in addition to Christianity, the traditionally “great” religions of the world—Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism—the Second Vatican Council then contented itself with the generic statement: “Other religions which are found throughout the world, attempt in their own ways to calm the hearts of men by outlining a program of life covering doctrine, moral precepts and sacred rites, thus the Catholic Church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions.”⁴

The changed climate in the attitude of the Catholic Church towards African religious culture and traditions indeed led to increased research in the area; nevertheless the Church in many parts of Africa still shows a noticeable negative attitude towards African heritage in its different forms of cultural and religious expression.

Historians today recognize that ideas of racial inferiority had inspired the belief that in the past African peoples lived in a state of primitive barbarism. Many of the European writings which they use to reconstruct the African past—such as accounts by nineteenth-century missionaries and travelers, for example—are themselves tainted by these

² Cf. Paul VI, *Africae Terrarum*, October 29, AAS (1967) pp. 1076-7.

³ Knitter, P.K., *No other Name: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitude toward the World Religions*. New York: 1986, p. 124. See *Nostra Aetate* 2.

⁴ Abbot, W., (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II*, New York: 1966, p. 662, footnote 9. Cf *Nostra Aetate* 2.

same notions of African inferiority. This type of history had relegated Africans into playing the role of the “cheated child” of the earth and produced a people who even today find it difficult to be proud of their cultural values.

This long lasting negative attitude to African culture raises many questions. What of those stories shared sitting around fire; what of the moonlight narratives, during which each member of the group participated in the process of listening to and hearing stories? How was life lived and organized in those small village units, in the old kingdoms and empires that existed in Africa? What type of political philosophy sustained such units of communal life?

Today, historians emphasize the need to seek out alternative sources of information including writings by Africans, the much fuller bodies of oral tradition which are found throughout Africa, the vocabularies and structures of African languages themselves, and the physical artifacts uncovered by archaeologists. According to J. Giblin, the art of all peoples expresses values, attitudes, and thought, which are the products of their past experience. This applies to the art of Africans also. “Through the study of African art we can study the questions which have long preoccupied historians of Africa.”⁵ We believe that the history of Africa needs to be complemented by paying a greater and more systematic attention to narrative history. Deeply rooted cultural values have continued to *live on* and to be *handed on* through shared human experiences in storytelling, art, and festivals of life in Africa.

NARRATIVE AND HISTORY

There is every sign that narrative is speedily recovering from “the mists of philosophical denigration and neglect”⁶ which it suffered for many years. One of the ways of understanding narrative, according to J. Rankin, is that it is a “story—factual, fictitious, or somewhere between the two—that is usually told verbally or in writing, but may be expressed in other symbolic systems, such as those of art, of sign language, or of gesture.”⁷ Narrative, in this understanding, brings forth the human processes of knowledge, culture, tradition, truth, reality, consciousness and identity. It is, therefore, not surprising that over the last 20 years, there has been a noticeable upsurge in the study of storytelling or narratives in the social sciences in general, and particularly in the study of conflicts and peace-building. Human beings are beginning to discover that stories “are fundamental to social interaction, found everywhere, a form of expression,

⁵ James Giblin: Issues in African History; in: <http://www.uiowa.edu/~africart/toc/history/giblinhistory.html>

⁶ Jenny Rankin: What is Narrative? Ricouer, Bakhtin, and Process Approaches; *Concrescence* 2002 Vol. 3 pp. 1-12.

⁷ J. Rankin, 2002.

of memory and imagination, which can relate, describe, characterize, and hold an essential thread of unfolding experience. We need to tell stories to explain things to each other, to understand each other—how things happen, why they happen.” Hardly a day passes without hearing or telling a story in some way. Stories have been described as our memories and the food of our imaginations.⁸

At the early stage of human life, there were no written words, and as such no written history. Special importance was therefore ascribed to the storytellers because they were the keen observers and the authentic keepers of the history of the people. Indeed, many cultures considered storytellers the most important people in the community, and special effort was made to protect them in the event of some natural disaster or in the case of war. The simple historical fact was that if you lost your stories (by losing the storytellers), you lost a piece of yourself.⁹ Story-telling has been an integral part of the human experience and human activity for millennia, dealing with issues of self-identity, group membership, past and future and good and evil. Stories are an important means of learning and communication; parents relate stories to their children as a form of entertainment, as well as a way of learning about morals, about culture and acceptable standards of behavior and conduct.

Storytelling expresses how human beings engage themselves with their past. Every human past seems to have a direct relevance to the present and to human life in a society. There is a saying that “those who do not learn from the past are doomed to repeat it.”¹⁰ The expression “doomed” shows that there is a value judgment that accompanies the engagement with the past history of people. “Doomed to repeat” the past would mean repeating the mistakes of the past. The realization of this mistake takes place in the present in anticipation of the future. Histories and stories of a people that come to us in a spoken and sung form are part of what is called an oral tradition. Oral traditions have a different way of being alive than written histories. Because people hold the oral tradition in their memory, and sometimes the story changes with the telling, oral histories can be more fluid, more dynamic, more alive, than written histories. This does not make them less true but rather different from written histories.¹¹

One fact of human history is the issue of migration. For diverse reasons, peoples changed their locations, and in that venture they came in contact with different environments and peoples. When people migrated and met peoples of other parts of the world, they shared their stories of life. “There are many multicultural tales of disaster that wiped out all the bad people, allowing the gods a cosmic do-over. More than almost anything

⁸ Doug Reeler: *Story-telling—getting to the heart of things*; (CDRA Nugget] March 2004].

⁹ Cf. <http://store.augusthouse.com/storytelling/>

¹⁰ Cf. <http://store.augusthouse.com/storytelling/>

¹¹ Cf. <http://www.si.umich.edu/chico/UMS/Drummers/storytelling.html>.

else, stories show how close we are as a human tribe, a tribe of many different flavors.”¹²

Lawrence Stone begins his essay on “*The Revival of Narrative*,” with the incisive statement: “Historians have always told stories.” He understands his essay as “Reflections on a New Old History”. Stone reminds the reader that history was in fact a branch of rhetoric until, for the past fifty years, the story-telling function of history fell into ill repute among those who regarded themselves as “in the vanguard of the profession.”¹³ Narrative history differs from the conventional structural history in that, according to Stone, its arrangement is descriptive rather than analytical and that its central focus is on the human being and not circumstances. As such, narrative history “deals with the particular and specific rather than the collective and statistical.” Narrative history is a mode of historical writing, but it is a mode which also affects and is affected by the content and the method.”¹⁴ Stone does not want to pass value judgments on modes of writing history, he does not want to urge anyone to throw away his calculator and simply tell stories. His aim is to chart observed changes in historical fashion, taking cognizance that the current narrative turn, the return to narrative history is a renewal of attention on the old form of historical writing. Recognizing that history has always had many mansions, Stone insists that it must continue to do so if it is to flourish in the future. His reason is that the triumph of any one genre or school eventually always leads to “narrow sectarianism, narcissism and self-adulation, contempt or tyranny towards outsiders, and other disagreeable and self-defeating characteristics.”¹⁵

One of the greatest benefits of narrative for human thought is that narrative historians are concerned with the lives, feelings, behaviors, and stories of the poor and obscure rather than the great and powerful.¹⁶ Hayden White’s¹⁷ assertion that history always assumed a narrative form and thus shares the qualities of literal texts, has been generally accepted, but not his conclusion that history, like literature, is therefore essentially a “fiction-making” operation.¹⁸

Peter Singer assigns literary work importance in that it provides interesting plots and interesting illuminations. However, he maintains that

¹² Cf. <http://store.augusthouse.com/storytelling/>

¹³ Lawrence Stone: *The Revival of Narrative: Reflections on a New Old History*; in *Past and Present*, No. 85. (Nov., 1979), pp. 3-24, (3).

¹⁴ L Stone, 1979, 3-4.

¹⁵ L Stone, 1979, 4.

¹⁶ L. Stone, 19.

¹⁷ Hayden White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality.” *Critical Inquiry* 7 (1980): 5-28.

¹⁸ Georg Iggers: *Historiography in the Twentieth Century. From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge*; Wesleyan University Press, published by University Press of New England, Hanover and London: 1997, 139-140.

in the end, it has to be judged by philosophy. Singer seems to be influenced by Plato who talked about ‘that ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy.’ However, Plato’s view of poetry is interpreted to be an extended view including Homer and the great tragedies. A more recent view shared by Peter Singer and others is that if literature has anything to teach the head, as opposed to moving the heart, we need first to extract a more intellectual form from it, and assess it before an impersonal philosophical court.

Raimon Gaita in his work, *The Philosopher’s Dog* disagrees with Singer and argues against the idea of an extractable, cognitive, head-like content from literary form. He would prefer to do the storytelling and the philosophising in what he hopes would be a seamless way.¹⁹ Albert Camus would maintain that a novel is never anything but a philosophy put into images. Camus admired Sartre’s gift as novelist and philosopher, even though he did not find his two sides, philosophy and storytelling, both equally convincing.²⁰

Traditionally, Africans have revered good stories and storytellers, as have most past and present peoples around the world who are rooted in oral cultures and traditions. Ancient writing traditions do exist on the African continent, but most Africans today, as in the past, are primarily oral peoples, and their art forms are oral rather than literary. In contrast to written literature, African “orature” (to use Kenyan novelist and critic Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s phrase) is orally composed and transmitted, and often created to be verbally and communally performed as an integral part of dance and music. The Oral Arts of Africa are rich and varied, developing with the beginnings of African cultures, and they remain living traditions that continue to evolve and flourish today. Oral African storytelling is essentially a communal participatory experience. Everyone in most traditional African societies participates in formal and informal storytelling as interactive oral performance. Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* has become one of the greatest narratives of Nigerian history that documents cultural values and identities of the Igbo.

CHINUA ACHEBE AND THE NIGERIAN STORY

Chinua Achebe is one of Africa’s most well-known and influential

¹⁹ Cf. Philosophy vs Storytelling, a ‘Public Conversation’ between Raimond Gaita (professor of Moral Philosophy at King’s Collage at the University of London, and professor of Philosophy at the Australian Catholic University) and Arnold Zable (Storyteller), presented and produced by Michael Shirrefs; Melbourne, Sunday 10/04/2005, published in <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/arts/bwriting/stories/s1339719.htm>.

²⁰ Cf. <http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/acamus.htm>.

contemporary writers. His first novel, *Things Fall Apart*,²¹ is an early narrative about the European colonization of Africa told from the point of view of the colonized people. According to Achebe: “The last four or five hundred years of European contact with Africa produced a body of literature that presented Africa in a very bad light and Africans in very lurid terms. The reason for this, according to him, had to do with the need to justify the slave trade and slavery.... This continued until the Africans themselves, in the middle of the twentieth century, took into their own hands the telling of their story.”²² In an interview in the 1994-95 issue of *The Paris Review*, Chinua Achebe states that he became a writer in order to tell his story and the story of his people from his own viewpoint. He explains the danger of not having one's own stories with the following proverb: “until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter.” Unless Africans could tell their side of their story, Achebe believed that the African experience would forever be “mistold,” even by well-meaning foreign authors.

Achebe has been a major force in the worldwide literary movement to define and describe the African experience. Other postcolonial writers in this movement include Leopold Senghor, Wole Soyinka, Aime Cesaire, Derek Walcott, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and Birago Diop. These writers not only confront a multiethnic perspective of history and truth, but they also challenge readers to reexamine themselves in this complex and evolving world.

Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* is about the tragic fall of the protagonist, Okonkwo, and the Igbo culture. Okonkwo is a respected and influential leader within the Igbo community of Umuofia in Eastern Nigeria. He first earns personal fame and distinction, and brings honor to his village, when he defeats Amalinze the Cat in a wrestling contest. Okonkwo determines to gain titles for himself and becomes a powerful and wealthy man in spite of his own father’s weaknesses. Despite his father’s shameful reputation, Okonkwo becomes highly respected in Umuofia, which honors individual achievement rather than family heritage. Still a young man in his thirties, Okonkwo has become a wealthy yam farmer—a sacred crop—and supports three wives, a significant indicator of wealth and “manliness.” Furthermore, he is known for his incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars, and he holds two honorific titles, though his father died

²¹ Although the novel was first published in 1958—two years before Nigeria achieved its independence—thousands of copies are still sold every year in the United States alone. Millions of copies have been sold around the world in its many translations. The novel has been adapted for productions on the stage, on the radio, and on television. Teachers in high schools, colleges, and graduate schools use the novel as a textbook in many types of classes—from history and social studies to comparative literature and anthropology.

²² Chinua Achebe, “An African Voice”; cf. <http://theatlantic.com/unbound/interviews/ba2000-08-02.htm>.

with none. Because Okonkwo is honored as one of the greatest men in his community, he is asked to look after a young man, Ikemefuna, who will be given as a peace offering to Umuofia by the neighboring village of Mbaino, which hopes to avoid war with Umuofia. Okonkwo's fame and the Igbo culture flourished, until things fell apart.²³ In chapter 20 of the book, when Okonkwo tells Obierika that his fellow Umuofians should rise up against the British, Obierika wisely understands that it is too late. Many Umuofians have already "joined the ranks of the stranger." Obierika says that the white man "has put a knife in the things that held us together and we have fallen apart".

Published in 1958, just before Nigerian independence, the novel recounts the life of the warrior and village hero Okonkwo, but it is also a broad description of the arrival of white missionaries to his Igbo village and their impact on African life and society at the end of the nineteenth century. Through his writing, Achebe counters images of African societies and peoples as they are represented within the Western literary tradition and reclaims his own and his people's history. This novel deals with the clash of cultures and the violent transitions in life and values brought about by the onset of British colonialism in Nigeria at the end of the nineteenth century. *Things Fall Apart* interposes Western linguistic forms and literary traditions with Igbo words and phrases, proverbs, fables, tales, and other elements of African oral and communal storytelling traditions in order to record and preserve African oral traditions, as well as to subvert the colonialist language and culture.

In *Things Fall Apart*, the Europeans' understanding of Africa is particularly exemplified in two characters: the Reverend James Smith, who came to replace Brown²⁴ and the unnamed District Commissioner. Mr. Smith sees no need to compromise on unquestionable religious doctrine or practices, even during their introduction to a society very different from his own. He simply does not recognize any benefit for allowing the Nigerians to retain elements of their heritage. The District Commissioner, on the other hand, prides himself on being a student of primitive customs and sees himself as a benevolent leader who has only the best intentions for

²³ Cf. Chua, John, and Suzanne Pavlos. CliffNotes on *Things Fall Apart*. 10 Nov 2006; published in: <http://www.cliffsnotes.com/WileyCDA/LitNote/id-133.html>.

²⁴ Achebe has said that he may have unconsciously modeled Mr. Brown, the white missionary, after G.T. Basden, a real-life missionary who worked among the Igbo in the early twentieth-century—a man who was a friend of Achebe's parents. Like Brown, Basden was a patient man who was willing to learn about so-called heathen traditions and values. However, Basden ultimately misunderstood Igbo culture, writing in *Among the Ibos of Nigeria* (1921) that "the black man himself does not know his own mind. He does the most extraordinary things, and cannot explain why he does them. . . . He is not controlled by logic."

pacifying the primitive tribes and bringing them into the modern era. Both men would express surprise if anyone suggested to them that their European values may not be entirely appropriate for these societies. The Commissioner's plan for briefly treating the story of Okonkwo illustrates the inclination toward Western simplification of African culture. To counter this inclination, Achebe brings to life an African culture with a religion, a government, a system of money, and an artistic tradition, as well as a judicial system. While technologically unsophisticated, the Igbo culture is revealed to the reader as remarkably complex.

The book raises several issues regarding the cultures and values of the Igbos. We wish to highlight three aspects of Igbo culture constantly expressed in the narrative of Achebe:

Storytelling & Use of Proverbs

The oral tradition of storytelling in Igbo culture is portrayed as a means for teaching history and customs, for passing on legends and beliefs, and for explaining the natural as well as the supernatural worlds. Secular tricksters like "Tortoise" often project the kinds of evil forces and bad behaviors against which the human community must contend to survive and which must be kept in check. This goal is rehearsed and achieved in communal performances of African proverbs and folktales, wherein the trickster's bad anti-social behaviors are usually punished, and the evil forces unleashed are controlled or defeated. Thus, for example, recounting Tortoise stories in African communities can function to reaffirm the priority and wisdom of the community, reassure its members that balance and harmony can and should be restored, and that the community will survive and prevail.

All through his narrative Achebe continues to use the art of traditional storytelling and references to legends and sayings of the time to illustrate what people believed and respected. He introduces the use of stories and proverbs as integral parts of the daily life. For instance in chapter 7 of *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe narrates how Nwoye and Ikemefuna sat with Okonkwo in his hut and listened to his manly stories of violence and bloodshed. Nwoye still remembered that his mother's folk tales and legends, though thought to be just "womens' stories," were more enjoyable ones than those of Okonkwo. In chapter 11, while Okonkwo is relaxing in his hut after the evening meal, he hears the voices of his wives and children telling folk stories. Ekwefi relates to Ezinma the tale of Tortoise, which explains why the Tortoise shell is not smooth.

Chapter 3 also illustrates several traditional ideas and truths that shaped day-to-day Igbo life. These principles are often expressed through indirect language and symbols in the following proverbs:

- i) *A toad does not run in the daytime for nothing.*

- ii) *The lizard that jumped from the high iroko tree to the ground said that he would praise himself if no one else did.*
- iii) *[Because] men have learned to shoot without missing, Eneke [the bird] has learned to fly without perching.*
- iv) *You can tell a ripe corn by its look.*

These traditional expressions were used to demonstrate great respect and courtesy that the Igbo people show to one another. The speaker uses veiled language when making comments about himself (Okonkwo in the lizard example, and Nwakibie in the Eneke example); about others (Ogbuefi Idigo talking about Obiako in the toad example); about the person he is addressing (Nwakibie speaking to Okonkwo in the corn example); and about life in general, even to oneself (Okonkwo in the old woman example). This symbolic language represents a high level of cultural sensitivity and sophistication.

In an essay written in 1974, Achebe insists: "Since Igbo people did not construct a rigid and closely argued system of thought to explain the universe and the place of man in it, preferring the metaphor of myth and poetry, anyone seeking an insight into their world must seek it along their own way. Some of these ways are folk tales, proverbs, proper names, rituals, and festivals"²⁵ Achebe is convinced that the human story is a complex reality, and that "there's no way you can tell that story in one way and say, 'this is it.' Always there will be someone who can tell it differently depending on where they are standing ... this is the way I think the world's stories should be told: from many different perspectives."²⁶ This would make for a better disposition to the diverse cultures that make the one global family of peoples. Storytelling is therefore a reliable instrument for social cohesion.

Festivals & Commensality

Festivals have far-reaching cultural values which play a very central role in the peaceful coexistence of people. One central point about festivals in Africa is the issue of commensality. Commensality has been described as the action of eating together, and is understood as one of the most powerful operators of the social process. Several authors maintain that in all societies, sharing food is a way of establishing closeness, while, conversely, the refusal to share food is one of the clearest marks of distance and enmity. The reason is that the sharing of food is, in some way or other,

²⁵ Chinua Achebe: "Chi in Igbo Cosmology." In Achebe, Chinua: *Morning Yet on Creation Day: Essays*. New York: Doubleday, 1975. 159-175, (161).

²⁶ Chinua Achebe: "The Art of Fiction CXXXVIV," interviewed by Jerome Brooks in *The Paris Review*, Issue #133 (Winter 1994-5).

the sharing of that which will cause, or at least maintain, a common substance among those who commune together²⁷.

Traditional festivals in Igboland present a distinguishing cultural identity of Igbo people. They express the philosophy of life that social stability is not guaranteed alone through oral or even written agreements. Through the regular celebration of the *agreement-event* during festivals, Africans renew the commitment of every member of the community to the values of the social agreement. Such festivals are, therefore, incumbent opportunities for the whole community to live out and reenact the values imbedded in the agreement. It is also an effective manner of handing on values that have sustained the community in harmony on to the younger generations.

This can be a great contribution to the global neighborhood, namely, the realization that written laws alone are not enough to guide human action. The internalization of the values the laws embody is as important as the written laws. Without celebrations of handing on, such laws lose their relevance to human interaction as we today notice in Nigeria and in many African countries where juridical legality tend to exist only on paper.

Paradoxically the celebration of traditional festivals has been one of the most explosive elements in the relationship between the Church and African cultural values today. Some traditional cultural festivals have been occasions of violent controversy between the native people and the Catholic Church in Igboland. This makes the Catholic Church appear to be promoting a negative attitude towards the cultures and identities of the people. Even though the majority of the pastoral workers are born and nurtured in the cultural area, they seem to be very hostile to their own traditional culture. The battle field for the conflict is always the issue of what should be accepted as Christian and what should be rejected as pagan or fetish?

The conflicts with the Church have, on the other hand, led to a review of some cultural practices in the area, just as conflict with Moslems has led the Church to review her relationship to other religions. The changed attitude of the Church towards traditional cultures has inspired experts to document oral history and make it available to a wider human community. A great deal of research has been undertaken in seminaries, many diocesan archives now contain oral histories that are documented as reports of committees set up to settle conflicts between priests and their parishioners. The history of the Igbos, for instance, would not be complete without reference to such documentation, which contain not only

²⁷ Cf. Osmund A. C. Anigbo, *Commensality and Human Relationship among the Igbo. An Ethnographic Study of Ibagwa Aka, Igboeze L.G.A. Anambra State, Nigeria*, University of Nigeria Press, Nsukka: 1987, pp. 7ff. Maurice Bloch (1999), *Commensality and Poisoning*, in www.looksmartcollege.com.

information about the origin of the feast and how it was celebrated, but also an analysis of the transformation processes in the understanding and celebration of the feast in recent times.

Closely related to festivals is the establishment of village squares. K. Awoono rightly observes that most of the development projects in Africa do not contain considerations for leisure facilities.²⁸ Hardly any housing project features so much as a little space for even a children's playground. Practically every Sunday you see young men playing soccer along less busy roads in the city of Enugu. But we all know that every little African village allows space for leisure activities by both children and adults. The traditional "village square" is, therefore, a cultural institution often overlooked by so-called modern town planners, to the detriment of the development of the individual person and life in the community. Village squares bear witness to a philosophy of life which values wide space (large heart), and a large forum (many opportunities) for human interaction and exchange. One wonders why this social philosophy does not influence the planning of cities in Africa today, in order to establish a human society based on the values of "large heart and many opportunities" for peoples.

Festivities are celebrated not only in private houses but also in village squares. They are occasions for confirming and strengthening social harmony and integration among the people through commensality, music, dance, sharing of life experiences, and so on. If, for instance, somebody who usually participated in the festival of a particular clan suddenly absents himself, his friends would usually ask questions to find out whether something is not well with him, or whether the friendship between them had fallen apart.

Discussing the issue of an organic approach to development in Africa, Kofi Anyidoho would however warn against what he describes as the hidden dangers of "the festival approach to cultural programming." He means the approach which tends to isolate culture from the mainstream of educational and development programs. In such cases, culture is removed from the curriculum or essential programs of development and is treated as an extra-curricular and extra-budgetary activity. Culture becomes something you do only when you have finished your main program. You might then pay attention to it only when you have some time and, above all, some extra resources to spare. Culture then diminishes to mean little more than drumming and dancing. An organic understanding of African culture would take note that behind many a one-day or seven-day festival, there is often a whole year of careful and sustained planning and hard work. "There can be no Yam Festival unless there are yams to harvest. Clearing the land, finding and planting the seed yams, tending them, even the harvesting, these are all dimensions of the culture without which there can be no agriculture. But clearly they are not festive occasions. The festival is

²⁸ Cf. Awoonor 1972, 20.

possible and makes sense only because it follows a long period of hard, fruitful labor.”

An organic approach to development planning is seen in Achebe's description, in *Things Fall Apart*, of how in the calendar of events agriculture will begin with propitiatory rites in honor of the Earth Goddess and move into the successive periods of clearing the soil, planting, making sacrifices to the rain god, observing the “Week of Peace”, gathering the harvest home and finally celebrating the rice or yam festival.²⁹ These events bring people together in different formats, thereby making them share their common origins and cultures, and making life harmoniously worthwhile in the human society.

Attitude to Culture

Achebe uses different characters of his narrative to present the attitude of Igbo people to culture. In Chapter 7 Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, emerges as a major character who, in contrast to his father, questions the long-standing customs of the clan. Achebe begins to show the boy's conflicting emotions; he is torn between being a fiercely masculine and physically strong person to please his father; and allowing himself to cherish values and feelings that Okonkwo considers feminine and weak. Okonkwo's friend, Obierika, in chapter 8 disapproves of Okonkwo's role in the killing of Ikemefuna, even though it was said to have been decreed by the Oracle. Obierika is presented as a moderate, balanced man and thus serves as a contrast to Okonkwo. Obierika periodically questions tribal law and believes that some changes can improve their society. Okonkwo tends to cling to tradition regardless of the cost, as the killing of Ikemefuna illustrates. Essentially, Obierika is a man of thought and questioning, while Okonkwo is a man of action without questioning.

Even though Okonkwo is presented in the major parts of the book as one who observes the village tradition to a fault, at the same time we see a situation in chapter 11 in which Okonkwo and Ekwefi consider their family more important than the customs of their people or even their own personal safety. Despite Chielo's warning about the Oracle Agbala, “Beware, woman, lest he strike you in his anger,” Ekwefi risks her life for the sake of her daughter when she chooses to follow Chielo through the woods. And when Okonkwo goes to the cave to help his wife and protect their daughter, he displays behavior uncharacteristic of him; love for his daughter was stronger than the warnings of the Oracle.

We notice here strong, individual personalities who do not just follow traditional laws and customs blindly and that are not just functions of the community.³⁰ Ekwefi is certainly one of the less-traditionally

²⁹ Kofi Anyidoho: Culture: The Human Factor in African Development; published in: http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/II-5/chapter_i.htm.

³⁰ Cf. Kwame Gyekye: Person and Community in Akan Thought.

constrained women, and Obierika represents men who question some traditions and rituals. Indeed, Obierika (literally this name means: *hearts are many*) is presented throughout the book as one who at certain times and in certain circumstances rethinks and ponders the old traditions.

CONCLUSION

Lack of organic relationship to cultural heritage has often been posited as a reason for the failure of development programs in Africa. It does appear that there could not be reasonable development without the correct attitude to culture. African cultural values are here understood as, not the artificial flower which adorns our hat, “but the very blood which flows in our veins.”³¹

The discovery of narrative history leads to an upgrading of subjectivity in human interaction. The nature of storytelling is such that every story is narrated from a subjective point of view. This helps the individual discover that his viewpoint, which he would very much like others to acknowledge as the “historical truth”, is fundamentally a subjective standpoint. All historical data will begin to evolve as human living history, as soon as persons begin to tell their own stories and others are willing to listen. It is in this process of sharing history as our stories that the truth as the center, which holds all peoples together, will have a chance to evolve. As long as a people pretend to hold *the* key to objective fact, truth will have a truncated chance in human history.

One of the illusions of a so-called civilized society is that it imagines the time of a primitive society and culture that was characterized by barbarism. Today’s civilized society claims to be the “refined product” of evolving human mind or spirit, creating cultures and identities, and moving towards the realization of a perfect being. In contrast to the purported barbarian culture, the civilized culture would praise itself for being superior, less brutal, less cruel, and to have created more sensitive personalities, whose behavior is acceptable to a wider society of humans.

Yet, a critical view of civilized society tends to reveal rather a sophisticated barbarism than the absence of it. How come that our civilization today has created enlightened people with a mind-set that declares war and destroys millions of human lives and property in the name of “an almighty god” (who does not actually need human worship for his well-being), or in defense of economic interests of a small part of the human community? In our civilized culture today political opponents go to the extent of terminating the life of an opponent in order to get to power. Could this not just be called a “barbaric civilization” that is unmatched in history? It is such a situation in our world today that calls us to cast a searching view to life and identities in the local cultures of people everywhere. If political power is well understood as a position of service for

³¹ Cf. Ki-Zerbo 1977, 105.

the welfare of the *polis*, there would not be any need to struggle for it. Rather it should be easy to let the members of the *polis* choose their best servants at any point in time.

Critical thinkers are yet to discover that African cultures respected the individual person in a manner that is rare in human history. When one analyses the process we today call the “palaver approach”, one would have a glimpse of the position of the individual in the dynamics of community life. The burden of the relationship between person and community is that it makes life, in the judgment of today, a complex reality. It was certainly not an easy way to find a consensus when all grown young males would gather to debate an issue. Emphasis was placed on the contribution of each member of the community. There were cases where conclusions could not be reached, simply because certain members of the society were not available to make their input to the issue at stake.

The upgrading of the subjective person in the community of human beings, as manifested in storytelling, will help create a “global attitude” which promotes sensibility for the importance of every person, people, culture and religion, in global interactions. That would then imply that there is no legitimate reason to leave anybody behind in the process of development. We mean a type of *omnilateral* disposition that will guarantee integral human development. We mean a human *being* that is ontologically attuned *to-wards* understanding the “different other” as a necessary partner for dialogue and not a barbarian to be converted or civilized, and much less an enemy to capture or eliminate. In the global village each person and people must learn to tell their stories, as well as listen to and appreciate the stories of others.

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PART III

DIALOGUE:

FREEDOM, TOLERANCE AND PLURALISM

CHAPTER 8

RELIGIOUS CULTURE AND HISTORICAL CHANGE: VATICAN II ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

M. JOHN FARRELLY

Many societies and religious bodies today face serious problems of how they can keep faithful to what is essential to their identity and yet adjust to a world-wide environment that impacts and questions them as it does every culture. I would like to give one example of how a major religious body faced this question of history and cultural identity. I am referring to the way that Vatican II changed pre-Vatican II Catholic teaching from being in principle opposed to religious freedom to acclaiming religious freedom in principle and in practice; the Council defended this change as a faithful development of its doctrine and practice. There were Catholics who denied that this teaching was faithful to the Church's past. A notorious case is that of Bishop Marcel Lefebvre who justified his leaving the Church and establishing an alternate church by this discontinuity. Terrence Tilley is one Catholic theologian who denies that there is continuity within this change of Church teaching. He wrote in reference to the change between Pope Pius IX's and Vatican II's teaching on religious freedom:

Clearly, the change in teaching on religious freedom would fail to have what Newman identifies as the notes or tests of an authentic development. There is no continuity of principles; indeed, as the conservative minority objected at the Second Vatican Council, there is a *reversal* of principles.¹

In what sense can we call such a change a *development* of doctrine, and what does it show us about the nature of such development? In its *Declaration on Religious Liberty (Dignitatis Humanae)* Vatican Council II did speak of its teaching as a 'development': "In dealing with this question of liberty, the sacred Council intends to develop the teaching of recent popes on the inviolable rights of the human person and on the constitutional order of society" (1).² This is the only time that the Council affirmed that a

¹ Terence W. Tilley, *Inventing Catholic Tradition* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2000) 117.

² I am using the translation of Vatican II documents found in Austin Flannery, OP (ed.), *Vatican II Documents* (Northport, NY: Costello Publishing

particular teaching it proclaimed was a 'development.' But in the heated discussion that preceded the final document and its passage, the conservative minority had advanced two major arguments, first, that error has no rights, and second, that a declaration of religious freedom would be counter to a long standing and universally held Church tradition.³

Certainly, denial of freedom to heretics—as distinct from Jews and other non-Christians—had been the practice and teaching of the Church for some 1500 years. Augustine had initially been against the state's persecution of the Donatists, but then he came to acknowledge “that persecution worked. Such 'medicinal harassment' as beatings were necessary 'for the hardness that could not be changed by words.’”⁴ In the conflict with the Cathars in the 12th century, Pope Lucius III issued a decree in 1184, *Ad abolendam* that:

directed that a lapsed heretic be “left to secular judgment.”
 . . . *Ad abolendam* did not state that the secular punishment was death. The decretal adjoining it in Gregory IX's collection was Innocent III's *Vergentis*, which noted that secular crimes of *lèse-majesté* were punished by death and added that “it was far more serious” to offend God (151).

Thomas Aquinas reflected on this theologically, asking whether

Co, 1975). Numbers in the texts referring to these documents are references to paragraphs in them.

³ See Giovanni Miccoli, “Religious Freedom,” in Guiseppe Alberigo (ed.), *History of Vatican II*. Vol. IV, *Church as Communion. Third Period and Intersession, September 1964—September 1965* (trans. by Joseph Komonchak, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2003) 96-134. When the text speaks of 'development' it is referring particularly to teachings of Popes Pius XII and John XXIII. See also a number of articles on “*Dignitatis Humanae*, The Declaration of Religious Liberty, on its Fortieth Anniversary,” in *U.S. Catholic Historian* 24 (2006), issue #1, especially Joseph Komonchak, “The American Contribution to *Dignitatis Humanae*: The Role of John Courtney Murray, S.J.,” 1-20. Also see Mary Doak, “Resisting the Eclipse of *Dignitatis Humanae*,” *Horizons* (33) 2006 33-53.

⁴ John T. Noonan, Jr., *A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005) 150. See Augustine, “The Correction of the Donatists,” *Epistola* 185 (P 33:803). The references I give here in the text to tradition are from Noonan's book. For an alternate interpretation of the evidence see Avery Cardinal Dulles review of Noonan's book in *First Things*, October 2005, and his article, “*Dignitatis Humanae* and the Development of Catholic Doctrine,” in Kenneth Grasso and Robert Hunt (eds.), *Catholicism and Religious Freedom. Contemporary Reflections on Vatican II's “Declaration on Religious Liberty”* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006) 43-67.

“heretics should be tolerated” (ST II-II, 11, 3). He answered that if they relapsed after a first and second correction, they should not be tolerated. Counterfeiters who corrupt money are executed, but corrupting faith through heresy is a more serious offense. So after initial corrections, “the Church, not hoping further for his conversion, provides for the salvation of others by separating him from the Church by a sentence of excommunication and further leaves him to be exterminated from the world by death through the secular court.” Theologians justified the Inquisition. In the sixteenth century, while Desiderius Erasmus was against persecution of heretics, Thomas More and Bartholomé de Las Casas supported it. Among the Reformers, Calvin and the Anglican Church also supported it.

While persecuting heretics fell out of favor after the religious wars of Europe, the Popes continued to teach against freedom of religion in the 19th century. In 1832, Pope Gregory XVI issued the encyclical *Mirari vos* in which he condemned:

indifferentism, the . . . notion that all could achieve eternal salvation provided their morals were good. On the contrary, “they will perish eternally if they do not hold the Catholic faith.” From “this most foul font of *indifferentism*,” the pope continued, “flows that absurd and erroneous teaching, or rather that folly . . . that it is necessary to assure and guarantee to whomever it may be *the liberty of conscience*.” . . . Freedom of conscience . . . was related to “that worst freedom which one could never hate and detest enough,” freedom of publishing . . .

[In 1864 in the Syllabus of Errors, Pope Pius IX] repeated Gregory XVI’s condemnation of “the folly that freedom of conscience and worship is the proper right of every human being.” In 1885, Leo XIII endorsed his predecessors’ teaching in the encyclical *Immortale Dei* . . . (148-149).

We have to acknowledge that there was indeed a long standing tradition in the Church against freedom of conscience.

But in answer to the above view, J.C. Murray argued with others at the time of Vatican II that the teachings of the Popes were historically conditioned and must be interpreted within the context of their time. In defense of the teaching that ultimately prevailed at Vatican II, he asks:

whether the whole issue of human rights is to be argued on the premise that the nature of man is a historical nature, whose rational exigencies manifest themselves progressively, under the impact of the continually changing social-political context, and response to the growing personal and political consciousness. . . .

Again, in what concerns the interpretation of papal documents, . . . [Murray] asks the question . . . is not the historical context of the document and its doctrinal, polemic, and pastoral intentions to be considered, with the result that particular assertions may be regarded as historically conditioned and therefore subject to further development in what concerns their manner of conception and statement, under altered circumstances and with the rise of new questions which affect the perspectives in which the truth is viewed. . . . [Murray cites] the assertion of Pius XII that Boniface VIII's doctrine of the sun and the moon and the two swords was historically conditioned and is today archaic.⁵

In its document on religious liberty, *Dignitatis humanae*, Vatican II affirmed what Murray and others were supporting, accepting most of Murray's arguments. We will briefly show this teaching and the basis for it to defend our view that this teaching is a legitimate *development* of doctrine, not simply a rejection of it, and to indicate some major reasons that justified and, indeed, demanded it. This is an important resource helping us to see some elements of the relation of historical change to cultural identity proper to Christianity.

What the Council meant by "freedom of religion" was "freedom from coercion in civil society" (par. 1); this left intact man's responsibility to seek the truth in religion, "especially in what concerns God and his Church, and to embrace it and hold on to it as they come to know it" (1). It gave two bases to support this freedom, one from the dignity of the human person and the other from Christian revelation and practice.

In reference to the first, it acknowledged the place of *experience*, and, indeed, a changing historical experience over the ages, in enabling the Church to come to this development of doctrine: "The Declaration of this Vatican Council on man's right to religious freedom is based on the dignity of the person, the demands of which have become more fully known to human reason through centuries of experience" (9).

Indeed, historical circumstances have changed radically and our understanding of the demands of human dignity has been affected by these changes. And it is only proper to point out that this *experience* and the interpretation of it as calling for freedom of religion came largely from those outside the Church. The Roman Empire, once the Emperor became Christian, thought that its unity depended on unity in Christianity. And there was a certain unity in the Holy Roman Empire in the Western Middle Ages, where a central question was where the superior power or authority lay—in the Pope or the Emperor. In the 16th century Reformation, this

⁵ John C. Murray, S.J., "The Problem of Religious Freedom," *Theological Studies* 25 (1964) 503-575 and 559-560.

unity was dramatically lost. Religious wars ensued, and the principle of “*cuius regio eius religio*” (the religion of a state follows that of the ruler—an expression later coined to summarize the agreement) was an interim settlement at the Peace of Augsburg (1555). A peace of sorts held in Germany for some sixty years, but this was followed by the Thirty Years War, religiously motivated in its early years. This was settled by the Peace of Westphalia (1648), that restored the peace of Augsburg, but with an acceptance of religious minorities in the states outside the hereditary Habsburg dominions.⁶

This date usually marks the beginning of what is called the Age of Enlightenment, a period when political and cultural unity was sought by many cultural leaders on more general principles of ‘reason’ and a general revelation given to all humans. Religious persecution did not cease, but gradually tolerance was more generally accepted:

The first defenders of religious freedom for dissident Christians were devout Christians, asserting it in the name of Christianity—the ex-Dominican Sebastian Franck; the ex-priest Menno Simon; the Congregationalist minister Roger Williams; and then most persuasively for educated Englishmen and Americans, the devout Protestant layman John Locke The American constitution was shaped in an intellectual climate in which religious intolerance was on the defensive. The chief shaper of the nation’s freedom of religion was James Madison, himself a Christian, who defended freedom for everyone and wrote that to rely on governmental support is “a contradiction to the Christian Religion itself, for every page of it disavows a dependence on the powers of the world.”⁷

The experience of the benefits of religious freedom in the United States was primary for the American bishops at Vatican II in their vigorous support of the declaration; and so it is one important basis for that experience that showed progressively the demands of the dignity of the human person. This was different from some nineteenth century European

⁶ See Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation. A History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2004) 646-647.

⁷ Noonan, 157. The teaching of none of these men would fully cohere with Vatican II’s teaching on religious freedom. For example, Robert Bellah in “Is There a Common American Culture?,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 66 (1998) 613-625, critiques Roger Williams’ espousal of the Free Church tradition as a ‘sociological disaster’ (622), adding, “Just when we are moving to an ever greater validation of the sacredness of the individual person, our capacity to imagine a social fabric that would hold individuals together is vanishing.”

liberalisms that sought to destroy the Catholic Church. Another important source for this growing awareness was the experience of totalitarianisms in the twentieth century that prohibited freedom of religion and conscience.

This experience and its implications in this area referred to both the dignity of the person and the changing nature of the state. It is in accord with the dignity and the responsibility of the person to seek the truth, and particularly that truth that has to do with God. And to seek it freely: “Men cannot satisfy this obligation in a way that is in keeping with their nature unless they enjoy both psychological freedom and immunity from external coercion. Therefore the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective attitude of the individual but in his very nature” (2). It is through conscience that man recognizes the demands of God’s law, and so “he must not be forced to act contrary to conscience” (3). This demand for religious liberty implies the right not only of the individual but of groups of citizens who externally express their religious beliefs, acting in community (see 4).

This demand also follows from the experience modern history afforded of the state, and the implications this had:

The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man is an essential duty of every civil authority. . . . [T]he civil authority, the purpose of which is the care of the common good in the temporal order, must recognize and look with favor on the religious life of the citizens. But if it presumes to control or restrict religious activity it must be said to have exceeded the limits of its power (3).⁸

The state is to support the common good in the temporal order, namely “the sum total of those conditions of social life which enable men to achieve a fuller measure of perfection with greater ease” (6), or, more specifically, a dimension of this which “is called public order” (7)⁹. Thus too, the public authority “has the right to protect itself against possible

⁸ In view of concordats the Church had with Spain and Colombia that gave the Catholic Church special status there, it added: “If because of the circumstances of a particular people special civil recognition is given to one religious community in the constitutional organization of the State, the right of all citizens and religious communities to religious freedom must be recognized and respected as well” (6).

⁹ In the article previously cited, Mary Doak defends the Vatican Council’s document from the accusation of incoherence, answering the objection, “If our laws are informed by a particular understanding of the good to which society is to be directed, is this not tantamount to endorsing a religion and thus coercing those who do not accept that religion’s account of the good?” (40). And she deals with the question of the extent to which the state should exercise “a necessary protection of public morality,” as the Council calls for (7).

abuses committed in the name of religious freedom“ (7), though this is not to be an arbitrary exercise of power, but “for the effective protection of the rights of all citizens and for peaceful settlement of conflicts of rights” (7). In accord with this, “it is a fact that religious freedom has already been declared a civil right in most constitutions and has been given solemn recognition in international documents” (15).

The second basis for the Church’s teaching here is Christian revelation. The act of Christian faith, to be saving, is a *free* act: “man’s response to God by faith ought to be free, and . . . therefore nobody is to be forced to embrace the faith against his will” (10). The ministries of Jesus and the first disciples of Jesus show that they did not in any way force faith, but bore witness to the truth and appealed to people’s freedom. Jesus did indeed denounce the unbelief of his listeners but he left vengeance to God until the day of judgment. . . . He himself recognized that weeds had been sown through the wheat but ordered that both be allowed to grow until the harvest which will come at the end of the world (11).

The Council acknowledges that although, “there has at times appeared [in the Church] a form of behavior which was hardly in keeping with the spirit of the Gospel and was even opposed to it, it has always remained the teaching of the Church that no one is to be coerced into believing” (12).

Given that some interpreters consider the Council’s teaching on religious freedom contradictory to its earlier teaching and practice, we can ask how this particular instance can be considered a legitimate development of doctrine.

In the first place, the way that the Council’s explanation of the development of doctrine in its Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum* (DV), does not seem adequate for this case. DV acknowledges that tradition:

makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts (cf. Lk. 2:19 and 51). It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth (DV 8).

This text expresses development as coming from within the Church, and it is a non-dialectical view of the Church as “always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth” (DV 10). Though it is true of much development of doctrine in the Church’s history, there is too little of the “*ecclesia semper reformanda*” here.

We have to acknowledge that the Church's teaching on religious freedom contradicts a continuous line of teaching and practice reaching back to Augustine. But does this contradiction mean that there is no continuity of doctrine, or does it mean that growth comes at times by ways other than simply deepening understanding of the faith? That is, does it mean that there is at times a *dialectical* moment in the Church's advance to a new insight into the mystery of Christianity, but that there is continuity between the before and after of this moment? The history of scientific knowledge shows that there are *paradigm shifts* that lead from one interpretation to a later and more adequate one. Some interpreters of this process deny that there is any continuity between one paradigm and the next, but this is far from the majority opinion. Rather, the shift comes after there are a substantial number of problems with an earlier paradigm, and this leads some scientists to interpret the data by a new paradigm that does more justice to factors that undermine the adequacy of the earlier one. For example, Einstein's interpretation of the relativity of time succeeded Newton's view that time was absolute. What the earlier paradigm explained can now be seen as a part of a larger whole rather than the whole.

The earlier denials in the practice of religious freedom in the Church were associated with the view that error has no rights. This in turn was associated with a scholastic overly objectivistic view of the world and man's insertion in it with a particular nature that he was to take as his norm of action.¹⁰ Modern developments in society and reflection on it by philosophers led, e.g. in Kant and German idealism, to stress the subject as the origin of action and as historical, autonomous and free. This led in many people's interpretation to subjectivism and a rejection of an objective order of right and wrong. But it did enshrine some genuinely new insights into the human person—person rather than nature being the more adequate context for the understanding of human action. The painfully achieved recognition that a state-established religion and the primacy of conscience were in contradiction led to a larger context in which the issue was seen. And so the Church came to preserve its teaching on the responsibility of the human person to respond positively to the truth within a fuller acceptance of human freedom in society, with a respect for persons whose conscience does not or does not yet lead them to the free acceptance of the Christian mystery.

Perhaps the Church should have been able to reach this development of doctrine and practice without a long historical checkered experience and from within the resources interior to the Church without

¹⁰ See Andrzej Szostek, "Karol Wojtyla's View of the Human Person in the Light of the Experience of Morality," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 60 (1986) 52: "the Thomistic philosophy of being treats the problematics of morality too objectivistically at the cost of diminishing the subjective dimension which is so important for philosophy of morality."

being taught by others, some of whom violently opposed the Church as it was.¹¹ On the other hand, there is nothing in the nature of Christian revelation or the Church's responsibility to pass that on to succeeding generations that is opposed to the Church learning from agents outside the Church. It did learn, eventually, from modern science. Experience and the methods of the physical sciences brought to light truths about the physical world and its emergence that enriched the Church's teaching on creation and the interpretation of Scripture. Similarly, modern human experience of the moral subject and the political organization appropriate for such a subject helped the Church to a deeper insight into the riches and mystery of the Christian revelation committed to its preservation and proclamation. In this sense, we acknowledge what we can call *structuralism* as an element of the Church's development of doctrine. That is, its deeper insight into the Christian mystery depends in part on elements of human experience and knowledge that derive from elsewhere and that come from God. And thus the Church's capacity to gain this deeper insight into the Christian mystery depends in part on the situation from which it views this mystery and the perspective it allows. This is a question of *hermeneutics*.¹²

This recognition of how development takes place in the Church means that it must correct earlier statements of belief and practice if it is to be faithful to Christ and its mission. The Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith acknowledged in 1973 that difficulties arise from the historical condition that affects some of the Church's expression of revelation; this affects moral as well as doctrinal statements. And it means that such teaching is *historically conditioned*, without this undermining the Church's infallibility in certain clearly restricted circumstances:

[i] The meaning of the pronouncements of faith depend partly upon the expressive power of the language used at a certain point in time and in particular circumstances. Moreover, [ii] it sometimes happens that some dogmatic truth is first expressed incompletely (but not falsely), and at a later date, when considered in a broader context of faith or human knowledge, it receives a fuller and more perfect expression. . . . [iii, also, the Church] usually has the intention of solving certain questions or removing

¹¹ In a larger sense the Christian tradition did contribute to the modern insights concerning freedom of religion. As Christopher Dawson wrote, "The study of Christian culture. . . should devote special attention to the problem of the Enlightenment and the way in which the doctrines of Natural Law and the theory of the limited state had their original roots in the Christian tradition." *The Crisis of Western Education* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961) 185.

¹² See Avery Dulles, "Doctrinal Renewal: A Situationist View," in *The Resilient Church. The Necessity and Limits of Adaptation* (New York: Doubleday, 1977) 45-62.

certain errors. All these things have to be taken into account in order that these pronouncements may be properly interpreted. Finally, [iv] even though the truths which the Church intends to teach through her dogmatic formulas are distinct from the changeable conceptions of a given epoch and can be expressed without them, nevertheless it can sometimes happen that these truths may be enunciated by the Sacred Magisterium in terms that bear traces of such conceptions.¹³

When we apply this to teachings and actions regarding the moral order, this calls not only for change but for repentance on the part of the Church. Noonan comments:

The Church, Vatican II teaches, is “holy and always in need of purification”—a paradox parallel to being unchanging and able to change. John Paul II made the paradox more understandable by distinguishing the Church from its members. It is the members who “all those times in history departed from the spirit of Christ.” The pope spoke of repentance for “errors,” among them holding “that an authentic witness to the truth could include suppressing the opinion of others.” . . . As he repeated as the millenium approached, “Although many acted here in good faith, it was certainly not evangelical to think that the truth should be imposed by force.” He added immediately that there had been “a lack of discernment by many Christians in situations where basic human rights were violated.” . . . But [Noonan notes] the Church only speaks and acts and lives through its people. . . . It is difficult to draw a line between the authorities of the Church and the Church. It is unnecessary to draw a line if it is acknowledged that the Church is not always infallible.¹⁴

Our recognition of the factors present in the inadequate and harmful Church teaching and actions of the past should not engender in us an overconfidence in the perspective of the contemporary world. Human experience has been interpreted as supporting all and any human actions, so

¹³ “Declaration in defense of the Catholic doctrine on the Church against certain errors of the present day,” 5.

¹⁴ Noonan, *A Church*, 201-202. His quotation from Vatican II is from *Lumen gentium*, 8. His quotations from John Paul II are from *Adveniente millenio tertio* (1994), 33, and from Catechesis in the series “God the Father,” September 1, 1999.

a critical interpretation of experience within the context of an adequate philosophy and above all within the Christian revelation is essential if we are not to be misled by the chaotic pluralism of our time.¹⁵

We can see that this development of doctrine found in Vatican II was made possible by looking at issues within a larger context than in the past and with an openness to other voices. This process has continued since Vatican II, at least in important instances. For example, more than in the past, the differences between the Western Church and Orthodoxy on the issue of the Holy Spirit have been acknowledged to be due to different perspectives and to be complementary rather than contradictory.¹⁶ And the agreement Catholics and Lutherans reached in 1999 on the question of justification by faith after decades of dialogue shows a growing awareness that the mystery of faith can be formulated differently by different cultures, ecclesial communions or periods of the Church,¹⁷ without this indicating a Church-dividing difference of faith itself. These instances also show us that factors that are present in the development of the Church's moral teaching, e.g. freedom of conscience, are present too in its development of doctrine. There is recognition of cultural diversity and a discontinuity between one culture and another, the need to articulate the doctrine in relation to the culture (inculturation), and thus the legitimacy and necessity of expressing a doctrine differently than in the past. A doctrine may be expressed differently synchronously (at the same time period) and diachronically (at sequential time periods). Thus there is a borrowing from a culture outside the Church and its use in articulating a doctrine, given certain safeguards to assure its coherence with the Church's central teaching of the past; this can be called structuralism.

We must note also that the process that has allowed the Church to achieve these significant advances in understanding aspects of the Christian mystery was one that was collegial, as at Vatican II, and open dialogue, as with Lutherans and the Orthodox. Its failures in the past to break out of too narrow perspectives have at times been due to lack of collegiality and lack of open dialogue. The continuing tension between the conservative impulse in the Church and openness to the other and the new is, in the view of some critics, shown, for example, in the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith's document *Dominus Iesus*, and responses to it.¹⁸

¹⁵ See John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio*, "On the Relationship between Faith and Reason," 1998.

¹⁶ Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, "Traditions Regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit," in *Eastern Churches Journal* 2 (1995) 35-46.

¹⁷ See *Origins* 28 (July 16, 1998) and 29 (Nov. 11, 1999).

¹⁸ See *Origins* 30 (Sept. 14, 2000) 211-219; and Walter Kasper, "Relating Christ's Universality to Interreligious Dialogue," *Origins* 30 (Nov. 2, 2000) 321-327. Kasper writes: "[N]o dogma of the church, can exhaust this [Trinitarian and Christological] mystery completely. . . The encounter with

In summary, the Church's achievement of a development of doctrine is at times not simply through an expansion of an understanding it already has but rather by a dialectical process in which it denies what it has frequently taught in the past, because it is now open to a larger perspective that includes dimensions of the mystery that were defensively earlier dismissed. This is also a characteristic of the development in other fields of human knowledge. Essential elements that allow this development are that individual and communal human experience has changed, that this change has been revelatory of what it means to be human and that the Church has learned from this experience something that had not been factored into its earlier teaching. It is also essential that the Church comes to an awareness that the acceptance of this earlier denied dimension does not contradict what it was centrally affirming and defending in its earlier teaching and practice.

We are in no way attempting here to give an analysis of the development of doctrine that enables us to predict future developments that are genuine. We have simply given an introductory analysis of Vatican II's development of doctrine in reference to religious freedom and shown that to be characteristic of other developments that are genuine, arguing that such developments of understanding are essential for the Church's mission and not at all a presumption to add to or detract from what God has revealed through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.

other religions can be a way to open up to us more deeply a given aspect of the one mystery of Christ. Therefore, for us, interreligious dialogue is not a one-way street; it is a true encounter that can be an enrichment for us Christians. In it we are not only the givers, but also the learners and receivers . . . (327). See also "Dominus Iesus: A Panel Discussion," *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 56 (2001) 97-116.

CHAPTER 9

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL “WORLD ORDER”: OUTLINE OF A PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM AND TOLERANCE

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CONCEPTUAL FLEXIBILITY OR RIGIDITY?

One of the cornerstones of religious pluralism and tolerance in an interactive and globalized world is the encounter between the three Abrahamic faiths, especially Christianity and Islam, on the one hand, and the other main religions of Asia, Hinduism, Buddhism, and the Chinese tradition (with its Confucian and Daoist components, among others), on the other. A special set of problems arises because of the contrast in conceptual habits. Followers of Christianity and Islam often hold themselves to a strict dichotomy: belief/unbelief, a complete or incomplete creed, absolute truth/falsehood. Many go further to claim that without acceptance of a complete creed guided and informed by absolute truth, one is not religious. However, when one looks at Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Confucianism, one finds a profoundly different conceptual approach. None are all-or-nothing propositions. Concepts like “belief”, “absolute”, “truth”, “completeness” are far more attenuated, if not entirely absent. Western and Islamic notions of truth, absoluteness, and complete creeds are alien to many followers of the older Asian religions.

Consider, for example, the Chinese word “Dao”. Its reference is so rich and inexhaustible that no English translation is adequate. It refers at once to the Way (in general), the way that individuals follow, the Way of something like Spirit in the world (for which no name like “Spirit” is adequate), and what cannot be told or named, what is beyond Being (as Ibn ‘Arabi might put it) as the oracular opening passage in the *Tao Te Ching* tells us. The focus of Chinese spirituality—again using words like “focus” and “spirituality” that mislead us, but what can we do?—retains the “transparency to transcendence” that Joseph Campbell highlighted as characteristic of the manner in which mythopoetic cultures approached the Divine, above all before the rise of agriculture and settlement. Campbell believes that openness is shut among those who insist on referring to the Divine with finality, perhaps because they take the Divine as having claimed finality for Itself.

An altogether different expression of conceptual richness and suppleness is to be found in Hinduism. Many take the presence of so many Hindu gods—and the statues through which they are represented and

honoured—at face value and consider Hinduism to be polytheistic. However, what transpires is that Hindus allow the faithful to participate in the Divine at whatever level suits them. This is shown by the layout of Hindu temples. Successive chambers lead to an inner sanctum devoid of statues, where Brahman is present to the devotee. Hinduism spans the full range of human celebration of the Divine, from colourful and sometimes raucous feasts to quiet meditation and contemplation aimed at liberation through full awareness of the Unity of Being (again similar to Ibn ‘Arabi’s *wihdat al-wujud*) and the Brahmanic Self. Contrast this with iconoclasm, powerful in Islam, not unknown to Christians.

In one case, one sees a rigid structure resistant to change or accommodating it only after long, sometimes overlong, deliberation. In the other, one sees a structure retaining its plasticity through all change and local variation. All too often, the Abrahamic faithful see others as verging on heresy; while others see the Abrahamic faithful as domineering and uncompromising. Since the world is divided roughly equally between the two, how can they share their increasingly common space constructively?

It is difficult to believe that the Abrahamic faiths, traditions so rich, spread so far and wide, do not contain within themselves the seeds for greater conceptual flexibility. While it is difficult to dissociate damaging notions of exclusivism, completeness, and finality from believers committed to the Abrahamic faiths, one can find individuals and smaller communities who have been aware of the limitations of those notions. Thanks to them, it is far from accurate to create the impression that there is such a harsh divide between the Abrahamic faiths and the other main religions of Asia (or the traditional religions of the Americas, Africa, and Australia). Sometimes, the history itself suggests the anatomy of openness.

For instance, turning first to the Islamic world, in Iran, Buddhism had a strong presence before the country became Islamized. Moreover, Iran had had its own home grown religion, otherwise known as Zoroastrianism, transformed officially into Mazdaism during the reign of the Sassanid dynasty. Iran, as is all too well known, neighbours Mesopotamia as well, where several Christian monastic traditions still thrived. Is it an accident, then, that Sufism, so congenial to Muslims who were at peace with the notion that religious life is always a work in progress, that God is far beyond any delimitation, that belief grows within the heart as does truth within the soul, should thrive there? Iranians had paid attention to Buddhist and Christian ways, had had the confidence to maintain awareness of their pre-Islamic past, and so played a pivotal role in developing the mystical traditions of Islam (See for example, Molé). The same can be said of the Turkic peoples, who retained something of the syncretism thriving in a Central Asia open at once to Buddhists, Nestorian Christians, Sufis and Muslim traders, and shamanic pagan groups before the thorough Islamization of the region. Well into the twentieth century, Sufism, often containing syncretistic strands, has thrived in Anatolia (Mardin, 1989). Great Sufis like Ibn ‘Arabi, Rumi, and ‘Iraqi were quite at home in Turkey.

One might also note the cosmopolitanism of the Ottomans, especially in the early stages, and how rulers like Mehmet the Conqueror made it a point to promote religious and cultural pluralism. What has happened since then? What are the many facets of a long hardening process? To what degree do they have to do with how Muslims relate to Islam, to what degree to other factors, such as nationalism, colonialism in all its various transformations and incarnations, and fear of dissolution in some kind of globalized melting pot?

Judaism has also produced influential thinkers like Maimonides who, although devoted to the Torah, preferred to preserve the primordality and pristineness of the Divine rather than assign specific attributes to It. In the thought and vision of Maimonides, the Being of beings, or the Power to Be, is heeded, and our predilection for assigning specific attributes to It explained. For instance, eternity is attributed to It because It transcends all causal chains. We can be aware of such transcendence, but it is beyond us to say anything specific. We can also come to the realization that It alone has necessary existence. To the degree that all contingent existence is an overflow from the Necessary Existent—and in this, Maimonides is following Ibn Sina—we say that It has power. And so on. So words like 'eternity' and 'power' that are commonly attributed to the Divine within the Abrahamic faiths are the human way to understand, and effectively delimit, what is beyond understanding and any delimitation (Maimonides, Ch 53, 58, 59).

Among the various Christian traditions, Russian Orthodoxy places a profound emphasis on narrative, allegory, and symbolism, and until recently, most Russians participated in their faith through icons, still widely venerated in their culture, while mysticism continued to flower. Meanwhile, pagan feasts maintain their resonance, sometimes—but not always—in the guise of Christian metamorphoses, most prominent among which is the fusion of the Resurrection with the pre-Christian celebration of spring as the long Russian winter draws to an end. The richness of Russian Orthodoxy echoes the multilevel practice one finds in Hinduism. Roman Catholicism today allows local transformations of the faith in the many, many cultures within which it has become embedded, not least by allowing the liturgy to be expressed in the local language. This has been officially sanctioned by the Church ever since the epochal council known as Vatican II, which actively promoted reaching out to all local cultures as well as dialogue with the followers of other religions. Informally, many Catholics go further—in Africa, Latin America, Ireland, and elsewhere—and maintain old pagan rituals, practices, and habits under the Catholic umbrella.

Returning to Islam, we can find even within its central doctrines the elements of a more flexible approach. To begin with, the profession of uniqueness (*La Ilah illa Allah*) is not merely a statement of allegiance, which it undoubtedly is far more than anything else for most Muslims today. It also entails uniqueness in the sense of being beyond compare, as is

well known, and hence illimitable and, in large measure, unknowable (certainly not to the intellect in the ordinary sense of the word). This in itself is reason enough for Muslims to refrain from being too confident regarding what they say about God, and so precludes an impositional stance. The Ninety-Nine Names are a further instance of the difficulty of talking about God with finality, for even without reference to other unnamed (and implicitly unnameable) attributes, as one can see from Ibn ‘Arabi’s mystical theology, the Ninety-Nine Names potentially account, in varying combinations, and with a continuum of intensity for each Name, for every possible existence other than the Necessary Existent (Chittick). At the other end of the spectrum, a kind of folk Islam has emerged in various parts of Eurasia. One can cite the puppet theatre in Anatolia, which among many other things expressed the sense of injustice felt by the common people (Mardin, 1991); and in Java, where it is still used as a primary vehicle for all sorts of narratives, ranging all the way to stories about the Creation, and integrating Hindu themes without any sense of clash or discontinuity (Geertz). Islam has sheltered a fertile diversity within its domains for many centuries. The source of such diversity has evidently been a constructive encounter with a wide variety of cultures and civilizations. The foregoing opens far-ranging possibilities for the articulation of a theology based on greater conceptual flexibility in order to officially consecrate the ground for sharing cultural space in a healthier manner. One wonders why so many Muslims (like so many Christians in the United States and now even, absurdly, some Hindus) are allowing themselves to be crowded into a stance narrower than what they have so commendably fashioned in the past, over and above the defensiveness brought about by the current geopolitical and technological situation.

This last reflection leads us back to something common to all Abrahamic faiths, namely their susceptibility to a sense of exclusivism, completeness, and finality, which forms the basis for their conceptual rigidity whenever that obtains. Yet Jews, Christians, and Muslims have often inclined towards letting Transcendence be, and have allowed this profound openness to express itself in various kinds of folk religion and heterodoxy. An internal pluralism has been tolerated in all three faiths, although it comes under increasing threat among Muslims. What is the problem, then? Perhaps it comes down to yet another contradiction that humans must contend with: In religion, they want certainty and finality for fear of being lost; yet they release or spread themselves into a deep ambiguity for love of growth. All religions preserve this contradiction, but the accent varies. Some accentuate finality, others ambiguity. The danger is when we find ourselves in a world, ironically “advanced”, that has no time for ambiguity and so heavily favours finality, not least because of the displacement and oversimplification favoured by the markedly accelerated rhythms of life. Under such conditions, clash is far likelier than dialogue.

**OPENNESS AND THE EMBODIMENT OF DEEP AMBIGUITY:
THE OPENING PASSAGE OF LAO TZU'S TAO TE CHING:**

The main font of Chinese spirituality is Daoism. This is not to ignore the pivotal role of Confucianism in the life of the Chinese, but, while it is mindful of spirituality, its main accent is on the ethical, just as Daoism, while mindful of the ethical, accentuates the spiritual. Chinese religious life is complicated and inherently pluralistic, allowing not only Daoism and Confucianism to blend and combine freely in the lives of individuals, but elements of Buddhism and a more ancient shamanism, as well. This may in itself be an example to follow in our contemporary world, fraught as it is in many places with religious tension. But here, we shall look closely at the opening passage of the *Tao Te Ching*, the central text of Daoism, to see how easily Lao Tzu came to embody his people's tolerance for ambiguity, nay their insistence that to remove ambiguity is to bypass altogether what we call the Divine (and what the Chinese, as we shall presently see, refuse to call by any name):

*The Tao that can be told is not the eternal Tao.
The name that can be named is not the eternal name.*

This speaks for itself. The Way: our way, the way of the world, the way of the universe, the Way for all these ways, always, is respected as it is, completely open, drawing everything into the Void that, far from empty, is full beyond naming, the Way for everything—including the Whole and what gave rise to it—to find its way. Eternity is understood for what it is: beyond space and time, beyond all limit, beyond all definition other than how we define it negatively, in contrast with space, time, limit, and definition.

*The nameless is the beginning of heaven and earth.
The named is the mother of ten thousand things.*

The "ten thousand things" is the Chinese expression for all beings, animate and inanimate. The Chinese sometimes translate "the named" as "Being", and "the nameless" as "beyond-Being". The *Tao Te Ching* clearly differentiates between a definable demiurgic Being, which is how beings come to be, and beyond-Being, which is how the being of beings is itself possible, heaven and earth holding all ten thousand things between them. There is recognition not only of the equivalent for a "Creator", but of a Mystery beyond any act of creation. Again, it is left unnamed on purpose in thorough awareness of the distortion, or even violation, caused by naming.

*Ever desireless, one can see the mystery.
Ever desiring, one sees the manifestations.*

To attain a state of no desire is not to quell the life within oneself, but to allow it to flow entirely unimpeded. This is why meditation and other kinds of spiritual exercise are so important in China. Only then does one attain Enlightenment and thereby “see” Mystery. Better still, one awakens to Mystery at a certain stage. It is widely believed within the older Asian religions that such an awakening, once attained, entails unity with Mystery, however transient. Psychologically, epistemologically, and ontologically, one is therefore not in a position to name what one has awakened to, even if one could. The minimal detachment presupposed by the act of naming distorts the very Reality one tries to name. Naming is always accompanied with desire. Our separation from things, our habit of regarding our situation as one captured by the expression “I and the world”, enables us to see beings, the manifestations of Mystery, never the Mystery itself. So two different psychological-epistemological states correspond respectively with whether we intend Being or beyond-Being: desire, and no desire (just as the goal of Zen is to attain the state of no-mind). When we speak of God with a sense of knowing exactly what we are talking about, and especially when we are in the preaching or proselytizing mode, the Chinese would ascribe to us the state of desire:

These two spring from the same source but differ in name;

This appears as darkness.

Darkness within darkness.

The gate to all mystery.

There is the darkness of the emergence of the outer world, the manifestations, the ten thousand things. Then there is the darkness of the mystery of the emergence itself, the emergence of emergence, as it were. This echoes the motif of darkness found throughout the ancient mythologies of the world. It shows that the pristine expression of the mysterious ingression of Transcendence into the world has retained its freshness in Lao Tzu. More important, darkness is not something to be feared, but a Light beyond all light so that light emerges from it. Mystery is doubly embedded within darkness because the Light of lights is already a reduction of its intensity. To say that the “darkness within darkness” is the “gate to all mystery” is also to recall the different initiatory styles among ancient cultures centred around myth: whether it is the darkness of the rain forest, a cave, or a moonless night atop a mesa in the America Southwest, it is only through darkness that boys became men and so knew Reality. Many contemporary secularists and orthodox followers of the Abrahamic faiths alike treat the darkness of ambiguity as though it were an abhorrent state to be surmounted at all costs. But the cost of clarity can be far greater.

This is why the Chinese sage does nothing and teaches seekers not to talk. Much as this may please those with a predilection for indolence, this is not the idea. To do nothing silently while beings come and go without cease, while the bustle of the world continues remorselessly, is to echo the

"non-action" deeper than all creation and hence evocative of the Void within which even Creation must unfold. Doing nothing means to be attuned to what is prior to all activity known to us, a flow "beneath" all bustle, even all coming to be and passing away. Doing nothing silently means to heed the inherent unnameability of Mystery and the need to transcend desire in order to reach awareness of It. Without desire, in awareness of Mystery, the silent non-action of the sage therefore is thoroughly devoid of any possessiveness; it is the Work beyond all work for which no credit is asked, it is so entirely selfless that it is forgotten as soon as it is "done"—and so, "it lasts forever":

*Therefore the sage goes about doing nothing,
Teaching no-talking.
The ten thousand things rise and fall without cease.
Creating, yet not possessing,
Working, yet not taking credit.
Work is done, then forgotten.
Therefore it lasts forever.*

We are far removed from a world in which Mystery is named as God and God asks to be praised, thanked, and worshipped. From a Daoist perspective, this process is reductionistic at many levels, including the ethical—for it encourages a culture in which we are always looking to be thanked and praised for our deeds rather than concentrate on the depth, genuineness, and quality of our work. One sees this just as much in, say, the United States as one does in the Near East. The *Tao Te Ching*, right from the start, opens up our mystical instincts, our metaphysical reflection, our epistemological framework, and our ethical attitude to the ultimate ambiguity that is a ground so deep it grounds any conceivable ground, which is why Buddhists called it the "Void". Whatever issues from such openness, however good, is just a by-product of such intensely concentrated, yet eventually free-flowing immersion. The sage embodies this openness. And it is noteworthy that in another ancient central Chinese text, the *I Ching*, there is a deliberate ambiguity between the sage, the guide, heaven, and so on. The sage becomes a universal figure, no longer divided from Mystery.

China has a long history of religious pluralism that has not only been accepted officially, but which is embodied in the lives of individual Chinese, for whom it presents no great problem to combine several perspectives, approaches, and attitudes simultaneously. This has been alluded to just before we turned to the opening passage of the *Tao Te Ching*. We now have a somewhat better idea of how it is so. Daoism encourages individuals to throw themselves open into the very essence of Being without any preconceived notions, totally liberated from any tendency to name—and thereby master and delimit—what after all grounds all naming. It is natural for humans to desire that everything be named. But

to recognize the reductionism that this entails is to accept that there can never be an end to the process of naming what cannot be named. In any case, what is named is never the same as what cannot be named. So the unnameable abides unsullied with Its Mystery, while the various names go about their complex business of pointing the way, even as they cause us to lose it whenever we confuse the name with what we are (impossibly) trying to name. All religious conflict derives from the confusion between names that, when alluding to Mystery, are necessarily different from one culture or civilization to another, since while they all must miss their mark, they can hardly all miss it in the same way, such is the infinitude with which one is faced. Religious conflict occurs when we name Mystery, when my names conflict with yours, and we both take our names to be naming the Unnameable.

The Chinese, through Daoism at least, can teach others how to constantly maintain awareness of what can and what cannot be named, of the integrity of Mystery, and so become open to greater conceptual flexibility when attempting the verbalization of religious life and thought. Just as important, it can teach others that whenever they must confine themselves to what is definite, then they have reduced the Indefinite to one form of definitude—among MANY others. They have shown the way for there to be *pluralism without relativism*.

THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE ADVANCEMENT OF CONCEPTUAL FLEXIBILITY:

While modern philosophy is often separated strictly from religion, a habit that goes back to the Middle Ages when it was decided that philosophy should no longer be allowed to deal with spiritual and existential matters (Hadot), this does not mean that it ought to be separated from religion. After all, philosophy has roots in the early efforts to interpret mythology. In India, China, and ancient Greece, the ontological essence of myth was expressed without recourse to the imagery and rituals characteristic of earlier ways. This is what we see in the Upanishads, the Tao Te Ching, and the work of Anaximander, Pythagoras, Heraclitus, Parmenides, and Empedocles (Kingsley). Once human beings discover a novel approach, they are invariably faced with the temptation of assigning far too much importance to that approach, so that with time it assumes a life of its own. Thus if we can speak of rationality, of a Logos at the heart of mythology that was a direct expression of the Logos at the heart of the cosmos, we can also see that in the long run, the rationale implied by the method used by philosophers to express and communicate the deep imprint of mythology on their being was abstracted from its original context. After many centuries, it became what we call “rationality”. Along the way, key concepts, uprooted from the rich soil of the reality to which they had given expression, either lost their reference or shrank to a shadow of their former selves. The word “being”, in much contemporary metaphysics, means

almost nothing. "Presence" has lost its mystical connotation. "Logic" refers to the mechanics of thought, itself detached from the thinkable reality that had given rise to it. And so on. In the West, however, philosophers since Hegel have been trying to reverse this distortion. Thinkers as diverse as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Whitehead, Jaspers, Jung, Wittgenstein, Marcel, and Heidegger have all played an important role in showing the richness and subtlety of key philosophical concepts. The work of specialists in ancient thought, as well as anthropologists and mythologists, has also played an important part in this broad cultural recovery. Here, we review how a better understanding of some of those concepts can help in founding religious pluralism more firmly.

All religions have in common a sense of Eternity. Yet the religious often imagine that their definition of the Eternal is final! How can this be? It should be an obvious philosophical point that the eternal can never be reduced to the temporal although, again, all religions, implicitly or explicitly, are inspired by visions of the Eternal's temporal ingressions. Yet time and again, we see those who believe in Revelation often believing that what is thereby revealed is fixed for all time. It is interesting to note that the Abrahamic faiths, so dependent on Revelation, are inclined to regard what has been revealed as final and exclusive; whereas in the older Asian traditions, which do not depend on Revelation, one comes across tentativeness and inclusiveness. What we have here are two opposing questions, and the challenge is to reconcile them: Do finality and exclusiveness represent progress over tentativeness and inclusiveness, as though humanity were in possession of some final theory? Or is one to regard Revelation with another attitude even as one takes it very seriously?

From the standpoint of Abrahamic believers, it is important to keep in mind that Eternity can never be adequately expressed within the limits of human finitude. All three faiths emphasize the unknowability of God. Mystery is especially important in Christian thought. Yet Jews, Christians, and Muslims seem to forget at times that the eternal is outside of time by definition. This has a psychological dimension. Genuine allegiance requires one to believe in the finality of that to which one owes allegiance. However, this has been exacerbated by the modern emphasis on temporality. Time is so pervasive that many of us are unable to even think the timeless. Thus eternity is often confused with infinity, which is simply the mathematical extension of finitude. And as those with some background in mathematics know, it is quite possible to express infinity mathematically. Indeed, there is a branch of mathematics that deals only with infinity, developed by Georg Cantor (although interestingly, it appears to run into eternity somehow, but too much technical detail would be required to explain this) (Moore). Eternity is radically different. What is before all time—implied as well by macrophysics since Einstein—can at best be given partial expression in time. Our understanding of time itself is problematic (Augustine). Note the continuing effort of philosophers to define it. Our very grasp of time, as we define it, involves going beyond its mathematical representation. For

strictly speaking, only the present moment exists. And however short the moment is that we use for reference, we can refer to one shorter still, without end. Mathematically, time vanishes when we try to say what it is. Yet we all know what time is. There are many such situations at the philosophical boundaries of our lives. We all live in full confidence that the external world is real, but if the criteria are strict enough, we can never prove that it is so. How is it, then, when we are dealing with particular expressions of the Eternal, revelations that amount to temporal ingressions?

As one might try to appreciate the full philosophical implications of the concept of eternity, another dimension of the problem enters the picture: Difficulties arise when belief and allegiance are conflated with statements of fact. Belief and allegiance entail fidelity. They do not entail the falsification of all other possibilities. This leads us to the discussion of truth, for the objection is now made that if truth is one, then there are no other possibilities. But in which sense is truth truth?

Modern thought has mostly focused on a sense of truth governed by what might be termed the geometric mentality. Truth is something out there. We can possess it. We know that this or that theorem is true. These facts are true. This account is true. That revelation is true. And so, we have the truth. But is truth something to be had? Is truth ultimately related to having—or being?

In Christianity, Christ says: “I am the Truth.” Note: Not I *have* the truth. It is actually part of a famous phrase that also tells Christians that Christ is the Life and the Way. We encounter the word “way” again. Dao. Would that Christians heeded those words more often! Truth is related to following a person along the way that leads to life. And so one lives the truth, dwells in the truth. Truth here becomes evocative of its ancient Greek sense given to us by the word “*aletheia*”. Heidegger’s translators usually translate it as “unconcealment” or “disclosure”. The word has its roots in Greek mythology. Lethe is the river of forgetfulness in the afterworld (actually underworld, Hades). *Aletheia* is, therefore, what is “saved” from forgetfulness or oblivion. This meaning shifts to coming out of a darkness, Mystery, beyond all light. Truth is related to emergence from the “darkness within darkness” that we came upon when we paused and considered the opening passages of the *Tao Te Ching*.

The foregoing approach has the potential of disabusing us from the exclusivist notion of truth. If truth is associated with the “darkness within darkness”, with oblivion beyond memory, grounding all memory—just as the Void acknowledged by Buddhism is beyond any conceivable ground, full beyond conceivable expression—then many are the ways for humanity to dwell within the truth. Islam tacitly acknowledges this through association of the word “*al-haqiqa*” (truth) with “*al-haq*” (Ultimate Reality in its religious context). *Al-haq* refers to God, and so it is unfathomable. Truth has one face turned to the Unfathomable, another to what is clearly brought out into the open for believers to follow. Thus believers know—or think they know—exactly what to follow, but this comes at a price: They

often slip into believing that they are in sole possession of the truth. On the other hand, those who follow the ways offered them by the older Asian traditions remain open to "darkness within darkness" and are able to relate to Truth without pretending to own it, that is, if we are able to speak accurately of any conception of truth that is psychologically or existentially operative among them. However, Abrahamic believers might claim that the price in this case is that one does not quite know what one is following. One does. But it is knowledge of another kind.

The definition of knowledge is yet another complex issue that has been one of the perennial concerns of philosophy ever since Plato undertook to take it on in the *Theaetetus*. We cannot try to do too much here. But it is important for us to discuss rationality and reason, for these have been closely tied to knowledge, and explicitly so from Descartes onwards. More pertinently, rationality plays an important role in consolidating the framework for religious pluralism. One of the more insidious ways that intolerance is fostered is through the imposition of a narrow, quasi-computational mode of rationality. Once we accept a limited notion of 'reason', whereby we come to identify what is rational with what conforms with, say, the rules of reasoning as given in university courses on logic, however advanced, combined with some naïve notion of "scientific method," we guarantee that substantial domains of human experience languish unrecognized, condemned to the dungeons of irrationality, superstition, and what not. Many well-meaning modernizers around the world have caused untold emotional, psychological, and spiritual harm because they fell into a strangely restricted and restrictive notion of rationality (Khuri, 33-77).

One way for us to reverse that tendency is to return to the origins of rationality. Our recent understanding of the transition from mythology to philosophy goes a long way in helping us attain more clarity about what slowly became Reason, which then slowly was chiselled away into narrower and narrower modes. As high civilization first appeared along with the observation of the regular movements of planets in the skies, the idea took hold that there is a rationale within the heavens to conform with which orders human life properly, as well. This rationale lay deeply embedded within the "darkness" or "deep" from which the cosmos emerged, and is seen as the source of universal order (Campbell, 101-2). The word "logos" came to refer to that rationale. Subsequently, philosophers from Heraclitus (Heidegger, 1975, 59-78) and Aristotle to Hegel (Singer) and Heidegger (Heidegger, 2002) would turn the logos into the lynchpin of their respective philosophies, albeit in different ways.

It is above all with Aristotle and Hegel that the temptation lay to distill a more "accessible" or "logical" form of rationality from the much broader conception they had in mind. One might say that Aristotle and Hegel both had a firm foothold in what is generally known as the perennial philosophy. They both understood the universal and deeply mysterious aspect of Being even as they sought to explain it, Aristotle in the

Metaphysics and Hegel in both the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Logic*. Once this aspect of their respective philosophies is stripped away, one falls into the clutches of a narrower rationality. This is a story that can be told in many ways. Suffice to say that where certainty matters most in a world strictly divided in accordance with the subject/object epistemology, as adumbrated by Descartes and those who followed in his wake, there is only that much one can be certain of, only so few ways to reach such certainty (Khuri, 82-103). Preoccupied with certainty, one then forgets about Being—one more entry point for religious extremists intuitively aware of what they have lost, but without the intellectual or psychological wherewithal to articulate the way back (and forward) soundly and maturely.

What is required for philosophy to contribute to a solid framework for religious pluralism is the same as what is required for philosophy to once more be open to the fullness and richness of Being: To renew the vitality and openness of key concepts such as “eternity”, “truth”, “knowledge”, and “reason”.

THE CONTRIBUTION OF RECENT STUDIES IN MYTHOLOGY:

The problem of exclusivism has already been mentioned. Now is the time to shed further light on it as we briefly consider what has been coming down to us from those who have taken a fresh and unprejudiced look at mythology, helped in no small measure by recent advances in archaeology. What is of special interest to us here is the emergence of exclusivism after many thousands of years of syncretism. ‘Syncretism’ refers to the earlier tendency, as evidenced in mythologies gathered from around the world, to attribute more importance to what may be called “nature divinities” than “tribal patron divinities.” When divinity, expressed in whatever form, is referred back to natural forces and phenomena, there is the tacit acceptance that these are the same for all human beings, and so it does not matter that their expression, however exotic or colourful, should vary greatly from one group of people to another. There was the further tacit acceptance that those divinities referring specifically to the tribe in question, totemically or otherwise expressed, do not entail something akin to the exclusive possession of truth. This two-fold tacit acceptance roughly constitutes the syncretistic attitude.

What would appear later was the idea of a tribe or a people in sole possession of the truth. This is one way to view how the Abrahamic faiths came to follow a different path than other religions. Believers within those faiths almost always believe that they alone have the truth. Indeed, the very notion of Truth as we understand it entered human life through them. Thus, exclusivism entered history—and fashioned it. It is interesting to note that the older Asian religions remained profoundly different on two counts relevant to our discussion: They retained the earlier syncretism, and their evolution did not entail the destructive critical approach to mythology, namely the criticism that leaves us without the mythopoetic dimension or

subsumes it into a single narrative legitimized by a powerful orthodoxy (Campbell, 49-110). It is noteworthy that syncretism is often regarded with hostility by both Christians and Muslims. It is implied here that syncretism is more congenial to conceptual openness and breadth, for it preserves the pristine purity with which Transcendence is encountered and expressed, and studiously avoids incarcerating it within any finality. Mystics and Sufis, as well as other dynamic individuals within Christianity and Islam, have tried to preserve that purity in various ways. For example negative theology, an option within all three Abrahamic faiths, distinguishes itself by refusing to define any divine attributes, insisting that God is beyond all specification and sometimes declining to use even the word "God". This is for the sake of recognizing the openness and purity of Transcendence, thus restoring to humanity the possibility of religious experience unprejudiced by narrow conceptual habits. Great thinkers along the lines of negative theology in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are, respectively, Maimonides, Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagite, and Ibn 'Arabi. In the foregoing, we have already come across Maimonides and Ibn 'Arabi, both of whom hailed from Andalusia when it was ruled by the Arabs.

It cannot be over emphasized how important it is for meaningful long term religious pluralism that exclusivism be set aside, if not in favour of syncretism, then at least in recognition of the essential impossibility of transposing Transcendence, Mystery, Being, the Unknown into a finite realm with any finality.

THE EFFECT OF GLOBALIZATION:

There are indications that the human encounter with Transcendence is undergoing a profound transformation. If so, the extremism that has surfaced across the world among the adherents of several religions, and which threatens the sustainability of a genuinely pluralistic world order, can be seen partly as retrenchment in the face of inevitable change (contemporary religious psychology). This is compounded by the media's predilection for oversimplification and the accelerated rhythms of computer-driven activities that crowd out richness and careful articulation (contemporary consumerism and the elaborate networks supporting it).

What is that transformation? The foregoing helps us provide its lineaments. Perhaps we have reached the point where the combination of exclusivism and narrow rationalism has run its course. Perhaps there is renewed awareness that a more genuine expression and experience of Transcendence has become much needed in our world, suppressed as it has been both by religious orthodoxy of all kinds and a radically secular application of reason largely reduced to a pseudo-computational rationality. These forces of suppression have not only impoverished spiritual life, either by standardizing it and reducing it to the perfunctory or by denying it altogether on the grounds that it is "irrational". They have come perilously

close to destroying life altogether, above all by the great harm caused to the environment, in part through the relentless application of “rational” schemes of production and consumption, in part through regarding the Earth as a bounty to be fully exploited with the highest divine sanction.

Unfortunately, in a world where the communications media are so pervasive and the rhythms of life so dramatically accelerated, it is not so easy to respond to that transformation thoughtfully and constructively. Haste and oversimplification are the ideal setting for ideologically driven responses, for in our day, ideology tempts even the religious with its easy and ready-made belief packages (Khuri, 8-32).

One can try to be sanguine about the consequences of an ideological expression of the contemporary transformation by appealing to a kind of Hegelian optimism, according to which one might argue that religious extremism, driven by genuine motives often enough, will eventually fall victim to its own failings. If we do experience such a “determinate negation” on a global scale, what might come next? Might not the elements already be there in widespread traditions that live on? The opening page of the *Tao Te Ching* is reassuring in that regard. To continue in the spirit of exclusivism, completeness, and finality is not—for our culturally and psychologically overcrowded world, its rhythms dramatically and forcibly accelerated, will turn into a veritable cauldron.

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CHAPTER 10

ISLAMIC DOCTRINE AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES

RAHIM NOBAHAR

INTRODUCTION

In this article, after presenting some brief explanations about the concepts of public and private, I will argue that in Islamic thought, the state has moral responsibility towards its citizens for promoting virtue and morality. Nonetheless, the private sphere as a realm that is outside the supervision and interference of the state is also recognized. Thus, in Islamic society, even in an officially Islamic state, citizens can, or should be able to form their personal identities through optional and free behavior.

DEFINING THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

Dividing the domain of human life into the public and private spheres is, in a sense, an achievement of the modern world, but like many other concepts of the human and social sciences it has its roots in the thought of ancient figures. Plato, for example, supported a kind of paternalistic interference of State in the private affairs of citizens. He thought that if peoples' private life were not regulated, the law imposed on public life would not be sustained. He also was of the opinion that the government should adopt a special and different treatment of private deviations as opposed to overt ones, but without offering a clear delineation between the two areas. Ironically, Menville's research shows that the dichotomies forming modern democratic politics, such as state and society, public and private, law and morality, were never really applied in Athens.

In modern times since the nineteenth century, serious attention has been given to the public and private spheres. John Stuart Mill and Jurgen Habermas have dealt with the issue more than other philosophers. Mill believed that the individual's conduct is a personal matter when it does not affect others. Adopting a utilitarian approach, he thought that the individual is the best and final authority to decide his own interest. As a result, the best reason against interference in the private sphere of individuals is that when others interfere in this sphere, it is likely that their interference is wrong or unwarranted. After Mill, Habermas dealt extensively with the public sphere. In his book *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, he explains the emergence and development of the bourgeois public sphere—that is, a sphere which was distinct from the state and in which citizens could discuss

issues of general interest. In analyzing the historical transformations of this sphere, Habermas recovers a concept which is of crucial significance for current debates in social and political theory. He focuses on the liberal notion of the bourgeois public sphere as it emerged in Europe in the early modern period and examines both the writings of political theorists, including Marx, Mill and de Tocqueville, and the specific institutions and social forms in which the public sphere was realized.¹ He attempts to criticize the classical liberal conception of public and private spheres. In the liberal conception of the private sphere, the individual is not and ought not be subject to legal standards and rules or constrained by social constraints and moral and normative commitments.

The individual is, however, bound by a series of norms, rules and regulations in the public sphere of life. British and American philosophic traditions are both based on some minimalist conception of the state. In political philosophy and theory there are also such doctrines as representation and separation of powers which support this conception of state and imply that it serves as an instrument for some ends and consider it mainly as a “necessary evil”. Here, “liberty“ is often intended to mean “freedom from” any interference with attaining individual liberty and well-being. But this is negative freedom. In contrast, German philosophical tradition, since Kant, and in particular since Hegel, considers society, quite naturally, as a collective manifestation of knowledge, cognition, wisdom and identity of a nation. Social institutions are consequences resulting from this collective “will and conscience.” Here, though state and society are very different from each other, the emphasis is on the positive and rational potentials of both, and they are seen as mediums through which individuals are able to promote voluntary and self-imposed restrictions on their lives and to collectively realize higher aims and objectives. Thus, the boundary between public and private is not as strong as it is in the liberal tradition.

BOUNDARIES AND DISTINCTIONS

Nowadays, at least in some important fields of the humanities like economics, politics, law and sociology, great efforts are being made to propose clear-cut boundaries between the two spheres. The expansion of the debate owes to its significant role in human social life. Biotechnology, for example, has introduced new attitudes towards the concept and scope of privacy. It has also posed threats to it and amplified the importance of the debate. This has caused lawyers, political theorists, feminists, anthropologists, cultural historians and economists who advocate a theory

¹ Jurgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Thomas McCarthy, (Introduction), Thomas Burger & Patrick Lawrence (Translators) 1992, Publisher: Polity Press.

of public choice to introduce their own categorizations relating to the concept.

The distinction between public and private spheres should in no way be considered a simple dichotomy; it should rather be seen as a multifaceted and shifting series of distinctions constantly varying under increased social pressures and political struggles. The complex and dubious nature of classifications relating to public and private spheres has been highlighted by some recent research. The liberal economic model, civil republicanism, cultural and social historical approach, and feminism are but some of these frameworks. This leads one to conclude that the relation between the two spheres is necessarily asymmetrical. One should not think of a simple classification which would resolve the issue. Something that used to belong to public sphere may now be considered as belonging to the private sphere. An institution like marriage may at the same time have both public and private aspects.

The present paper aims at showing the compatibility of the separation of the two spheres within Islamic teachings and doctrines. This exempts the author from engaging in a careful and technical discussion as to the criteria of the distinction at stake. My concern is more a conception in line with the delimitation of state authority separating the public from the private sphere.

Separating public and private spheres serves various purposes. Economic liberalism uses the distinction to separate the area of public or state economy from the private sector. The latter is left to the market in which the state is not permitted to interfere. Proponents of civil society use it to strengthen their own status as institutions mediating between “citizens” and “government”. Advocates of secularism are concerned with providing social space that excludes the institution of religion. Feminists want to offer boundaries in order to include family as a public institution, but also to protect it, within the state’s supervision. This is seen as a means to protect women’s rights. For them, a private issue may be “political. The very public/private distinction is a political construction and it is, they argue, in men’s interests to conceal domestic violence against women from the public.

This paper is not concerned with evaluating such approaches to the public and private spheres; it is only to demonstrate the fact that from an Islamic perspective, many areas of human life are not considered public and hence under the State’s supervision and control. Any government is committed to recognize this distinction. Obviously, a government committed to divine law, is more observant of this and gives effect to its consequences. On the other hand, respect for the citizens’ privacy is not an obligation restricted to state authorities; it extends to civil institutions, non-state social organizations and even to ordinary citizens. Indeed, a person’s private life is part of his/her personality, and all individual citizens are entitled to demand non- interference from others and the state.

It can be argued that in recognizing a “right” or other convention consistent with Islamic principles or supported by them, there might not necessarily be available explicit texts to that effect. Many rights or other social conventions are consistent with Islamic principles in the sense that their conceptual analysis makes us consider them as a clear instance of a right or transaction recognized in Islamic texts. Perhaps, they are found as a general concept, the compatibility of which is obvious; or perhaps, although not found in the Shari’a rules, they emerge as valid, needed prohibitions or transactions and this provides legitimacy.

THE NEED FOR SOME SEPARATION

Among the arguments for the compatibility of separating the public from the private sphere within Islamic doctrine is the rule of *Ada al- sultah* or non-dominion. According to this rule, one has dominion over one’s life and property. Though the jurists consider it a property rule, there is no doubt its content is not limited to one’s property and assets; one’s dominion over his/her property results from his/her dominion over his/her life and body and over his/her personality. It provides in a positive way that any decision relating to a human being’s personality is left to him/her alone. The rule corresponds more closely to positive freedom.

Similarly, the principle of “non-authority“ as a recognized and valid principle among the jurists, excludes others’ dominion over one’s life, body, property and any other personal aspect. The content of this principle is more consonant with negative freedom. Thus, interference in the private life of persons, including the attempt to gain knowledge of a private nature by the State or individuals is, in principle, forbidden and intrusive; the principle may be overridden only by a strong justification. An example of this justification might be where harm is caused to public interests; interference to prevent harm to the individual himself would be permitted only under special conditions. Interference to implement morality, interference to allow an individual to act for his/her own benefit or the benefit of others is covered by the principle.

Another ground for believing the compatibility of Islamic principles with the separation of the public and private spheres is the prohibition of spying which is an established Qur’anic rule. God’s short commandment, “do not spy”, contains several points:

- A) The imperative in the verse denotes prohibition of spying.
- B) The imperative implies one’s right to privacy. Indeed, since there is such a right, others are obliged to respect it. The discourse of duty or responsibility has more emphasis than the discourse of right.
- C) The condemnation of spying is not confined to attempting to discover other people’s weaknesses or bad points; even goods and virtues are to be kept from others and may not be made overt by spying.

D) The object of spying is not mentioned in the verse. According to Arabic linguistic rules this omission indicates generality and substance; this is a Qur'anic method which tries not to mention changeable affairs. The scope of the individual's privacy is determined according to various circumstances and through the interaction of the individual and society.

E) The verse is addressed to believers. This seems natural; God addresses those who are prepared to listen to Him; but the scope of the obligation is not restricted to believers. Spying on non-Muslims is also included.

F) Spying is of itself inherently prohibited; it is forbidden even when it does not disclose secrets. Prohibition of disclosure of private matters is distinct from that of spying.

G) The holy Qur'an does not give any utilitarian grounds for the prohibition of spying. In other words, it does not try to enumerate social evils resulting from the practice, notwithstanding the fact that we know what God forbids surely contains evils. The author believes that the Qur'an wants the audience to consider spying an immoral act and to feel a moral obligation not to engage in such behavior. The utilitarian justification may direct individuals to think that the evil may be remedied by positive measures.

H) Spying is not condemned only as a method of collecting information; the point is that spying gathers information which is to be concealed and not to be revealed.

One of the important Islamic principles is enabling good and forbidding evil. The emphasis put on this duty indicates that members of an Islamic society feel moral responsibility to each other. This sense of responsibility is naturally felt by the State as a social institution. But this religious duty is in no way contradictory with the prohibition on spying. First, because, as expressed in some traditions, enabling good and forbidding evil are related to cases of refraining from good and committing evil in public. Second, because the texts forbidding spying are special, and impose the duty to enjoin good and forbid evil, they modify moral responsibility in both the public and private sphere. Adding to this, we would say that the rationale behind the duty to enjoin and forbid others is a utilitarian consideration, in that it is discharged whenever it is useful. No one would doubt that, spying on the privacy of the people even to enable virtuous action. This would only make them disgusted with religion.

Another way to reach the compatibility and emphasis of Islamic doctrine on the separation of the public from the private sphere is by promoting basic moral values. This needs some explanation. Morality enjoys a first rank of priority in Islam; numerous verses of the Qur'an include purification of the human soul as the purpose for sending prophets, including the Prophet Mohammad (p.u. h.). It is obvious that what is intended by Islam and the Prophet is the real and genuine promotion of morality and its internalization by sincere and conscientious individuals.

Building a society without belief in religious principles and uncommitted to moral values but with external religious trappings is of no interest to Islamic leaders. Whatever the Islamic moral system may be, it is beyond question that Islam gives moral value to individual, reflective, voluntary actions when they are performed out of an inner sense and wisdom and without coercion. Spying and paternalistic supervision even with incentive to promote and spread moral values and virtues will not bring this outcome. They will instead institutionalize hypocrisy in the conduct of citizens, and this is opposed by both Qur'an and Shari'ah.

The consequences of the spread of hypocrisy caused by paternalistic imposition on public life and in particular on the private life of individuals should not be taken as trivial; it is followed by its own social problems. Individuals come to know less of each other, since the outward manifestations of behavior are short of representing the real personality of agents.

The institution of *dhimma* is further evidence of the compatibility of Islamic thought with the idea of separating the public from the private sphere. Historical evidence indicates that Muslims, even at times when they were of the great power, tolerated covert practices of non-Muslims which were clearly in conflict with Islamic rules. *Dhimmis* were allowed to do, in private, what they deemed correct. This treatment which was approved by the Prophet and our Imams, on the one hand, indicates the potential and capability of Islamic thought to adopt a tolerant attitude, and, on the other, is expressive of the fact that belief in God and adherence to Islamic rules is not something to be imposed on others.

SOME CONCLUSIONS

Good relations between the State and citizens is desired and valued by any government, including the one which has committed itself to Islamic principles. According to Imam Ali's guidelines to *Malik Ashtar*, the governor must try, beyond observing justice and truth, to seek the consent of the citizens. There is no doubt that the government's interference in the private life of people, even for correction and the spread of virtues, will obliterate the relations between the State and citizens and undermine the very foundation of government. Imam Ali gives paramount importance to the protection of privacy especially concerning the government. The role of government, in this regard, is to protect its citizens' privacy—even their faults.

Among the grounds which encourage the individual or government to spy on peoples' affairs is suspicion. Islamic teachings while blaming both optimism and skepticism and insisting on being realistic, put the weight of blame on suspicion and in particular on acting accordingly. Good will is of course encouraged. It is not merely moral advice. The principle of *sihhat* (correctness), according to which a Muslim's (or any person's) act, should be construed as correct and proper, even where they could be

interpreted otherwise, has many legal effects, including the ban on spying. Prohibition of suspicion and the principle of correctness can be considered as appropriate foundations for distinguishing the public and private spheres.

Since spying and, in fact, interfering in the private sphere of others is prohibited save in exceptional cases, the government should insure protection in this realm. Justice which binds us to protect the subordinate requires providing the most protection to individuals and their rights against the encroachment of government. Moreover, governments traditionally, and too often, offer broad interpretation of the concept of security and invoke it to violate citizens' privacy. Therefore, it is necessary to have transparent laws and provide for appropriate sanctions in order to ensure citizens' security and privacy. This is something which, unfortunately, has received insufficient attention in my country.

PART IV

SYMBOLS, SUFFERINGS AND HOPE

CHAPTER 11

TROPING TRAUMA: CONCEIVING (OF) EXPERIENCES OF SPEECHLESS TERROR

ROSEMARY WINSLOW

Suddenly his eyes would become blank, nothing but two open wounds, two pits of terror (Elie Wiesel, *Night*, p. 72).

A metaphor gives us at least a fighting chance of saying something real (Alicia Ostriker, "Dancing at the Devil's Party," p. 208).

. . . metaphor is one of the chief agents of our moral nature
. . . the more serious we are in life, the less we can do without it (Cynthia Ozick, *Metaphor and Memory*, p. 270).

INTRODUCTION

In the past two years, interest in studying and teaching writings about terror and trauma have markedly increased, especially and understandably first-person accounts of events that affected large numbers of people. As one century that has often been called "the century of trauma" passes into another like it, but compounded so far by the fear that it may also be a century of terror, it is important to read and understand what these accounts have to tell us. Much recent research on personal accounts of traumatic events has focused on narrative and ethos, (e.g., Carruth, Langer, Rosenwald, DeVinne, Bernard-Donals and Glejzer, Hayes). Little has been said about the stylistic aspects despite the highly tropological nature of trauma writings, which depend on tropes to indicate the profound psychological and moral depths of traumatic experience their writers are determined to tell. Lawrence Langer, one of the leading researchers of Jewish Holocaust narratives, has denounced the presence of figural language in survivor narratives, believing that it detracts from the reality of the events that happened. Cathy Carruth has made the necessary distinction between narrative and event; she separates objective events from subjective experience and finds the event pressures the narrative as gaps, which are the evidence of traumatic events and which cannot be recovered because the experiencer is not fully conscious during the event. What we have, she says, is a fragmented world which cannot be pieced together from personal accounts. At issue in both is the aim of recovering "what happened" in the "objective" world, meaning the physical, social, and political contexts

external to the individual, so that the historian is able to construct her own version of events. Michael Bernard-Donals has taken up Carruth's deconstructive gaps to argue that ethos may be indicated by the gaps. He argues that in traumatic narratives the writer must be judged as credible *on the fact of experience, though not on the facts themselves* on the basis of the gaps' existence.

It seems odd that such topological approaches constitute the methodology for determining veracity and meaning of events, but not for understanding the *story*—the writer's constructed perspective on the events. Since the publication of Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things*, historiography has been seen as topological, as the historian employs topological processes in researching and using evidence for abstract claims and generalizing concepts. Metonymic process is necessary to abstracting meaning from events, while metaphor is necessary to holding abstraction in tension to retain some measure of particularity through difference. Metonymy threatens erasure of the individual and disempowered social groups through their collapsing fragments of the whole event, and metaphor threatens to overwhelm making meaning at all with its wealth of difference.¹ Yet, the authors of personal experience narratives are not seen as having the same difficulties of metonymic reduction and metaphoric distinction, or of having to resort to the same problematic solutions of decision and tension. Even more, the figural language inside the text is likely to be read wholly off cultural concept metaphors, as are analyses of terror.² Shouldn't we read the texts on—and *in*—their own terms, at least for some purposes, for example, to learn what their authors, who know intimately the extremes of the human condition, have to say? Shouldn't we try to read the texts as fully as possible? If we don't try, I think our failure renders the writer faceless as an experiencer of trauma, when we turn away from the full and particular sense of the indicators she has set before us. Although a traumatic event may happen to large groups of people, it always happens to each person—to each body, mind, and spirit. It is felt and thought in individuals, in each body and mind, even if many are physically together. And that feeling and thought, *hers*, are what personal experience accounts attempt to set down in a communicable way. To understand trauma narratives, then, we have to look inside, not just for facts of events but for the language that binds meaning and significance to them. We have to read their language more fully than we are used to doing.

To read trauma narratives as having "gaps," as mere metonymic displacement of fragments of events and fragmentation of the everyday world—as unfortunate interference (Langer) or unfortunate absence (Carruth)—is to ignore both the aims of the genre and tropical language that is *in* the so-called gaps. It is to ignore the language, and thus the experience the writer is deeply intent on conveying. Events may look fragmented, and the experience of them may look fragmented from the perspective of the everyday world, but to an experience, it is a *whole* world, and while in the experience, it is the real world, the one that counts. It is thus a *separate*

world, because it is outside everyday experience and thus outside ordinary language, which developed in and from the everyday, ordinary, consensual world to give meaning to everyday reality. What appears to the reader when reading through eyes reading from an ordinary language perspective is a fragmented world; what is there is the traumatic world; and its speakability is hampered by the nature of the experience's and the experiencer's outsideness, and by the necessary reliance on tropical language that is *not* conceptual, that is, not of the everyday ordinary world and language shared by readers. To speak and to read the world *next to* the ordinary world requires using the kinds of tropes capable of indicating (pointing to, gesturing toward) the experience. Knowledge-making in trauma results from a metonymic displacement (not fragmentation) of the already-available ordinary world and its language, which fails in its ordering when faced with trauma. This move shifts the experiencer to preconceptual figural resources. And because the everyday ordinary world and its concepts are rendered meaningless in the total shift outside of it, another world is created that is discontinuous: the trauma world is thus made through a metaphoric process. It exists outside of the ordinary—side-by-side.

Bernard-Donals recognizes the side-by-sideness when he asserts, "the origin of testimony itself ... [is] another reality," and the origin, the event itself, as unrecoverable as its objective fact from the narrative (572). He proposes a view of ethos as indicative, by which he means a view that regards ethos as credible, or "telling the truth," if the writer is able, through language, not on external grounds, "to move an audience to 'see' an issue or an event that exceeds language's ability to narrate it" (566). I want to propose that the world induced by traumatic experience is itself indicative, for it lives in preconceptual figuration, beyond language, and to "see" its truth, we need imaging strategies that move us into its world; otherwise we cannot "see"—grasp its language-exceeding truth. These strategies have traditionally been associated with reading poetry, where we are schooled to build up a sense of an individual's world from the figural resources that create it.

How do we read the figuration of these texts to make sense of their worlds? If the trauma world is a world radically different from the everyday world, how do we know it if we do not have the conceptual store that enables language to give meaning to experience? If an experience is unspeakable, is it also unthinkable? The answer is no. Primo Levi expressed the difficulty this way, encountered the first morning in Auschwitz: "for the first time we became aware that our language lacks words to express this offence, the demolition of a man" (*Survival in Auschwitz* 26). While the facts detailed in his narrative say what happened, it is the figurative language that indicates what the facts meant in the situation, how they all contributed to the "demolition of a man." *A man*. An individual human being. Hayden White's concern that scientific historiography tells "only part of the story of human beings at grips with their individual and

collective destinies” (145, 46) has become a central problem not only for historians, but for rhetoric and composition studies. How we read figuration of individuals’ accounts is basic to gathering, analyzing, and interpreting data; to miss it or to misread is to *mistake* the data. With accounts of traumatic experience, this is even more true. In the absence of already-made language, figuration has to build the sense of the experience, its feel and meaning of the destruction of the human. But more, the figures are the only language with which the experiencer can think *of* the experience.

In *Metaphoric Worlds*, Samuel R. Levin proposes a kind of metaphor he terms “conceiving of,” in contrast to “conceiving” it. “To think *of*” a world, he suggests, is very different from “to think” a world. In the first, the world is thought in its fullness and *meaningfulness*; in the second, the world is thought in conceptual terms. It is the first strategy we have not used, but need to use to engage with trauma worlds. It is the second that most directly conveys reading to the reader, but which also can be the significant source of misreading. The first asks us to try to “think of” the world in its own terms and existence. The second easily overlooks and unwittingly erases the world and the experiencer’s identity as experiencer and speaker of unspeakable truth.

But before taking a detailed look at Levin’s ideas, it is necessary to have a clearer idea of what trauma is and how the experiencer of trauma thinks of and attempts to present it.

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

What is trauma? What is traumatic experience?

—*As always when I saw their faces I froze from terror and hatred.*

—Primo Levi (*Survival at Auschwitz*, p. 159)

—*The different emotions that overcame us, of resignation, of futile rebellion, of religious abandon, of fear, of despair, now joined together after a sleepless night in a collective, uncontrolled panic. The time for meditation, the time for decision was over, and all reason dissolved into a tumult. . . .*

—Primo Levi, (*Survival at Auschwitz*, p. 16.)

—*I could feel myself as two entities—my body and me. I hated it.*

—Elie Wiesel (*Night*, p. 81)

Trauma induces extreme physical and psychological states, which arise from a body and mind that knows itself to be in the grip of an annihilating threat to a whole or part. Overwhelmed and unable to escape, the experiencer’s ordinary world is severely disrupted, rendering the making of meaning of the event, while in it, impossible. In addition, the experience is not *of* the ordinary world of everyday experience and meaning, and it cannot be made to reconcile (be organized within, ordered, made meaningful) with it. But the situation is more complicated still; changes in physical and psychological states shift the experiencer into an

altered state of consciousness characterized by heightened imaging and interference with reasoning. As traumatic experience is a physiological/psychological phenomenon much studied in the discipline of psychology, I will let Barry M. Cohen, trauma researcher and therapist, define and summarize:

Spiegel (1992) defines trauma as a “sudden discontinuity in physical and psychological experience” in which the discontinuity is both a defense by the victim against the traumatic input (flight from harm), as well as a reflection of it (schema shifts and dissociation). . . . The victim shifts consciousness in order to avoid pain, separates any previous positive connection with the perpetrator from awareness, and becomes a thing instead of a person This moment of disparity and despair facilitates a hypnoid or trance state in the victim which fosters the creation of arational, atemporal, and nonlinear constructs (Horowitz, 1070). The response to this state of overwhelming experience has been described as “speechless terror,” “since information can neither be fully assimilated nor accommodated”(van der Kolk & van der Hart, 1991). Trauma often causes the inadvertent association of disparate stimuli. . . the ability to retrieve information in a manner in which it can be translated into words depends on compatibility with or similarity to current cues. The traumatized individual lives in two different worlds, the realm of trauma (the past) and the realm of “ordinary” life (present). The realm of trauma is internal reality—a world repetitive, solitary, and very importantly, timeless. Further, these are utterly “incompatible worlds” ([van der Kolk and van der Hart,] 1991, p. 449). “This explains why traumatized individuals crave metaphor and imagery . . . to make sense of their worlds” (527, 28).

We can see from this description why Carruth assigns to trauma narratives the term “gaps” and says rightly that the objective facts of the event are not recoverable from this physical/psychological response. However, the disjunction of the ordinary world is not absence, as the term “gap” indicates. Rather, something is present—emotion, imaging, thought—and this something forms the reality and truth of the individual’s experience of the event. If we are looking to draw objective facts in a linear form—a narrative sequence—Carruth is right; it cannot look like “objectivity,” which means really, with respect to narrative, a version of how the ordinary world would structure the facts of an event. But we can recover (an interesting conceptual metaphor itself, that needs objection on grounds that it indicates putting the experience out of sight) something of the truth of the experience, and this is what experiencers who survive insist on telling, and what readers and interpreters must attend to if their concern is to access and understand these experiences as meaningful.

From Cohen’s summary of defining features of traumatic experience, five are central to understanding what trauma worlds are and how to read them: (feature 1) the presence of “discontinuity“ of both physical/psychological experiences, and its status as both “defense” and “reflection;”(feature 2) the “creation of arational, atemporal, and nonlinear

constructs,” which are therefore not amenable to the full range of reasoning processes and language resources, which depend on concepts and on time-bound linearity; (feature 3) the defining experience of “speechless terror,” an extreme emotion that stuns the experiencer out of language; (feature 4) the experiencer’s shifted view from person to thing; and (feature 5) the existence of “two worlds”—“the realm of trauma” and “the realm of ‘ordinary’ life”—in which the experiencer is and continues to be past the event. These two worlds exist, disjoined (i.e., neither is fragmented nor erased). All of these features work against the construction of narrative. But tropical thought is well-suited: flexible, imagistic, felt, preconceptual, indicative, and rich with indicative possibility.

In short-term, single-event trauma, the trauma world may be so sparse as hardly to be called a world. In long-term, repeating trauma (e.g., as may occur, in concentration camps, enslavement, prison, torture, war, severely dysfunctional families), however, the trauma world may develop extensively and be maintained beside but apart from the ordinary world. This happens because the experiencer lives in both worlds, must survive, and must, therefore, maintain cognitive dissonance between the ordinary world, which is organized meaningfully to promote life, and the trauma world, which by contrast seems disorganized and threatens to annihilate (Cohen 527). Cohen classes these worlds as post-traumatic paracosms: “spontaneously created, systematized private worlds...internally consistent and deeply significant to the individual... and self-referential...[they] include the internal reality’s environment, architecture, values, culture, and constituents” (530). The alternate reality of the trauma-induced world is much like the art world reality, Cohen says, in its status as a “fundamental way of knowing the world,” because “[t]here is no mandate for sequential thought in the non-verbal mind; art carries information differently than language—in visual images rather than in words (528; quote is from Goodman). These images themselves need not be narrative, because form in art *is* content; it alone can communicate” (529). The transfer of experience into art’s visual language is, of course, a making of a textual world. It is not *the same as* the experience, even as imaged, as it is *mediated by* the material and formal possibilities of art, just as transfer into language would be by the linguistic medium. However, the visual, non-linear nature of art is closer to the actual experience than language can approach. Images are an inextricable component of semantic aspects of metaphor, as Paul Ricoeur has cogently asserted and demonstrated (“The Metaphoric Process”). They carry psychological/emotional meaning and are “emerging meaning” (147); they merge “sense and sense” (149). And they are the chief carriers of reference in poetic worlds. Spoken and written trauma accounts bear high proportions of tropes because tropes must indicate the trauma world with its high content of image and emotion, and because the trauma world is discontinuous with the ordinary world that writers address and the language they must address them in, if they are to be understood at all. When experiencers of long-term trauma write the trauma world, that world will

appear intermingled with the ordinary, as it must take on rationality, temporality, and linearity in order to be communicated. The life of the trauma world maintains itself in tropical formations and processes, as these are able to translate into language from visual content and form.

In addition, tropes are chief cognitive processes, the two main cognitive resources for thinking and organizing our experience. The two major tropes—metaphor and metonymy—underlie the production of language and life. We “live by” underlying conceptual metaphors, such as “argument as war,” “time as money,” and “theories are buildings” (Lakoff and Johnson). Metonymy allows us to conceptualize by taking one example to stand for a whole and by transferring functions (e.g., cause for effect, type for cause) (Lakoff). Yet, we do not all think alike. Individual variation emerges from each person’s mental representation, acquired from the general store, mingled with personal history and local material. As a rule then, some tropes would have non-common senses. As David Beres and Edward Joseph state, “all conscious psychic activity” arises from unconscious structures which are called “mental representations.” “A mental representation is a postulated unconscious psychic organization capable of evocation in consciousness as symbol, fantasy, thought, affect, or action.” We do not react directly to an external stimulus, but, instead, the external stimulus activates a mental representation and action issues from *it* (Beres and Joseph 2, 6,7). Like any individual’s version, or mental representations, of the ordinary world, paracosms are mental representations: they are internally created, but differ from the ordinary world in their individualized nature (the lack of consensuality) and high degree of the visual and nonlinear aspects—features resulting from traumatic response.

If one’s aim is to understand an alternate world, then non-consensual content and structure and their functioning are of paramount importance. Understanding *how* that world means is necessary to understanding *what* it means. If we do not understand the world on its own terms, we misunderstand and misread its differences from and contiguities with the ordinary, consensual world. Thus, what we consider the nature and function of tropes in a specific text determines the understanding and interpretation we make of how individual writings function in social and political contexts.

THEORIZING TROPES AND THE TRAUMA WORLD

I believe that every militant chemist can confirm it: that one must distrust the almost-the-same . . . the differences can be small, but they can lead to radically different consequence (Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table*, p. xii).

That night the soup tasted of corpse (Elie Wiesel, *Night*, p. 62).

Although accounts of history proceed largely through metonymic process, abstracting whole from cases (Foucault, White), texts relating traumatic experience, by contrast, have to rely on metaphor. In narrative accounts, concept metaphors enable communication with readers, but they (1) undercut and oppose them to indicate the disjunction with ordinary world concepts and (2) complicate them with non-conceptual metaphor to indicate aspects of the trauma world that have no ordinary world similarities. The incapacity of already-available concept metaphors to represent the trauma world thrusts tropical language into the role of indicating—through gesture toward traumatic experience—and signals the world's radical difference from the ordinary world. While experiencers can think the trauma world, without shared concepts readers cannot—unless there is a way possible through indicative tropes.

In trauma narratives, the typical strategy is to relate facts of the event and use tropes to point toward the sense of the world, to build its thought, feel, and moral dimensions. Tropes that do not have conventional concepts attached to them, or suggest more than conventional concept metaphors do serve this function. These are the tropes by which poetry (i.e., literary texts) acquires and indicates its reality and truth. While conventional tropical language anchors the reader in the ordinary world of meaning, non-conventional tropical language functions to create a “surplus” of meaning (Ricoeur's term, used throughout *Interpretation Theory*) that supplies more meaning than the conventional. In the traditional understanding, metaphor is regarded as an expression that does not make literal sense. In various theories it is called false, nonsense, absurd. Its presence functions to send the reader on a search for meaning for similarity across two incompatible semantic domains, while the grammar holds out incompatibility (difference) through its literal assertion. For example, when Elie Wiesel says, after watching a young boy hanged for sabotage at Auschwitz, “That night the soup tasted of corpses,” we see this as a metaphor because in the ordinary world, soup could not be made of corpses. Corpses belong in the semantic domain of death, not food ingredients. This awareness prompts a search for meaning other than the literal one. We look for relevant domains: death—perhaps Wiesel is experiencing some kind of death after watching the courageous, rebellious youth hanged. But what kind of death? And what about that extra, that overflow? A creepy, sinking feeling, distaste, perhaps in our mouths, a tightening in the stomach, revulsion, perhaps a darkening space around us, who have become, through a fuller, felt participation in the image, intensely aware of body; aware, perhaps, of isolation from everything else but this moment; perhaps aware of terror, even shame. In the first instant of taking in the literal sense, we very likely recoil, we resist even letting the thought into awareness: so strong is the taboo against eating human bodies, so strong is the desire—no, the animal instinct—to live. We want, naturally, to protect ourselves. But there is that soup, and that soup is all there is to eat—and eat or die. To read this fully is to take in its awareness, to be cognizant of the felt and morally

chaotic experience it tells of. It is to begin to *think of* that world of experience.

Although the specific responses will vary from reader to reader, some such physical and cognitive responses will attend the visual image arising in us through the trope. Paul Ricoeur, whose interactive theory is the richest and most elaborated of metaphor theories, says that this operation gives metaphoric utterances stereoscopic depth, because the ordinary world is held in tension with the newly-created world: "The metaphoric utterance not only abolishes but preserves the literal sense" ("Metaphorical Process" 152). The estrangement from the ordinary impels a sense of a strange world—a new world previously unthought, apart from but near the ordinary world.

Interpreting via conventional concept, metaphor tends to cancel the strange, new world—if it is seen at all.³ The reason for this is that the trope is regarded as deviant or false, and this process reads the trope back into the terms of ordinary world, assimilating the trope's meaning and world into it (Levin 2, 3). Corpses mean "death," and the wealth of sensation and thought fades back, unrealized. The psychological component flows back into abstract reduction, tamed, and the reader moves on. This is the point at which our usual ways of reading conventional and nonconventional metaphors end, for we can reach resolution of tension between the literal and figurative meanings through congruence with the ordinary world. Yet, as Ricoeur argues, the "psychological moment" of imaging produces a sensing and sense of the world that lies beyond the borders of the ordinary; it is a necessary component of the semantic aspect of metaphor—so necessary, he asserts (and demonstrates) that no theory of metaphor can achieve even its own aims without it (141).

As I noted above, Levin regards this connective resolution of metaphor to conventional meanings as an assimilation of the newly-created world into ordinary world; assimilation happens as a result of the failure to apprehend a metaphor as a new conceptual world. Assimilation enables an expansion of the ordinary world, but if there is a separate new world being posited and indicated through metaphor, then the price of assimilation is erasure of the newly-created experiential world as an "achieved comprehension" (20). And while Levin agrees for the most part with Ricoeur's approach, he insists that sometimes some writers mean some metaphors to be taken literally because they are writing of another, real way of experiencing the world. A new experiential world is not governed by conventional concepts; therefore it cannot be thought in those concepts, but it can, nevertheless, be *thought* through tropes. Readers cannot "think" it, but they can "think *of*" it. For these metaphors, the price of assimilation is the loss of the *meaningfulness* indicated in tropical thought. To gain meaningfulness, the reader has to try to "think of," or "conceive of" the world according to the literal sense of the metaphors. Levin's principal example is Wordsworth, whose metaphors of nature in happy communion (e.g., various waters "roaring with one voice" in "Mt. Snowden"), invite us

into the communion of living, joyful nature, where the poet himself is. “Doing so,” Levin says, “forces us to conceive of a world in which nature is ‘alive’, in which a community of spirit exists between ourselves and the objects of nature. To conceive of a river as loving, of nature as breathing, opens up for us a world different from the ordinary world of our senses and cognitions. This is a metaphoric world, a world of our own making, a world, it is my contention, that Wordsworth realized in his own thought and on the basis of which he wrote such lines as [we find in] *The Prelude*” (236). Wordsworth, Levin argues, invites readers to “conceive of a world or state of affairs whose nature, in its abrogation of the canons that govern existential relations in our world, is estranged from common notions of reality and may rightly be termed metaphoric” (237). To think of this world is to take its metaphors as literal, as the real thought of a distinct, not similar, not able-to-be-assimilated world. The conclusion of Levin’s proposal for reading is that metaphoric worlds are conceptual: they present and intend to elicit, through experience of their literal senses, new conceptual grasp of reality. The metaphoric world comprises a whole way of thinking, and its metaphors serve to indicate the literalness of its newly-thought, uncommon conceptualization.

Levin regards Wordsworth’s sublime experience as a cognitive achievement, and one that is ineffable because it can be neither thought nor spoken *in the terms of the ordinary world*. Because such experiences are outside of the everyday world of common experience, metaphors have to serve to convey them to readers through their non-deviant literalness. Like experiences of the sublime, traumatic experience is ineffable, cannot be thought or spoken through the already-made terms of language, and is outside of everyday common experience. Experiencers are thrown back onto the cognitive resources of nonconceptual tropes to conceive of their experience and to conceive the experiential world. Like sublime experience, traumatic experience abrogates the rules and laws that order relations in the everyday world. The ordinary world is organized to support life and sociality; the trauma world is organized for survival, a reality whose single overwhelming constant is the threat of annihilation. The trauma world isolates and cuts off sociality, it shrinks context to the immediate event’s relation to the individual’s need to get away from the threat. It erases context, and its rules. Trauma’s happenings are unpredictable and elude systematization. It is the antithesis of the sublime’s pervasive aliveness, communion, and total sociality among dimensions of context. It is also the antithesis of ordered, predictive relational rules and of our modern internal/external metaphysical split. These antitheses, in fact, form the conceptual bridge between worlds. Since ineffable experience cannot be understood in ordinary world terms, the trauma world emerges and develops tropically, and if speaking or writing that is motivated toward communication ensues, the experiencer must use the full range of metaphoric resources if she is to enable the reader to enter the world of the trauma experience. If the reader follows the way of reading Levin suggests,

if some metaphors are read off conventional concept metaphors and some are taken literally, what was unthinkable becomes thinkable.

The question then is, do writers of traumatic experience ask us to take at least some metaphors literally? I think the answer is yes. I offer two reasons. One: the trauma world is not ruled by ordinary world concepts and canons of reasoning. It is arational, and subsequent rationality in ordinary world terms yields a world that is, in many ways, the antithesis to the ordinary world in its striving to annihilate the individual. In its isolation and absence of context, it lacks sociality, which the ordinary world is organized to promote. Two: because the trauma world is atemporal, arational, nonlinear, and highly imagistic, tropes leap in where concepts and narrative cannot go. To read the world as other than this is to lose its essential character, as well as its means of making sense.

These two reasons—lack of concepts for a thought and consequential use of tropes for its content and effects—are the ones Levin explores as the motivating basis for his category of the “conceiving of” metaphor. His excursion through Giambattista Vico’s explanation of language’s development of concepts out of tropes (Chapter Five) is helpful to understanding how tropical thought is base and indicator of the trauma world.

Working from the evidence of early poetry, Vico discovered that all tropes were initially catachretic. Early thinking of the world was very different from our descriptions of the actual nature of the things. Rather, it was more like Wordsworth’s comprehension of the world as alive and continually and fully interacting with human beings. Before our modern metaphysical view came into being, conceptions were figural projections from human experience outward onto the world. The world was experienced and thought of as alive with passion and feeling. That their view was composed of projections early humans had no way of knowing, for they had not yet acquired the later split between the external actual world and their internal human experience. As science developed, the external world came to be described in its own nature, but prior to that it could not be conceived as such. Vico discovered that catachretic expressions took the place we now have for conceiving the world. He says that early humans “spoke in poetic characters” (quoted in Levin 120) to describe and think of their world. But they did not see they were making likeness. Their figural language, taken from the human figure, named the world as they thought it really was. To them, the poetic words were literal; their ordinary world looks to us like a poetic world only in retrospect.

Catachresis is one of two types of metaphor discussed in classical rhetoric. The first type is the traditional. It involves a choice of a different term where another, usual, literal one is available. It is the metaphor that theory has almost exclusively been concerned with describing and explaining. The motivation for this type has traditionally been regarded as decorative, that is, applied, in the artistic sense, where it doesn’t belong in order to vivify or to excite the passions. To put it simply, as a non-literal

choice, it is regarded as a deviance from the ordinary term and sense. It functions to estrange at the same time as it links up to similarities in the ordinary understanding of the world.

The second type of metaphor discussed in classical rhetoric is catachresis. This type emerges to fill a gap when no term for a thought is available. Thus, it is not a choice from among options, so it can be neither regarded as, nor processed as, a deviance from ordinary language. Levin quotes Vico: “Catachresis is thus metaphor by default”—compare Quintillian [*Institution Oratoria*, Vol. III, 303] where he says, “As an example of a necessary metaphor [i.e., catachresis], I may quote the following usage in vogue with peasants when they call a vinebud *gemma*, a gem (what other term was there they could use?)” (121). Catachresis grabs an image to fill in a conceptual gap in language. Furthermore, Levin points out, “as Vico describes the origin and nature of the tropes they are all catachretic in their motivation” (121). In Vico’s understanding, all the tropes originally functioned as nondeviant; they were the means of conceiving the world where no language for the conception existed before. Language was thus invented out of catachretic expressions.⁴ Only in retrospect do we regard tropes as “poetic.” When there is no choice, “tropes *are* the proper mode.” Catachretic metaphors “become conceptual metaphors only from the perspective of subsequent metaphysical development” (123). Vico’s evidence for the catachretic development of language is the lexicon:

It is noteworthy that in all languages the greater part of the expressions relating to inanimate things are formed by metaphors from the human body and its parts and from the human senses and passions. Thus, head for top or beginning; the brow and shoulders of a hill; the eyes of needles and of potatoes; mouth for any opening; the lip of a cup or pitcher; the teeth of a rake, saw, comb; . . . the flesh of fruits; a vein of rock or mineral; the blood of grapes for wine; the bowels of the earth. Heaven or sea smiles; the wind whistles; the waves murmur; a body groans under a great weight. The farmers of Latium used to say the fields were thirsty, bore fruit, were swollen with grain; and our rustics speak of plants making love, vines growing mad, resinous trees weeping (quoted in Levin 123, 24; from Vico 405).

If early humans did not think that the world was separate from them, but alive and bodied like them, then all of these metaphors are catachretic. A river has a mouth because it is a being. A mountain has a foot because it is a being.

Following Vico’s view of early metaphysics, Levin considers these terms as literal; early on the world was thought in human terms. But Levin

notices that two kinds of catachretic functions appear in Vico's discussion. Lexical terms are projected from the human body to name things in the world. These, he says, would be considered catachretic even by classical rhetoric. But another type insists that nature also functions as a body—pregnant, giving birth, feeling thirst, love, madness, and sorrow. This second type would be considered decorative, not catachretic by classical rhetoric. If these of the second type are catachretic, as Vico and Levin claim, then the world was conceived and thought of as exactly what was said (124).

When we read trauma accounts, at least sometimes the tropical language seems to mean what it literally says and the trauma world seems most accurate in tropical terms. Why? I suggest that the five features of the trauma world I noted earlier as central to this issue correspond to features of Vico's view of early human thinking and language development. First (feature 1): Disruption of and discontinuity with everyday ordinary reality with regard to bodily and psychic experience create a situation of lack of terms for actors and acts, like the situation of early humans. The projections, however, arise from the experiencer's prior store of knowledge, and they are grabbed to stand for thought without even the organization the human body has. The tropes will thus appear radically disorganized, because they are self-referential, pieced from the person's total knowledge store. If we try to read them entirely on the basis of shared meanings and functions, we are in danger of serious misreading. Second (feature 2): Trauma is felt and known in body and psyche, and imaged in sudden tropical emergences that have to stand as literal since there was no reasoned choice of terms, no time for choice in the arational, atemporal sudden freezing in the moment. The tropes that emerge *are* the thought/feeling of the experience. Third (feature 3): A traumatic experience is one of "speechless terror." It cannot be spoken or understood as it is happening, and further, as it continues past the time of the event, it remains cognized in the literalness of its tropes. In long-term trauma of repeated threat, the individual conceives of the trauma in more tropical formations specific to each situation, thereby developing and elaborating a world where the trauma exists. The experiencer projects the entire trauma world according to her experience of it, grabbing terms for actors and acts from familiar images and contexts, but these lose their familiar meanings as they arose to serve the exigence of self-survival. Fourth (feature four): A main strategy for self-survival during trauma is to think oneself as a thing. The thought is that one *literally* is a thing. This feature is stated as a constant of traumatic experience, and it reveals that the mind is not thinking according to the ordinary world. The world is self-enclosed, without the *awareness* of doubleness, or the possibility for choice, irony, or deception. It is a literal world. To access the experiential world requires reading it literally. Fifth (feature five): The fact that the trauma world is disjoined and disparate from the ordinary world means that it cannot be communicated without bridging; but the trauma world, with its self-referential world of literal tropical

language, resists transportation into language. If speaking and writing begin, the experiencer retains partial tropical conception, or the trauma world cannot be conveyed, and transfigures some of the world into communicable terms. The trauma world is not *recognizable* from the perspective of the ordinary world, but some of its tropes can be retained as indicators of its literalness. The indicative nature of tropes offers the reader a way to think *of* the trauma world by feeling and imagining what is elicited for her through the tropes. The writer has to negotiate back and forth between the linear, temporal, and rational and the alinear, atemporal, arational experience, identifying tropes that will convey into conventional conceptual tropes, but also indicate to a reader the literalness of the lived traumatic experience. Thus, we can expect texts to retain literal tropes as indicators for reading the way the world fully was, and these may often double as familiar concept metaphors and applied (“decorative”) metaphors. But if taken literally by the reader, these metaphors are capable of eliciting the *thoughtfull*, *meaningfull* experience of the traumatic events and a fuller knowledge of the writer’s true (vs. transformed) experience.

READING TRAUMA WORLD TROPES

As I swallowed my bowl of soup, I saw in the gesture an act of rebellion and protest against Him.
And I nibbled my crust of bread.
In the depths of my heart, I felt a great void (Elie Wiesel, *Night*, p. 66).

Bread, soup—these were my whole life. I was a body. Perhaps less than that even a starved stomach. The stomach alone was aware of the passage of time (Elie Wiesel, *Night*, p. 50).

The Lager is hunger: we ourselves are hunger, living hunger. . . . The Lager, hardly dead, had already begun to decompose (Primo Levi, *Survival at Auschwitz*, p. 74, p. 158).

To support these extrapolations, I will next explore a case example of a trauma world, searching its tropes for origins, functional meanings for actors and acts, and transformations during its transference into language. The case example will give a view of how such a world develops tropically and looks, aside from and before mingling with the ordinary world through language.⁵ Then I will explore the two trauma narratives that I have quoted in the epigraphs to locate catachretic metaphors and test the gains of a literal reading.

Exploring the Trauma World: An Example. The experiencer in this case was subjected to life-threatening situations over a period of at least fifteen years, virtually her entire childhood. Because of repeated threats over a long time, and because the source agents of threat came from within the home, she created a richly elaborated trauma world that was maintained to function to contain the traumatic experience. As two psychologists who spent time in Nazi concentration camps, Victor Frankl and Bruno Bettelheim, have both said, children in these situations live under conditions like those in the concentration camps: they have no way out, the whole of their being is under threat of destruction, and they maintain the world of the traumatic experience, and maintain it separately, disjoined from the everyday world (see also Cohen 527, 28, partially quoted above). Because the two worlds are radically disparate in actions, expectations, roles, relationships, morality, order, and predictability, figures of actors and acts look nonordinary and disordered. As the trauma world emerges from the single constant of threat, and is maintained in the presence of continuing threat, some figures, particularly those standing in for the threatening presence, appear as pervasive entities throughout the world.

I will draw a few, illustrative examples from the subject's visual and written productions (drawings, journals, notes, poems, prose). These are supplemented by discussion with the subject's therapist.

In one incident (not the first), at age five, the subject's grandfather cut open her arm, probably with a butcher knife, along the inside of the elbow, missing a major artery by an eighth of an inch. The wound exposed the bone and healed to a four-inch scar that remained large, pink, and ragged for more than a decade. The incident took place in the garage, which doubled as the grandfather's carpentry shop, where the knives for butchering hogs raised on the farm were kept. The trauma world contained a figure of a large snake, blood-red in color. Its figural action was swallowing a previous succession of minor figures, some which were human figures and some of which were non-human figures, whose function had been to protect against the threat. Swallowing these figures was also an act of protection: it meant getting them safely away from threat and keeping them hidden. As the figures all stood in for the subject, they were the means of imaging the nearly failed but finally successful effort to keep the threat from harming the subject. The figures and their figural acts stood in for the subject, but the grandfather appeared as a large, dark, looming solid shape—a thing emptied of "grandfather." This shape—a thing, but motive—experientially displaced and stood in the place of the actual grandfather. This shape was the figural thought of the pervasive sense of threat, it was not confined to the body shape but suffused mist-like the entire scene. And nothing existed *but* the scene. Everything else was a response to this pervasive encompassing sense.

When the subject began to examine the figures, she thought the snake was taken from the garden of Eden story, with which she was quite familiar with that age. Reading from the Biblical story back onto the trauma

world, she arrived at this interpretation, just as we might: the figure was a reversal of the destructive snake, engaged in the act of protection against a family member's authority. Because the Eden snake objected to God's command and survived, and the humans in the story hid from God, it seemed a likely parallel. However, this could not be the meaning within the experience of a five-year-old, who has not reached the age of self-reflection and moral development (which is about age ten). In addition, this gives only a rational meaning; it does not give the "thought" of the experience itself. In checking this incident with her mother, the subject learned that during the previous summer her father had attempted to kill with an axe a snake that had made its home (its hole) by the entrance to the house. He failed on the first attempt, only cutting half way through the neck. For days, until he completed the act, the snake kept appearing partway out of the whole with its bleeding cut neck. The mother reported that the subject had been so upset the snake was being killed and showing itself that she cried for days. This snake is a more likely source for the figure in the wounding incident. The snake had been deeply cut by a family member using an everyday instrument, and the subject reacted with unconsolable crying, as the subject would almost certainly have done after being wounded. The subject's arm was bloody and deeply cut, and held a white bone which had been unseen and secret until the wounding. The actual snake wounding and the subject's wounding share key likenesses. However, the figural snake was blood-red in color, pervasive through and through, and the secret space inside it for hiding was protective, just as the actual snake's hole had appeared to the girl as both holding a secret and protecting the snake from further wounding, at least for a while. Of course, this kind of imagined protection works only if believed to *be* literally real, which it was as psychically conceived, internal trauma world.

I bring in this incident because it demonstrates how the figures in a trauma world may be mixed or fused with personal history, how easily they can be misread, and how inadequately they may capture the thought of the trauma world. The figural snake enabled the incident to be thought, and it *was* its thought. From within the trauma world, the subject had insisted to the therapist that the snake was a snake, not her, and that the shape was not her grandfather, but only looked like him. The snake was not blood, but was the color of blood. Swallowing was also a literal act. In other words, the trauma world is one of literal sense—it is catachretic. There are no substitute words within the world, they are literal, and they require us to enter the literalness if we are to grasp the experience as it was for the subject. The process is a piecemeal projection from the internalized mental representation of the everyday world of personal history and context and of cultural story onto the trauma world, rather than projection of a whole systematic sense of human body, as in Vico's examples. The suddenness and radical atemporality, arationality, and nonlinearity of trauma makes inevitable the process of grabbing piecemeal whatever is available from wherever for figural thought.

In a later incident, the subject's father held her at rifle-point while she held her pet cat in her arms. The father kept demanding she put the cat down, and when she finally did, he killed the cat right at her feet with one shot. The father disposed of the cat, so that she could not bury it in the cat cemetery as she always did with favorite cats that died. This incident happened at age ten, and, in the trauma world, the subject appears in the shape of a ten-year-old, dark and transparent and mist-like, taking up the very sense of space. The place is grave-like though not a grave; and the figure is "dead," which, when asked, she said means "not feeling." The figure is nameless, alive, but not moving, and not able to be shot because it is "dead." This figure served as an act of protection against intolerable feeling and also against the possibility of being shot herself. A tombstone in the scene is also an active, animate figure. It is made of stone, but it is made of heart: it figures the thought of memory of the cat, which didn't have an actual burial. In addition, it is fused with the subject: it is a girl, it is the thought of the subject's own heart turned to stone, paradoxically both unable to die and "dead" (unfeeling). And probably it figures as the target at which the rifle was aimed, for the girl held her cat in her arms at the heart while the rifle was pointed at her. A stone can neither feel, nor die. The feelings behind the figures were identified as terror, rage, grief, sadness, consolation, and safety. The world was pervaded by the sound of the rifle shot, coming in from the great interminable surrounding distance.

EXPLORING FIGURATION IN WRITTEN ACCOUNTS: TWO EXAMPLES

There are no edges to the subject's trauma world, just as there are none in the Lager world of Wiesel's and Levi's experiences. The trauma world is all that exists—a universe, atemporal and nonlinear. The entire world is animate, an active pervading threat that is a universe: its figures actively seek to annihilate. In addition, they work across domains, as they must take figures from the everyday world, the only one available, across into the trauma world. The figures standing in for the experience are gestures of the sense of the world—sensory thought, as Ricoeur would say. When writing the world entirely from the trauma world perspective, it cannot be understood, except by others who know before hand what such a world is. In the case drawn from above, the subject wrote poetry from the trauma world perspective; given a poem titled "Cats," only one of fifteen readers (all of whom were poets) understood what was happening. That reader was familiar with traumatic experience. (This is like other ineffable experiences: readers who already know the experience recognize and read the world based on prior knowledge. They know what the indicators mean.) All fifteen, however, said it was "intense," "powerful"; they grasped the sense of the experience itself, if not the facts. And, they understood the few lines that made a plot and figure relation to a Biblical story. This portion was not in the trauma world, but had been inserted to accomplish a meaning

shared by ordinary readers. With two other texts, and a different set of five readers, comments were of two kinds: the reader cannot “enter” the text, or cannot “exit” it. The self-enclosed, self-referential nature made it inaccessible, except that all the reader said the texts had a powerful and overwhelming sense of terror. The two aspects that readers grasped—terror and an inability to understand what was happening—are truer to what traumatic *experience* is than are bare, objective facts.

But readers generally want a distance, and they want events in a way they *can* understand. The felt sense and the frustration of not being able to understand may be a key part of the experience, but it has to be toned down in degree and proportion in a communicable text. In addition, writing requires time, sequence, reflection, reasoning, verbal syntax: that is, it *has* to become mostly ordinary world and ordinary language. The trauma world appears, in at least some of its figuration, and we can read it if we can locate and suffer the frustration and other feeling and thought so as not to cut off its literal sense. Consider again Wiesel’s metaphor, “the soup tasted of corpses.” Take it literally, try to think of that world in which dead bodies are eaten, and tasted. Try to taste the taste of corpses. We most likely recoil from what may have initially passed us by, or flickered not quite into awareness. In the ordinary world, in that world ordered to promote human life, we are *expected* to recoil. Think also that there might be a world in which the soup, indeed, *did* taste of corpses. This might have been literally true in Wiesel’s experience, in the heightened sensory experience of trauma. It is the effects of trauma in the body and on (in) consciousness that the metaphor is capable of eliciting. The metaphor also stands in for the literalness of dead human bodies pervading all aspects of the experience: dead bodies are an abstraction, they are the specific, actual result of the living, active destroyer that is the camp. It is bodily fear and revulsion, the absence of spirit, and moral shame. It is to eat death, to eat each other to survive. But in the moment, it is the eating of corpses. It is all there is to eat. Wiesel must eat, to survive is to eat. But the figure is tamed for us by Wiesel just before we get to this point. He has heard someone ask that frequent refrain in the camp, “Where is God now?” And Wiesel writes, “And I heard a voice within me answer him: Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging there on the gallows.” (62, Wiesel’s ellipsis). The “He” is God transferred into a courageous rebel youth who had been one of a few brave saboteurs of the camp’s electric power station and who was hanged that day, and no one had lifted a hand to stop it. Certainly the death of God, the death of justice, the death of innocence and courage are indicated through the metaphor. Reversals are gestured: the Seder meal’s memory of emancipation, and the Christian Eucharist’s enspiriting, life-renewing and forgiving of sin (a few pages later Wiesel mentions Calvary) are turned toward indicating forced imprisoning, deadening, a spiritless way of surviving. Another degree of the destruction of the human person, another piece sheared away. One of the most important pieces of identity. Soup consumed in order for the body to continue.

Perhaps these meanings linked with the ordinary world *are* more important than the sense of the world itself. Or is that a separation that can't be made? In other words, can the ordinary world meanings be unhooked or ignored without changing or losing the sense of the trauma world? What happens if we do this? I think we lose the sense of "speechless terror," the defining aspect of traumatic experience. It is easy to do, because the account is made of words and we readers are at a distance, a safe distance where the threat of annihilation can't reach us. But if we take even some of the metaphors as literal, we begin to close the distance, we try to "think of" what it would be, that world with no names for things and actions, with only image for sight, taste, touch, sound, smell; with only these now rising in our bodies and starkly filling our minds.

Where are the metaphors that engage specifically this literal sense? Some pervade texts, occurring throughout, and collect to indicate the trauma world's felt sense. In the context of these recurring metaphors, others may acquire literalness as aspects or parts of the recurring metaphors. Throughout *Survival at Auschwitz*, Primo Levi regards the Lager as an animate being. It is the whole world, no one can see beyond it or know beyond it, and it is actively working in every aspect and function to annihilate the prisoners piece by piece—social identities, intellect, reasoning, beliefs, body, and spirit (hope, courage, dignity). The Lager is an organism; it devours; even the sky, ground, and the weather are aligned: "Dawn came on us like a betrayer; it seemed as though the new sun rose as an ally of our enemies to assist in our destruction" (16); "what happened to the others, to the women, to the children, to the old men . . . the night swallowed them up, purely and simply" (20); "the sun sets in a tumult of fierce, blood-red clouds" (29). And the sky threatens, even a first warm sunny spring day—the "good day" (subject and title of a chapter)—turns on them, destroying their sense of beauty, hope, and a new beginning, for it is stark reminder that they have none of these. Near the end of the book, after the Nazis had fled, the Lager begins to "decompose," and the prisoners are figured as worms, evidence of life that assists decay. These kinds of metaphors aggregate to suggest an applied metaphor, but if they are also read as literal, we have the sense of the world as it is in trauma, encompassing, alive, one being who acts "purely and simply" to destroy.

But there is another set of metaphors which insist that we take them literally, and they help to signal that those others might also be meant so. "But how could one imagine not being hungry? The Lager *is* hunger: we ourselves are hunger, living hunger" (74). The italics tell us to take the metaphor literally. Hunger is the single reality in that dark space that has no edges. It is everything, all feeling, thought, sense, the whole reality. *Night* has a similar passage: "I took little interest in anything except my daily plate of soup and my crust of bread. Bread, soup,—these were my whole life. I was a body. Perhaps less than that even: a *starved* stomach. The stomach alone was aware of the passage of time" (50). If we read "I am a body" as a literal metaphor, it doesn't *stand in for* a part of the whole

person, it *is* the whole person. It can't be an applied metaphor, nor a literal non-metaphoric statement. Rather it stands in for the true experience, the sensory thought of that moment in the Lager world, which is known to have already destroyed everything else. Then Levi zooms in closer, thinks further: "Perhaps less even than that: a *starved* stomach," annihilated, except for that. Stomach is alive, it is the whole being, desiring, conscious, knowing, unsatisfied, fearing extinction. As literal, the metaphor indicates the sensory thought of that moment. It says—This is how it is, purely and simply—try to think of this. When we begin to read it across the ordinary world domain as applied metaphor (and we must do this, but not only this), we have already begun to lose actual experience; the thought-figure fills the consciousness, it cannot be reasoned. It makes a great difference whether we stop first to absorb the metaphor's literal indications.

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this essay, I suggested that readers, scholars, and teachers of trauma writings need to know what traumatic experience is and what it entails for reading trauma experience more accurately and meaningfully. I suggested that narrative's linear movement and ordinary world language and organizations enable communication, but their price is the loss or reduction of the sense of the traumatic world. I then suggested that the trauma world might be retained, at least in some texts at some places, in certain catachretic metaphors, which indicate the speechless terror itself, and that these indicators collect to indicate the "thought" of the trauma world. Finally, following Levin's way of reading, I explored how catachretic metaphors might be located and "conceived of." This way of reading ushers us into trauma worlds, the experience of a person, to permit a fuller knowing of the "what" the person has to communicate. Since traumatic experience has major features common to all experiencers—results of annihilating threat and dealing with threat—it is one of humanity's ineffable experiences. Like Wordsworth writing a sublime world, experiencers of trauma who survive it return, and some of them tell of it. I think we should listen, we should try "to think of" their world—Levin says we have a "duty" to "conceive of" metaphoric worlds (80).

But in addition, this way of reading has implications for reading other kinds of writing. For example, the individuality of persons researchers, such as Christina Haas, ask us to seek and preserve in our studies of student writing might be read in the particularity and aggregation of even concept metaphors. But attempts to express what students have no words for may have catachretic features. Homi Bhabha has suggested that all hybrid discourse is catachretic. And for historiography: A central dilemma is that, as Hayden White puts it, "the aporias of temporality . . . must be spoken about in the idiom of symbolic discourse rather than that of logical or scientific discourse." While narrative has its own symbolic imaginary (plot) laid on events, the temporality of all human experience is

always highly figurative. Actual experience of time is “‘within-time-ness’ . . . the only experience of temporality human beings can know” (148). Trauma experience is an erasure of temporality, in which thought is “without-time-ness.” The symbolic imaginary is plotless, cleared of that field, making it more possible to see ways we might remake our thinking—our collective cultural plots—in new terms. It might have occurred to the savvy reader somewhere during this essay that many of the root metaphors Lakoff and Turner discuss are entirely inapplicable to trauma worlds: e.g., Life is a journey, Death is a deliverer, Death is a departure, Time flows, Time is money, Life is light, Life is a fluid. While metaphors, in the theories of deviance, are thought to expand the ordinary world, trauma worlds, like sublime worlds, don’t expand it, they resist its assimilation. They ask for a different, not an extended, perspective. To bring the trauma world *into* the everyday ordinary world would require such a reorganizing of the world’s core that to do so would render the ordinary world unrecognizable. It would constitute a different world. That is one reason it is so difficult to read these worlds, why we recoil and resist, and why we don’t understand well their terrible costs. For while these writers detail the “facts” of the events, it is the psychic and other human costs that are more damaging and that stay with their bearers for the long-term after the body is healed. And the terrible non-physical costs are why we may also want to exercise caution in taking student readers too fully into trauma worlds.

NOTES

1. For an excellent elucidation of the tension between metonymy and metaphor as historiographic method, see Maura B. Nelson’s excellent and extensive analysis, “Metaphoric History: Narrative and New Science in the Work of F.W. Maitland.”

2. For instance, every essay in the newly-added section on terrorism in Lynn Z. Bloom’s reader, *The Essay Connection*, Seventh Edition, is an analysis of cultural concept metaphors. Those writers who are exposing them to view, argue we need new concepts. And that is the problem: how do we, as a social/political group of many many millions, discover and acquire a new core concept? These concepts lie deep under our language, motivating our ability to see, think, use language, make meaning, and act.

3. A good demonstration of how concept metaphors yield meaning in poetic worlds is Lakoff and Turner’s *More Than Cool Reason*. Their interpretation of poems shows how we access poetic worlds, but the result of stopping there, as they do, is a felt flatness resulting from domesticating the metaphors in resolving them entirely by reference to the ordinary world. This way of reading misses the strangeness, the difference that poetic worlds sometimes ask us to enter. The concept metaphors *enable* us to enter, they act as bridges, but we are asked to look around beyond them. As Levin suggests, we are asked to think of the world itself. Certainly in a poet

like Emily Dickinson, from whose work Lakoff and Turner provide many examples of their way of reading, tame reading loses Dickinson's indicative states of feeling and consciousness that her best poetry attempts to communicate.

4. Lakoff's and Lakoff and Johnson's work on metonymy and metaphor, respectively, support this insight. They assert that these tropes underlie the "world we live by" as root concepts from which thought and language about our world are generated. In their view, the origins of our ordering of the everyday world are evident in a small set of root concepts and can be read from "satellite" metaphors (Levin's term, 5), which are the so-called dead metaphors (though not dead for Lakoff and Johnson since we still live by them) that indicate we think of argument as war, time as money, theories as buildings, and so on.

5. I would like to express my gratitude to the subject (client) for giving me permission to have full access to this case. I would like to acknowledge the assistance of the therapist on this case for helping me understand trauma in general, as well as this specific trauma world; my gratitude to her also. She affirms that in her experience with survivors of ongoing severe abuse in childhood, where the perpetrators were family members or other close caretakers, the response to the trauma experience has the same kind of figural nature and workings as in this case, although the internal worlds vary in richness and tone. In this case, the wealth of resources the subject had acquired made possible the unusual richness of figures: the subject had heard Bible stories read at least weekly in church and Sunday school, for certain periods of time daily in the home; and she learned to read on her own by age five. The therapist, who wishes to remain anonymous, is also a researcher, professor, and former editor of a major professional journal.

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CHAPTER 12

BETWEEN TWO CIRCLES: “HOST” AS METAPHOR OF IDENTITY IN THE LANGUAGES OF INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION

ROSEMARY WINSLOW

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)

I was a stranger and you took me in. (Matthew 25:3 5)

Logan Circle's long support for . . . programs to serve the poor may prove to be its undoing, as we become the favorite “host” neighborhood. (Connie Maffin, President, Logan Circle Neighborhood Association)

Defining homelessness is an ethical and political act, not just an analytic one. (Berlin and McAllister, *Brookings Review*)

INTRODUCTION: HOSTING THE HOMELESS

The scene, today: Downtown Washington, D.C., two traffic circles linked by one long block of Vermont Avenue that boasts Mercedes and mostly elegant upper middle class townhouses. A small church and the Mary McLeod Bethune Houses, both brownstones nestle unobtrusively among them. On the northeastern end of this block is Logan Circle, a neat, grassy park surrounded by once (and future?)-elegant townhouses and apartment buildings three to eight stories in height, half of them boarded up. At the other end of the block is N Street, where an eight-story building, under construction, stretches west to 14th Street. It will house at low rental rates, for a one-year limit, families who are making the transition from homelessness back into the class of working poor. On either end of this block are apartment houses ranging from eight to twelve stories. On the south side rises the back of the large nineteenth century buildings of Luther Place Memorial Church, which occupy the entire triangular block, fronting on Thomas Circle and extending between Vermont and 14th to N Street.

The site of the transitional housing construction used to be the church parking lot. Except for another large church on an adjacent arc of the traffic circle, the area surrounding the church is largely devoted to high-rise hotels and apartment living space, edging the business district on the west and south. Surrounding Thomas Circle to the north, between and beyond Logan Circle, is a mix of run-down, boarded-up, and elegant homes, interspersed with small businesses that serve the daily household needs of residents.

In large part, identities are drawn from location: physical, historical, and relational. It is language that mediates between these aspects, specifying the meaning of who we are with respect to our location. By way of language, the physical nature of the spaces we inhabit is imbued with meaning and value always subjectively. We can only see on our own terms, but this does not mean we are locked into certain ways of seeing. It is possible to change the terms and the view.

One of the great values of creative writers to a culture is that they open up new potentials in the language they use. That it is possible for a group of people to formulate and use—hence see and live by—a new language is a matter of the record of history and needs no argument. What I want to pursue here is the study of a single case in which a new formulation emerged in one group that ultimately clashed with a neighboring group in the same society. I am interested in how the languages developed, how they functioned to include and exclude, what caused communication to proceed and break down. From a close study of the nature and use of the language of identity in this one case, we can come, perhaps, a bit closer to understanding what happens in general.

People use language to tell themselves, and others, who they are. Language gives meaning to place, circumstance, fact: not altering the reality of these, but interpreting these according to the points of view language makes available. Thus we see the world in terms of ourselves, as in some way related to our stances—our positions—in it. We know ourselves by our ties, our lines of meaningful connection. The lines of identity that language draws are necessarily grounded in part in the physical locality occupied—“we” are the people who inhabit this space. Those who are outside of it are not “us.” The inclusionary and exclusionary use of language draw circles that serve to bind in solidarity and to protect. And as in all its instances, language which specifies identity is partly bound and partly free: the resources of a particular language (*langue*) make available to its speakers a variety of points of view, and from this array speakers may choose, as I have elaborated elsewhere, following a large body of theory and research in linguistics. Times of crisis may provide the occasion for developing new points of view, perhaps spurred by the necessity for individual or group survival. Language is constantly changing, helped along most rapidly when there is contact with a group using another language. Where language is the same and where it is different helps to tell us where we belong. Where we share a language, we are less distinct.¹ Within the same linguistic community, metaphors are the chief means by which deep,

often tacit, values and beliefs are held; the metaphors we live by distinguish who belongs to these communities of value (Lakoff and Johnson).

When two circles using clashing metaphors overlap, efforts to communicate toward reaching consensus will at some point be hindered by the circumscribing of each group's identificatory metaphoric ground.² When decisions have to be made as to how to deal with a situation that affects both circles, the clash of perspectives may inhibit or forestall reaching consensus. When metaphors grounding the points of view are, or arise from, those of the core identity, the advantage of the core metaphor—to advance dialogue, ground dialectic, and guide praxis within a group—becomes a hindrance in attempting to reconcile differences across group-boundaries. In instances where the ground of understanding is not held in common, dialogue will be troubled, dialectic impossible, praxis different: there is talk “at” but not “with,” and an agreement as to taking action cannot be reached through talk. The terms of truth, value, and belief can be neither clarified nor reinterpreted without a shared base of belief as to truth and value.

In the case of the two groups defined by the two traffic circles, group identity formed and became polarized around different senses of the metaphor “host.” The congregation of Luther Place Memorial Church emerged in the late 1960s into a new identity, guided by a vision whose central concept was hosting the stranger. The vision was a response to the crisis of increasing street crime and numbers of homeless outside the church building. In the mid-1970s, the Logan Circle Neighborhood Association formed in response to the same crisis; but its vision was to bring the neighborhood back to its previous middle class status—which meant attracting and keeping a population who could and would repair and maintain the properties—for reasons of safety, aesthetics, and economics.

At the heart of difference in vision was a belief and value regarding fear, which was figured in praxis according to the host metaphor. In the Luther Place version, fear was to be overcome with trust—the stranger was to be welcomed inside and given rest and replenishment. In the Logan Circle version, fear remained in place, seen as a protective value. The homeless were considered as parasites on the “host” of the neighborhood, as the president of the Association has put it (Maffin, col. 3). Following the biological sense of the metaphor, the homeless were regarded as a destructive presence, feeding on its resources, threatening the health and safety of the host, perhaps its very life (Maffin; Goodstein; “Boarding House”). This view has existed in the popular imagination for at least the past two decades, certainly in large cities, which have had to cope with a sudden increase in the numbers of homeless people, beginning in the mid-60s with the emptying of mental hospitals (Goodstein; De Witt; Dear). Recent research contradicting this belief (Dear; Snow, Baker, and Anderson; Fisher; Berlin and McAllister) has had no effect on popular attitudes. Such research, though available, did not enter into arguments made by the Logan Circle group. If it had, it would have destroyed the

concept of the neighborhood as one of host to parasite. In fact, some research demonstrates that not only is violent crime not related to homelessness but that property values do not fall, and actually sometimes rise as a result of well-run shelters coming into an area (Dear). The point of contention that began in 1990 was the proposed building of the transitional housing structure: Luther Place planned to go the limit of height permitted in the District (approximately eleven to twelve stories) in order to house as many people as possible. Logan Circle objected on the grounds that the building was out of character for the neighborhood, even though eight and twelve story apartment buildings existed on both ends of the block. The building was consistently viewed as presenting a grave danger to the character of the community, though research results predicted a positive effect, if there was any at all.

That the metaphor is held in place despite reliable evidence that contradict it is a testament to fear, understood complexly as entering physical, psychological and identificatory levels. Holding to a particular metaphor means staying in the same frame of reference; letting an identificatory metaphor go represents a threat to the self and initiates a journey of self-examination and re-, or new, discovery of identity. Metaphors order what might otherwise be seen and experienced as chaotic. In order to see how metaphors of new identity can emerge and guide both a group and its individuals, I will turn now to the development of the host metaphor at Luther Place.

The historical scene. Go into the church on any Sunday morning and you can read the weekly bulletin proclaim Luther Place's founding after the War Between the States as a symbol for healing North and South. In the 1870s, Thomas Circle was the edge of the suburbs; countryside with farms stretched north, through Logan Circle and beyond. By the last decade of the century, both circles and their environs were built up with middle class homes, ranging from small and serviceable to large, ornate, and well-appointed. By the 1950s, their middle class owners began to leave for the then newly-emerging suburbs outside the city. 1968 saw rioting and burning nearby, a few blocks north on 14th Street. Before and after this upheaval, the area was noisy and unsafe, teeming with drug traffickers, prostitutes, and homeless. Many homes were empty, serving to attract those who had little or nothing in the way of economic resources. Some of the homeless had had homes in the neighborhood, and continued to reside there, though unhoused.

Early Sunday mornings you could have witnessed church members policing the lawns and walks around Luther Place for needles, broken bottles, and condoms, hundreds scattered during the weekend activities. Nightly, you would find dozens of people sleeping on the grounds and steps while others plied their illegal trades among them.

These conditions constituted a crisis, an unacceptable situation, a point at which a decisive action was judged necessary if the church was to continue to exist. Lengthy deliberation ensued; though too extensive to

detail here, the result was a decision to open the doors of the church at night to shelter and feed within its walls those who were sleeping unhoused and unfed outside. This letting of the outsider into the space for rest and replenishment was initially based on the text of the seven acts of mercy, especially Matthew 25:35: “I was a stranger and you took me in” (in modern translations, “welcomed me”) (Steinbruck, April 17).

The traditional interpretation of this rule of treating those in need as if they were Jesus sustained the first dozen years of service work. In the early 1980s, the church sanctuary was overflowing into hallways and other available spaces as refugees from the wars in El Salvador added large numbers to the city’s own homeless. During a town meeting of the church membership, the pastor, Rev. John Steinbruck, argued that there were no “illegal” people in the biblical theology—only travelers and sojourners. By this time, passages in the New Testament such as the one in Matthew were being seen in light of Old Testament hospitality practice, as expressed and transmitted through such passages as the one from Leviticus in the epigraph of this paper, and narratives like the visit by two angels disguised as strangers to Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 18). Jesus was seen as the archetypal homeless one, a journeyer, born in a stable, who renounced the stability of home and livelihood to travel the countryside bearing the message of his ministry (Steinbruck, April 28, 1996).

A role for the Church as welcomer of the stranger was being developed from the late 60s on by theologians in response to contemporary social conditions. The most influential of these on Luther Place was Henry Nouwen, who, in his first book on the subject, published in 1971, draws on Old and New Testament hospitality practice. He sees the church’s identity as that of a “people of faith” who overcome their fear through trust in God to be “witnesses to love” by welcoming the sojourner. The practice entails a double-edged tension. The stranger might be a murderer or a thief. On the other hand he might be in disguise—God or an angel, a gift-bringer (as in the encounter and wrestling with Jacob, or the visit to Abraham and Sarah). This idea was held generally through the Mediterranean region; for instance, one can see the hospitality practice of the Greek peoples laid out in Homer’s *Odyssey*. Following Nouwen’s thinking, Luther Place deepened its concept as “people of faith” in contemporary times who hosted the homeless as stranger, who in turn were viewed as offering a potential gift to the community as a whole and its members individually. The gift was termed “salvation”—a reminder that all human beings are sojourners on the earth, which is a temporary home given, not earned, as life itself is merely, importantly, given. Bringing the stranger in for rest and replenishment was viewed as a modest return of mercy, of which a much greater measure had been, and continued to be, meted to some but due to all. The gift was seen as the opportunity for salvation from spiritual pride, and the opportunity to act on the responsibility to the neighbor mandated to the Hebrew people first, later to the Christian community through Jesus’s repeated reiteration of the mandate. More specifically the crisis outside the church doors meant

that the congregation had to “face its racism” and “middle-classism,” its tendency to be “in love with itself, full of itself, bent on itself” (Steinbruck, April 17 and 28, 1996). The immediate crisis thus served to bring to the surface a heretofore unacknowledged disjunction between actual and ideal valuing of human beings. The recognition and acknowledgement of the greater spiritual problem brought forward from under the immediate physical and psychological crisis served to enable the community not only to tolerate but to welcome the difficult tension of its flooded sanctuary. The “guests” became a “gift”; the “problem” became a “solution.”

The entailment of this unstable hierarchy in the host/guest relationship was itself viewed through the metaphor as of value; the host could become the guest in virtue of his receiving a gift, the guest became the host in virtue of his very presence inside the community, which is regarded as a gift. The hierarchy of insider/outsider, “have”/“have not” is not destroyed; rather, there is a shifting back and forth so that giving and receiving may occur on both sides, and for the duration of the relationship. This insures that the frame of reference is never closed; it remains open to the search for gift exchange. In this context, the church-as-host receives gifts on the level of the spiritual: in practice, the benefits additionally arrive in the emotional and psychological areas since those involved in this practice of hospitality open themselves to acquiring for themselves a new life-practice, which can only be gotten through experience. I have described this process of coming to know in terms of my own involvement in it (Winslow, in *Civil Society and Social Reconstruction*), and how literary reading and writing can impel an opening of viewpoints in a similar way (Winslow, “Style As Paradigm”; Winslow, *Civil Society and Social Reconstruction*). Knowledge of life-practice is too complex to be laid out in conceptual terms; indeed, all of its knowing cannot even be captured in linguistic terms, which is why metaphor is so important—it can get closer than any other means, especially as extensively presented and represented in works of art. Conceptualization of life-practice cannot be accomplished, except on severely reductive terms. Understanding remains severely limited to such an extent that it can hardly be recognized as understanding at all.³ Rather, concepts can bring us to the door of a new perspective; only living them ushers in fuller knowledge of them. To return to the point above: the “host” metaphor thus opened to the community a direction for proceeding with a new identity, one drawn from Biblical history and extended into the present and future, one which re-enabled the inclusion of the outsider, one which has an inherent creative openness to permit a grounding for dealing with future crises and decisions. The instability in the metaphor fit the newly valued instability suffered by the community by living out its metaphor. What had been a threat and detriment was transformed through the vision of the host metaphor to an invaluable asset.

And it is exactly this instability, requiring opening the eyes to see beyond already-known perspectives, that makes it difficult to live out. And the fact that the new perspectives cannot be seen except in the living out—

that those not in the perspective cannot share the terms of definition—means that communication cannot proceed outside the circle along the lines of arguments that derive from this version of the host metaphor. As the Logan Circle Neighborhood Association's vision for the community desired to at least limit the numbers of homeless in its self-defined territory, which overlapped with Luther Place's, its terms of exclusion seized the biological version of the metaphor, punning on it as it threw it back at the Church membership (Maflin, see epigraph above). This parodic rhetorical act serves to define the major reason for solidarity within its own community; its basis for existing as a group is to resist whatever is believed by the majority to constitute a threat to it and to promote whatever is seen as a good. At the same time, the act serves to signal the breakdown of dialogue between the two groups and to recognize the stand-off as existent in the clashing complex of values gathered into and symbolized by the metaphor. The use of the same word but different, opposing senses, functions rhetorically to mask the differences by presenting an illusion that the same terms are being employed.

But before the breakdown in communication occurred, the two circles lived peaceably next to each other, if not entirely easily. Each held its own vision, and lived it out on its own terms. The clash was spurred by the Church's acquisition in 1990, after ten years of work, of a \$5 million dollar grant, federal line-item budget money to be administered through the Department of Housing and Urban Development, toward the building of a \$7 million eleven-story transitional housing structure along the block of N Street behind the church on the site of its parking lot. It was the increase in the numbers of homeless that was at issue, an advancement of the perceived threat further into the territory considered by the Association to belong to Logan Circle. One of the benefits of language is that two groups of people can try to work out their differences in discourse instead of erupting into violence or solidifying positions into cold war, which is a state of being inherently and unstably on the edge of eruption. Initial discourse exchanges were brief; there could be no consensus for the reasons described above: the grounding metaphors of the groups' respective identities could not support dialogue, because the languages developed from different (the metaphoric) starting points.

If a chief benefit of language is its potential as a channel for resolving differences, another chief benefit is that language makes possible the system of laws and courts in a democracy, the potential for recourse when differences remain unresolved. At this time, a practice of neighborhood associations' filing complaints of zoning violations against organizations that operated shelters had begun nationwide (Dear). Tactics replaced attempts at dialogue, as associations began to ask that shelters be reclassified from "boarding houses" to Community-Based Residences Facilities (CBRFs). I will not go into the rise of these facilities as they came to be defined legally, nor the fines levied against Luther Place on existing shelters with legal permits; what I want to point out is that the move of the

contention into the system of laws changes the arena and terms of discussion. As Gadamer has pointed out (see McCarthy's discussion, 170), decisions made by entities charged with carrying out or interpreting law must base their judgments on the canonical texts' claims to truth and meaning. Statements made within the civil group or exchanged between the groups were derived from definitions of identity grounded in the metaphor that encapsulates the group values and beliefs. Statements made with respect to legal matters must originate in and proceed from the meanings of language encoded in and from the procedures for interpreting legal texts. The arena is no longer the "two circles," which are free to adopt and use their own identities and languages. The arena is now the shared one of the society of which the two circles are a part and which both have agreed, as part of the society as a whole, to accept as arbiter and safeguard of rights of those within its larger, encompassing circle. In this arena, dialectic moves along the definitions and according to procedures as these can be determined to be normative in their ordinary sense in the canonical texts and as reinterpreted in contemporary terms. Neither individual nor transcendental values have a bearing, except insofar as they intersect with the canonical (legal) text. The canonical text upholds traditional, normative values of the whole society. The aim of interpretation is "transmission, not the criticism, not the disinterested presentation of traditional beliefs and norms." New interpretations are "to be mediated with or applied to present circumstances" (McCarthy 229).

Thus, the origination of vision, that is point of view, begins in the traditional perspectives (values and beliefs) as encoded in authoritative texts. It is directed toward stability; its sights are set on maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, it is sensitive to changes in the society's understanding of its values and beliefs through reinterpretation of concepts in line with alterations in the concepts themselves. Its openness to crisis situations exists at this point: in the redefinition of terms along lines of reinterpretation of older concepts of what is true, good, and worthy (of value). The sense of stability through time is maintained, and with it the sense of identity of the whole social group as protecting and promoting the group welfare and rights along with the welfare and rights of its individual members and civil groups.

By contrast, the origination of vision in the two civil groups in this case is grounded in metaphors chosen by each respective group and shared neither by each other, nor by the society's canonical texts, nor even necessarily by the entire membership of each group. The response to crisis is oriented within the metaphors of identity, freely chosen, not encoded in canonical texts (Though Luther Place draws from its canonical texts, it does not argue canonically from them in this matter). This freedom itself confers more flexibility; but loss of stability is the price. The dilemma of the need for stability vs. the need for change in response to crisis is evident here. Civil groups can work to restrict or to extend perspectives on human freedoms and values, as well as on transcendent freedoms and values. The

language of inclusion under study here extends transcendent valuing on human life, from the most basic rights to food, rest, and home to the most transcendent values of serving, courage in the face of fear, strength to persevere through difficulty, love, humility, mercy. The language of exclusion extends these values as general principles, but restricts them within mitigating circumstances of its orientation of perceiving the homeless as parasite. Thus the language it presents in court documents refers to homeless people in shelters as “clients—not “residents” of boarding houses, which is the language of sojourn.⁴ Social responsibility is accepted in general, but assigned to other neighborhoods.⁵ As all wards in the District of Columbia were claiming in 1992, the date at which the dispute went into the court system, that they were already overburdened—each claimed more than its fair share of CBRFs—the argument is a dead-end as far as discussing outside of the court system a “fair” solution.⁶ The very language of ‘burden’ indicates the opposite of transcendent valuing along the lines of socially responsible praxis. As a concept it appears to make sense; as an argument in a practical situation it does not provide a workable response.

Just as legislative systems sometimes mediate between rights of individuals and groups who cannot agree, the direction of flow can be reversed. Individuals and groups can function to challenge existing laws, or their interpretations. The documents filed in court by Luther Place reveal this function, though always the arguments are put in terms of the bases on existing law and legal precedent. In the larger arena of understanding in which the court arguments are written, the process of appeal to court is viewed as necessary to the identity of Luther Place as a “people of faith” in a biblical tradition of working for social justice.⁷ Within the documents filed in court, the language argues for the group’s right (under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993) to practice its faith, which requires it to host the homeless. Though it cannot be argued directly to the court, the court action, as the action of hosting the homeless, is regarded as consonant with the church’s identity as a producer of “creative tension” in the face of a system that treats some of the people over whom it has power with economic injustice, here understood as insufficient means to acquire food and housing (Steinbruck, April 17, 1996). Though the practice of “creation of tension” to bring about the non-violent correction of unjust laws was developed in the U.S. in the 1950s and 1960s by civil rights activists,⁸ its practice as incorporated into contemporary views of the Christian identity as host to the stranger was developed by Walter Brueggemann in the 1980s, published in book form in 1991, just as the Luther Place and Logan Circle groups prepared to take their dispute to court.

Brueggemann worked out an argument that the identity of the Christian church, as an extension of Hebrew identity, had as its own fundamental identity not only the responsibility of hosting the stranger but of being the voice of objection to injustice and the place of socially transformative activity. He retrieves from textual scholarship an identity for

the Hebrew people as originally a group of outsiders who banded together because they were outsiders and whose laws encoded an orienting identity as one of solidarity with and voice of all who found themselves as disempowered outsiders at the far edges of the hierarchy and economic benefits of a society. Following Moshe Greenberg's, and other's, textual work on the etymology of the word "Hebrew" as located in *habiru*, Brueggeman argues for an identity of the Christian as solidarity with the outsider. The word *habiru* refers to an odd, hovering mass of unnamed humanity mentioned often in the texts of the 'insiders' as being at various times an inconvenience, a worry, and a serious threat. The *habiru* are the large mass of people who can find no right 'place' in the system, perhaps because they do not sufficiently conform, and perhaps because the community needs some outsiders for the menial functions of society. In the texts, the *habiru* are marginal people who in good times did menial work, in war times might have been hired for cannon fodder, and in bad times lived by raids and terrorism, because they did not have any approved modes of access to land, power, or even food (291,92).

Habiru indicates outsider, its own root is thought to be 'ahar': to "cross over" (292). Brueggemann interprets the Hebrew as a group of people who belong nowhere and everywhere, who, having been set outside of inclusion in even the rights to the means of basic survival, are to set themselves against the political and socio-economic system which has made them and kept them marginal. The Hebrew are thus the archetypal outsider, the challenger of the property rights of insiders on grounds that the system has not provided for all its members, and in fact keeps outsiders around to do the society's distasteful or dangerous work cheaply (292-94).

Identity as originally *habiru* places a people in solidarity with contemporary *habiru*—of whom homeless people, migrant workers, illegal immigrants working in sweatshops are some of the most marginalized of people within U.S. borders. It grounds identity as a host who was once as a people, and remains as a people, an outsider. To host the outsider is thus not only to return a measure of the mercy once given but also to be both guest and host simultaneously, a return home for the one who has no home. It is to return to the situational position of having to set oneself against the existing hierarchical system, which has not provided for all its people at all times. The host upsets the system, calling attention to its injustice and subverting economic structure by inviting the marginal population inside. The "subversion of insidedness" has three stages: (1) a cry of anguish and protest; (2) the answer to the cry by one who 'hears and answers, who enters into powerful solidarity with the outsiders'; and (3) intervention by Yahweh, who confers a new status and identity as insider—here the Church as the place of Yahweh (Brueggemann 295-98). This "place" of God in the people of God is then a transformative space in which the present is seen as now and always unstable, because its work entails the continual seeking and acting to advance the transformative community outward to cross the

borders of communities that do not share its vision and practice of social justice.

EVALUATING SPHERES OF RHETORIC: METAPHORS, DIALECTIC, AND RESPONSIBLE FREEDOM

While it may seem an easy thing to assign this vision and practice—this hope and value—to a religious category and so confine it as separate from the vision and values of democratic political states, in fact it cannot be so confined. The development of Luther Place's vision is seen by the congregation as in line with values encoded, even if then not so interpreted, during the democratic revolutions at the end of the eighteenth century. The Church is in the long line of those who work to advance social justice—the revolutionary heroes and the encoders of the original democratic vision into the Constitution, the abolitionists and women's rights advocates of the nineteenth century, and the human rights activists throughout this century.

Sorting out the lived implications over two centuries of individuals' rights to life, freedom, justice, truth, and the pursuit of happiness embodied in our national ideal terms is too large a task for this paper. Charles Taylor offers an analysis and critique of the terms' lived embodiment as they have developed through the double-edged valuing of the individual over the past two centuries. But two points are important to the study here: (1) the struggle between the rights of the individual and the rights of the whole society, as represented and protected in law, and (2) absence of a shared language outside of legal texts with which to deliberate what the balance between the one and the whole should be and what it would look like. Where a civil group's values coincide with those of the society which circumscribes it, agreement can be reached. Where a group's values coincide with values encoded in the laws of that society, they can be mediated in court when groups do not agree. When a value on the rights of all human individuals is the major thrust of that encoding, those on the margins are going to function to keep the balance righted against the infringement of individual rights to the extent that the group, or its official representatives, is considered able to survive and flourish when evaluating rights.

I propose borrowing this model of balancing individual, group, and society's rights as under the umbrella of human dignity and freedom of the individual for a model of evaluating rhetoric used within and between civil groups. Thinkers in the Athenian democracy first worked out descriptions of the nature, kinds, and uses of language as it existed in their society. Rhetoric was distrusted by Plato, as was most literature. Dialectic was for him the way to truth, and truth he considered to exist and to be knowable. The Sophists, of course, regarded certain truth as unknowable and valued rhetoric for various reasons, but among them, that city-states could get along better and avoid war if they could agree to disagree. It was Aristotle

who, recognizing the need for rational decision-making in the realm of human affairs, placed rhetoric next to dialectic as its “counterpart.” Rhetoric, which he further defined as “the power (*dunamis*) of determining the available means of persuasion,” was necessary to the life of a democratic *polis*, in which decisions and evaluations in the realm of human affairs—past, present, and future—were to be made after open deliberation by citizens. Part of rhetoric drew from logical reasoning, but part of it drew from what then was called “magic.” While “magic” was not and did not mean the same thing then and as it does in contemporary American culture, it nevertheless operates, though in different forms. William A. Covino surveys briefly the history of rhetoric and magic and notes that Suzanne Langer lists it as part of her “inventory of human needs” (38; cited in Covino 25). Covino then combines Burkean and Bakhtinian theories to arrive at a view of what form “magic” in rhetoric takes in contemporary discourse. His work opens up a rationale and means for evaluating rhetoric on the basis of protecting and advancing human growth and freedom.

First Covino finds magic a tool, as is rhetoric; and like rhetoric, or any other power, it can be used for ill or good. Also like rhetoric, it can never leave the other with complete freedom: “magic is always coercive because it constitutes reality by decree” (27). But what it can be is a practice for achieving good ends. One of the goods it can be practiced in the service of, as Aristotle recognized, is free inquiry that moves to discover the best course of action to advance the good. Covino distinguishes between “true-correct magic” and “false-incorrect magic.” “True-correct magic” [is] generative; enlarges the ground for action by the creation of choices; originates on the margins of mass culture; as critique [is] practiced as dialogue; results in integration. By contrast, “false-incorrect magic” [is] reductive; exploits the laws of motion by restriction of choices; originates in the center of mass culture; [is] practiced as inculcation results in adaptation (27). These features, of course, comprise a dichotomous set of criteria for promoting or short-circuiting free and open inquiry.

We could, then, evaluate the languages of inclusion and exclusion examined above in terms of these features. Metaphors lie in the realm of “magic” in this sense: they are paradigmatic—they are *paradeigma*, and thus hold an underlying complex of associations and potentially generative rules or directions for expansion of themselves. The *paradeigma* is one of the two forms of logical proofs that can be brought to bear in rhetoric. The other is the *enthymeme*, which is a reduced form of syllogism, providing the deductive reasoning of dialectic in the speech. We may judge a metaphor, then, by its capacity, or lack of it, to open up possibility, enlarge the ground of choice, engender productive dialogue, suggest creative change, and integrate opposing sides. In the case above, the rhetoric of inclusion moves in these directions, stirring the language of exclusion, which has been drawn from the popular imagination—the mass culture—and desires as its end mere adaptation to the crisis—which here devalues certain human beings and their rights to even the most basic of life needs. Even the

accepting of responsibility as a society, but not as a neighborhood, can be read in terms of these criteria as restrictive, adaptive, as mere rhetorical technique—a tactic—because there is no ensuing inquiry into the situation in the whole city, nor is there dialectical critique by the group of their own arguments.

LAST WORDS

I have tried to show how languages of exclusion and inclusion both hold groups together internally and keep neighboring groups from reaching consensus when disagreements arise. As the groups' central metaphors serve to define group identity, and as arguments made during attempts to reach consensus are grounded ultimately in these same metaphors, when groups clash in areas that involve the core metaphors of identity, there can be no resolution. One group would have to relinquish its identifying metaphor.

Secondly, I have tried to trace, however briefly, the nature of one language of inclusion, pointing out the difficulties and advantages, particularly the far-reaching radicalness of the vision of inclusion and the instability that is entailed in a workable transformative social praxis. I think it is not an instability most would choose to live with, and perhaps it cannot be lived with by many for very long unless such a vision could be encoded in a system of law or unless people could and would learn to live out a life-practice of greater valuing of the outsider. The movement into life-practice suggests a solution, but unless a life-practice of inclusion is entered on and the going is sustained, it cannot be understood. So how then would one convince others to begin it? As concepts about democratic values, as all concepts of value, are empty until filled with experience (see e.g., Gadamer, Nussbaum), there is potentially much room for changed views (interpretations). But yet, the experience is necessary. It would contradict democratic valuing of freedom to coerce; indeed, it contradicts the host/guest concept, which is an obligation, but not law. For a utopian vision to work in a free society, it must remain a vision, one perspective, or it risks becoming an oppressor. Yet, a vision and practice of socially responsible, free individuals is a good, a necessary part of societies whose stated values include as foundational the right of all to life and justice, to participation in the human flourishing of the society.

I have given but a small view of one case, one metaphor, one neighborhood. I do not know what implications there might be for other situations. The difficulties of working out a shared understanding seem to suggest that so much stands in the way of bringing about more just societies. In two previous papers, I have suggested that literature can provide an avenue in this direction because of its potential to take the reader through new experience and new epistemologies, preparing the ground for deeper and more complex insight into ethical problems. Because values can only be understood deeply if richly filled out with the viewer's experience,

it seems to me that only a process model of life-practice will bridge the individual and the ideal. This would mean that the ideal itself must incorporate a vision of practice that will never be wholly figured. Or figured out. Or finished. Its metaphors of identity must remain open to new interpretation, capable of guiding new generations in unforeseen situations they will encounter. And these metaphors must be sufficiently stable, sufficiently deep in the historical traditions of a people to enable them to see themselves as continuous with the people who preceded them, of which they remain a part.

NOTES

1. This claim can be warranted through any of several theoretical avenues available in the thought of linguistics, literary, and critical theories. Though the language of science remains largely unchanged, and of course the languages of mathematics are unaffected by natural languages, those languages by which we live construct our identities. Whereas we think, see, and live through the eyes made available by a language, we may share identity of how we see ourselves or we may differentiate identity from other ways of seeing. I have explored these relations at length in “Style As Paradigm.” Also, the theoretical construct developed by Mikhail Bakhtin reveals ways in which human beings “become” their culture by necessarily absorbing, thinking in, and speaking the discourse of those around us. Our identity is largely cultural because through language we think and speak in the language that is not ours, that is shared, given before we were born. Our individual identity emerges in and to the extent that language enables each of us to create new words and arrangements of words continually, “freely,” and “applied to new material, new conditions; [to] enter into inter-animating relationships with new contexts” (345, 46).

2. In the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle finds that, in successful speeches in his time, the grounding enthymemes from which the chain of all other arguments in a speech proceed are based in belief and opinion shared by the hearers. The construct developed by Kenneth Burke in *A Grammar of Motives* and *A Rhetoric of Motives* speaks more precisely to the grounding in key identificatory metaphors that are present in this case. He says that language systems create group identification around “God-terms,” which serve to bind group members in an ideology. The terms provide orienting epistemologies—ways of seeing and knowing the world. Unless one is part of a group sharing of the “God-term,” one does not have access to its epistemology, and there can be no movement of rhetoric toward persuasion or consensus as the starting ground is not shared. Unless one has “identification” with the group, Burke says, attempts at persuasion are futile. The metaphor of the “host” discussed here would be, for Burke, a “God-term.”

3. As Thomas McCarthy explains, in a discussion of the pitfalls of Jurgen Habermas’s social theory, a view of life-events fully conceptualized

would be pure theory attempting an impossible closure on the future. Closure is, however, necessary in practice, as we need to project from our horizons, known through life-practice, in order to make the future (186). Martha Nussbaum has been foremost among philosophers arguing that this knowledge of life practice cannot be conceptualized, though it may be conceived to some extent through the richly detailed complexities of literature.

4. The use of “client” to refer to those in shelters seems to have arisen, probably because of the laws that created the term “Community-Based Residence Facility” in the early 1980s. The reclassification of temporary shelter structures as CBRFs enabled a reconceptualization of those housed in them along the lines of medical metaphor. The label of “client” for those without homes displaces the perspective on the situation from social, economic, and familial contexts into a context of illness. The problem becomes “theirs,” not the society’s.

5. Maffin. This acceptance-in-general but refusal-in-specific of responsibility appears through the news articles in quotations and as reference, with respect to the dispute between Luther Place and the Logan Circle Neighborhood Association. LCNA President Constance Maffin used the argument in her defense of the Association’s actions (*Washington Business Journal*). The labeling is the standard one used nationwide (Dear).

6. “Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan,” 2.

7. “Applications for Docket Nos.”; “Civil Action No.”; “Zoning Regulations and Complicane. . . .” Not written for court, but making a more lengthy argument along these lines is “Campaign for a New Community.”

8. See, for example, Martin Luther King, Jr.’s treatment of the terms, drawing of Biblical authority, in “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” The church had formally been engaged in civil rights work during this era. Activists’ offices, including Dr. Benjamin Spock’s, dotted Vermont Avenue between Thomas and Logan Circles.

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CHAPTER 13

HISTORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY: THE PHILIPPINE CASE

ROLANDO M. GRIPALDO

INTRODUCTION

History, on the one hand, is defined as the study of the records of the past. This includes written records, archeological artifacts, ruins, and even traditions and literature orally transmitted from generation to generation. *Cultural identity*, on the other hand, is that aspect or aspects of a culture that a people are proud to identify themselves with and which foreigners usually mention with awe or admiration. "Cultural identity" connotes something positive, admirable, and enduring. It also connotes an ethnic or a racial underpinning. The *Ibanag* culture is ethnic, while the Ibanag as a *Filipino* (Malay race) is racial. In ordinary everyday speech, however, "ethnic" and "racial" are sometimes used interchangeably.

A nation generally consists of different tribes, and so there is a tribal cultural identity and a national cultural identity. It is possible in a war-torn country, as in a civil war, or in a postcolonial nation that there are only tribal cultural identities without a national cultural identity. And each tribe may want secession or complete independence.¹ They would not want to avail themselves of a national citizenship.² Cultural traits are aspects of culture and, at least, one or a group of these may serve as a benchmark for cultural identity for as long as the people can positively identify themselves with that benchmark and generally foreigners recognize it. The Japanese *sumo* wrestling is one example. A negative cultural trait or tradition, as in a tradition of corruption,³ could not serve as the identifying mark for cultural

¹ See the case of Yugoslavia in 1991.

² *National citizenship* is that type determined and enshrined in the constitution; it defines one's nationality or national identity. Cultural communities belonging to different races or ethnicities that desire to be identified with the nation as a totality aspire for *cultural citizenship* that will enable them to enjoy national citizenship (see Delgado-Moreira 1997).

³ Edgardo Angara ((2006) says that the Global Corruption Index of Transparency International (Berlin) "ranked the Philippines 117th in a survey of corruption in 159 countries." In Southeast Asia, the Philippines ranked third in corruption, next to Cambodia and Indonesia. A national culture will generally have an underlying macrotradition with many micro-traditions, some of which may be undesirable, such as the tradition of corruption which can be eliminated or drastically minimized over a period of time. See in this connection, Coronel and Kalaw-Tirol (2002).

identity acceptable by the people concerned, even if foreigners would keep on mentioning it.

This paper will examine the role that history plays in the molding of a people's cultural identity. In particular, it will sketchily trace the evolution of the Filipino national culture and identify aspects of culture that would explain the present state of Filipino culture.

HISTORY AND CULTURE

The term *culture* may be defined *broadly* as the sum total of what a tribe or group of people produced (material or nonmaterial), is producing, and will probably be producing in the future. What they produce—consciously or unconsciously—could be tools, clothing, cooking utensils, weaponry, technologies, unexpected outcomes, mores, or codes as in religion, and the like. And they will continue producing these things, probably with more improved efficiency, design or style, and *finisse*. The “make” can be distinctly identified—generally speaking—with their tribe or their period in history. If they discontinue producing, e.g., a particular tool, it is probably because it is replaced with tools of much improved efficiency. The criterion of utility is one consideration here. The former tool has outlived its usefulness.

Edward Tylor (1974) looks at culture as “that *complex whole* which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any capabilities and habits *acquired* by man as a member of society” (italics supplied). My emphasis is on the human *production* or *creation* of culture. Production connotes an *interiority*, i.e., coming from within the subject himself or herself, that reflects a lived experience. Albert Dondeyne (1964) talks of *historicity* as emanating from humans, and—to my mind—so is *culturicity*. Aspects of culture can be *acquired*, but once acquired they are adapted, reconstituted to fit the existing cultural terrain (either of the individual or the group), or reproduced. Cultural outcomes as in habits, norms plus sanctions, and customs are sometimes unexpectedly, unintentionally, or unconsciously produced. They are noticed as patterns or ways of thinking or behaving much later in life. From time to time they are evaluated, reevaluated, reproduced, reinforced, discarded, modified, or replaced. In other cases, when these outcomes are determined by some goals or purposes, they are consciously produced. Charles Taylor thinks of culture as a “public place” (1985, 270) or a “common [social] space” (2000, 35)⁴ into which an individual is situated or born, and by which he or she grows in political association with others through a shared communication vocabulary. While the person grows with culture, culture likewise grows

⁴ Wilhelm Dilthey (1991, 31) also calls culture the “common sphere” which serves as the individual's ground of becoming—that is, what one wants himself or herself to be—the ground by which he or she develops his or her identity as a person.

with him or her. A national culture is one that towers over and above the minority cultures (multiculturalism) that aspire to become a part of the national culture by first availing their members of “cultural citizenship”⁵ by gradually assimilating their individual cultures to the culture-at-large.

If we reflect on the life of our ancient ancestors, it is unimaginable to think that their collective memory is not *essentially* or *virtually* the same as their cultural history, although much of these may have been forgotten or buried deep in the unconscious. Their culture is distinctively the collective repository of all things: political, social, artistic, linguistic, educational, economic, religious, mythical, legal, moral, and so on. UNESCO (2002) stresses this collectivity of culture as a “set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual, and emotional features of society.” It includes “art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.” It is only very much later that these divisions of culture are given individual emphasis by social scientists and by humanists. And more often we forget that they are parts or features of a people’s culture. Nothing goes beyond culture, as culture, over time, is history.⁶

CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

We all know that civilization grows out of culture. That is why we can say that while we can have culture without civilization, we cannot have civilization without culture. The word *culture* etymologically means “to cultivate” while *civilization* originally means “citizen” (from *civitas*), which suggests urbanization or city life with a strong political organization and bureaucracy. The former reflects the process of refinement, while the latter reflects the partial or completed process of *organized* refinement. The refined person is a civilized person. He or she is usually referred to as a “cultured person.” Culture in this regard, that is “high culture,” is usually taken as equivalent to civilization. Below the civilized culture is mass culture, or what is sometimes referred to as “primitive culture,” “barbaric culture,” “low culture,” “uncultured,” “without culture,” or the like.

No doubt social scientists think in terms of their specializations. Even among anthropologists, they tend to focus on their respective fields. Leslie White (1949) invented the word “symbolate” to refer to a cultural object that comes about from the act of symbolization, such as a work of

⁵ The difference between national citizenship and cultural citizenship is that the national citizen is a citizen of a nation-state. The term “cultural citizenship” indicates the cultural side of a migrant who aspires to become a national citizen in order to enjoy its full benefits, or of the cultural aspect of a member of a cultural community who is not aware of, or is not interested in the benefits, of his national citizenship. In the case of a regional national identity, the postnational citizens enjoy the benefits of regional citizenship as in the European Union.

⁶ Key components of culture are identified as values, norms, institutions, and artifacts (see “Culture,” *Wikipedia*, n.d.).

art, a tool, a moral code, etc. It is argued that culture comes about simultaneously with symbols, for humans have the capacity to use symbols (a type of sign), the capacity to invent or acquire a type of language (see “The origin of culture,” *Wikipedia*, n.d.). Noam Chomsky (1975) argues that every human being has an innate “language acquisition device.” Julian Huxley (1957) classified the social world into “mentifacts” (ideological or belief subsystem), “socifacts” (social relationships and practices, or the sociological subsystem), and “artifacts” (material objects and their use, or the technological subsystem). Archaeologists are diggers of past cultures and can only generally uncover the material remains of a culture, while cultural anthropologists focus on the nonmaterial or symbolic aspect of culture.

Quite recently, an attempt was made in postmodernism to level off high and low cultures. The pragmatist John Dewey (1960) started it all by arguing that we should not limit art and its appreciation to art museums and art galleries. We can find art in everyday life, in the quality of experience we enjoy. There is art when we see a person with a beautiful face walking by, or one who is exquisitely dressed up, or the elegant clothes in tribal festivals. We find art in a basketball player who gracefully shoots a ball at the hoop, or in a nicely decorated cooked food, or in superb workmanship by a car technician. Mike Featherstone (1991) describes the leveling off process—the elevation of mass, tribal, and popular (“pop”) culture to an equal footing with high culture—as a postmodernist feature of our present civilization.

CULTURAL IDENTITY

There is a political or an ideological underpinning in the notion of “cultural identity.” An *ideology* is a set of values and beliefs that propels an individual or a group of people into action. An *identity*, ideologically speaking, connotes a feeling of oneness, an emotional acceptance of a totality or, at least, of features within a given totality that one is proud of, an internal or psychological desire to project this totality or its features to others with exuberance, and the anticipation that others will recognize and accept it (totality) or them (features) with respect.

Cultural identity is an evolving thing—sometimes slow, sometimes fast. Usually the dominant tribe of a nation will assume the national cultural identity. In other cases, if there are two or more tribes whose cultures are congruous, then they assume an identity using a national name other than the names of their individual tribes, a name that is historically influenced or determined.

It is possible that a civilized nation will evolve into a postnation. Postcolonial nations of Asia are toying with the idea of a regional identity while the nations of Europe are gradually being transformed into postnations, or they are evolving into a newly emerging regional identity called the European Union (EU). The European Union has a common

monetary exchange and has generally transcended national boundaries in terms of commercial and labor concerns. Its corporations are transnational: they do business everywhere. An EU citizen can travel, purchase items, and work anywhere in the Union without a passport or a working permit (see Gripaldo 2005a, 57). Eventually, the EU will assume a regional cultural identity.

Unfortunately, some nations—usually postcolonial ones or those nation-states that were once colonies—are still struggling to evolve a cultural identity which they can be proud of, an identity that is not just racial or ethnic but one that lies above ethnicity.

THE PHILIPPINE SITUATION

Four Groups of Filipinos

In the Philippine situation, there are many tribes and in the hinterlands we can still find tribal identities—small groups of people wearing their tribal clothes and continuing their tribal ways. They are Filipinos in the “cultural citizenship” sense, that is, their national identity is defined in terms of the provisions of the constitution: namely, they are native inhabitants (born here with indigenous parents) of the country. For many of them, their cultural citizenship does not mean anything at all (the Aetas, for example). They know that their ancestors have been living in this country for several centuries.

We can also find a second group of tribes in the Philippines whose cultural identities have been touched by modernization (which in this context is the same as Westernization) in a minimal way. Some of them send their children to school, and they are generally aware of their cultural citizenship. They go to urban areas in either tribal or modern clothes, but when they go home, they wear their tribal attire. They identify themselves more as a tribe rather than as a Filipino.

A third group of tribes are those that are more modernized compared to the second group. They send their children to school and when they visit the urban areas, especially the big cities, they wear modern clothes and adapt to the ways of modernity. Their identity is defined in terms of their religious persuasion. Some of the educated attend parties and dance in disco bars. They generally identify themselves as Filipinos. But when they go home to their native places they adjust themselves again to their native or religious ways. There are sectors in this group that spurn being called Filipinos and prefer a different label such as “Moro” or something else.

The last group of tribes is the highly modernized (Westernized). They are the largest group consisting of various tribes such as the Tagalog,

Bisayan, Ilokano, Kapampangan, and others.⁷ Their common perspective is outward or global rather than inward or national. The nationalists or the inward-looking Filipinos in this group are a minority. Renato Constantino (1966) identified them in the article, “The Filipinos in the Philippines,” as the genuine Filipinos. The nationalists are proud of their cultural citizenship and their cultural heritage. They want the nation to become a first world country in the coming centuries. They want the country to be industrialized and later superindustrialized. They want to see light and heavy industries churning out cars, tractors, airplanes, ships, rockets, and the like. They want political parties with broad programs of government on how to make the country industrialized or superindustrialized and not a crop of political parties and leaders whose main concern is to be in power or to grab power to serve their own selfish interests or pretend to work for the national interests where their idea of “national interests” is vague or misdirected. They reject any group whose economic perspective is provincial, despite the advent of the Third Wave civilization (see Toffler 1980).⁸ They reject those whose outlook is limited to only agricultural and small-and-medium-scale industrial development and modernization, and whose labor scenario is to train the workforce into global “hewers of wood [and] drawers of water” (Krugman, n.d.), into a “nation of nannies,”⁹ or into a nation of

⁷ See the major languages of the Philippines to get a glimpse of the various tribes; there are actually more than 170 Philippine languages (see “Languages of the Philippines,” *Wikipedia*, n.d.).

⁸ For a summary of Toffler’s description of the postindustrial society, see Gripaldo (2000, 113-146).

⁹ This expression was part of the question asked of Ms Precious Lara Quigaman during the interview portion of the Miss International contest held in Japan in 2005. The question was: “What do you say to the people of the world who have typecast Filipinos as nannies?” Her reply was: “I take no offence on being typecast as a nanny. But I do take offence that the educated people of the world have somehow denigrated the true sense and meaning of what a nanny is. She is someone who gives more than what she takes. She is someone you trust to look after the very people most precious to you—your child, the elderly, yourself. She is the one who has made a living out of caring and loving other people. So to those who have typecast us as nannies, thank you. It is a testament to the loving and caring culture of the Filipino people. And for that, I am forever proud and grateful of my roots and culture.” Although this reply succeeded in getting the nod of the judges and the audience (she became the 2005 Miss International), the phrase is very revealing of the cultural migrant and labor situation of the Philippines (see “Ms. Precious Lara Quigaman New International...” 2005).

There are about twelve million Filipinos (see “Overseas Filipino,” *Wikipedia*, n.d.) working worldwide, mostly nurses, doctors, seamen, engineers, teachers, other professionals, and construction workers. Only a small percentage are nannies, and they are more visible in such areas as Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Middle East.

second- or third-class workers.¹⁰ They want to build institutions that will run for decades and whose fruits will be of great significance to nation-building. But they are a minority.

The Filipino Majority

Globalization and Transworkers. The majority look at globalization in a wider perspective. They are a practical group. It takes decades to build institutions; they have to survive now. Philippine historical development did not provide them with economic security, with industrial progress, with socio-cultural pride, with sufficient physical security, the consequent mental peace, and with the necessary human dignity. Deep within them is national pride and patriotism. They love their country, but they love adventure more, despite risks, in order to survive economically. These probable risks are relegated to the traditional fatalistic (*bahala na*) attitude of the Filipinos (see Gripaldo 2005b). Those who have successfully immigrated still long for their native land and continue to send financial assistance to their families and loved ones back home. Very few felt frustrations so deep that they would not want to take a second look at their country of origin.

The majority of the Filipinos right now view globalization as not only transnational corporations, which establish food chains through franchises, and construct factories and industries in other countries,¹¹ but also transnational workers or, in short, *transworkers*—especially transient, not immigrant, ones—doing work in foreign lands. The Philippine overseas workers are one example. These are only temporary measures while the nationalists would still be building economic, political, social, and scientific institutions in the country. No doubt there are transworkers of other countries, including the United States. The only difference is that the transworkers of other countries generally work in foreign lands on their own initiative while in the Philippines the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) program is a government policy.

Political Scene: Misdirection. The majority sympathizes with the aspirations of the nationalists, but the fulfillment of those aspirations will take time. They view their current political leaders as misdirected. They believe that for as long as their political leaders continue to be misdirected,

¹⁰ Many Filipino professionals are first class workers but their pay is generally lower than the native workers of the foreign country. They are generally hired because of the need for cheap labor, and this fact, that is, in terms of pay, not in expertise, makes them second or third class workers. However, the pay they receive in foreign countries is higher than the pay they received in their country of origin.

¹¹ For a better appreciation of the concept globalization, see *The globalization reader* (Lechner and Boni 2004).

there will almost be nothing in the Philippines to be proud of as forming a national identity, and the Philippines will forever be a Third World country. After the defeat of the Federalista Party of Pardo de Tavera during the American colonial period (whose platform of government was to make the Philippines a state of the United States) by the Nacionalista Party (whose platform was to work for the “immediate, complete, and absolute independence” of the Philippines), the platforms of political parties that sprouted later became less distinct from one another. In the course of the political development of the country, only one man—Manuel L. Quezon—correctly diagnosed the unhealthy political drift of the nation: all political parties had one common platform—the “immediate, complete, and absolute independence” of the Philippines—and the main task of the political opposition was to fiscalize or critique the political actions of the party in power, not constructively (that is, by offering better alternative courses of action) but destructively so as to debilitate it before the electorate so that the opposition party would itself become the future party in power. Quezon (1940) argued that the existence of political parties is justified only when they have distinct alternative programs of government, which would serve as the standard by which to critique the political actions of the party in power. Quezon opposed political parties whose existence is premised on simply opposing the party in power in order to grab power, but could not offer any better alternative program of government to the people. In a situation like this, Quezon suggested that the Philippines should better adopt a partyless democracy where the best and the popular leaders will be elected by the people since there will only be one implicit political party, the party of the people—the people’s party.¹²

Economic Scene: Superindustrialization. Superindustrialization is the ideal that a country should achieve in the economic scene. Alvin Toffler (1970) and Peter Drucker (1993) describe the ongoing global postindustrial or postcapitalist society as characterized by transience in terms of disposable products, disposable persons, disposable knowledge, rise of new nomads, and rise of “adhocratic” organizations; novelty in terms of exploration of nontraditional sources such as the mining of oceans, the culturing of microorganisms for animal feeds and human food, genetic engineering to control diseases, new birth technology, and so on; and

¹² Senator Edgardo Angara (2006a) argues that in the Philippines “political parties are mere paper parties, with no restricting rules binding members.” In every Philippine election “we always see the effects of turncoatism [changing parties].” Moreover, “Political parties without strong ideological commitments, or unable to offer a concrete plan of action to address a nation’s ills are more prone to corruption.” Senator Nene Pimentel (see “RP political parties weak...,” 2006) also maintains that Philippine political parties “are weak and many of them do not have solid ideological moorings.” Moreover, “political platforms are mainly motherhood statements that have no bearing on the real needs of the people.”

diversity in terms of overchoice (many varieties of the same kind to choose from) and demassification of culture (mini audiences, mini movies, highly specialized radio stations, etc.). It does not have to be a posthuman society, as Francis Fukuyama (2002) feared,¹³ but a highly computerized society that will guarantee the rapid advance of technology and the demassification of products. When Toffler visited the Philippines during the time of President Fidel Ramos, he agreed with Ramos that the Philippines can “pole vault” to postindustrialization (third wave) from an agricultural economy (first wave) since the industrial society (second wave) is fast becoming obsolete.¹⁴ For example, a traditional integrated steel mill, which employs several thousand workers, will need only a minimal number of workers in a postindustrial steel mill since the processes will be highly computerized, and the workers will be computer literate. Later in April 2006, Toffler (Gardels 2006) said of China: “The Chinese are moving ahead by *simultaneously* developing both an industrial and information society . . . but they are not going to wait to become an industrial society before they move into the third wave.”

Educational Scene: Futurism. If postindustrialization is the economic goal, then the economic component of the educational system should be tailored along this line. The human person and his natural environment are complex such that the educational system caters to all these multifarious aspects: we have the political, social, cultural, technological, communication, educational, psychological, scientific, etc., components. All these, of course, will have to be addressed by the educational system. Every college and university in the Philippines has various divisions such as the colleges of social sciences, arts and letters, engineering, education, computer science, natural sciences, and so on. No doubt in every such division there are also subdivisions. For example, the college of natural sciences has the individual departments of biology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc., which has further subdivisions. While the educational system addresses itself to the goals of each of these

¹³ Fukuyama argues that the ideology of liberal democracy and capitalism is rooted in the traditional conception of human nature. Once man becomes posthuman through genetic modification as in cloning, then human nature would correspondingly change and the end of history would be overhauled (see Kettmann 2002).

¹⁴ Fidel Ramos optimistically said that the government's “pole-vaulting” strategy “is based on the vision of transforming the Philippines within the next 25 years into a knowledge center in the Asia-Pacific, Food Basket in Asia, Maritime Power in East Asia, Commercial Hub in the Asia-Pacific, Energy Exporter in East Asia, Financial Center in East Asia, Shoppers’ Paradise in the Asia-Pacific, Medical Center in East Asia, Center of Culture and Arts in Asia, and Educational Center for the Asia-Pacific—a total of at least ten strategic targets for the Philippines to pole-vault into” (Philippine News Agency, 27 April 1997).

human and nature components, the economic goal of industrialization will have to be futuristic, as probably all the other goals should be. In the futuristic educational outlook on economic development, we project on the basis of existing technological developments an achievable image of the future of what we want our nation or society to become, and on that image—which we wish to achieve—we tailor the present educational curricular offerings. If an *existential human being* is a human project of what he or she wants himself or herself to become in the future, an *existential nation* is a national project of what it wants itself to become in the future. If we want, for instance, to explore the oceans in a massive scale in the future, then we must offer a curriculum on oceanography that will include construction of ocean tunnels, ocean cities, ocean mining (see Stablum 2006), ocean factories, and so on.

Communications Scene: New Media Ideology. In the communications scene (see Gripaldo 2006a)—in the new media—it is important that the media should assume an ideology of nationalist development. Right now, the Philippine media—like its political counterpart—is misdirected. By “ideology of nationalist development” I mean to say that the media should have an image of a national identity to mould, which will serve as their journalistic standard for critiquing society and its leaders. For instance, in the Philippine setting, commentators against the Arroyo administration do not offer constructive criticisms but merely destructive ones, and they demand the resignation of the president without assuring the people that the rightful successor would have a better government program. Journalists interview members of the political opposition who enumerate a litany of what they perceive as the evils of the administration—such as the alleged cheating during the past elections—but generally the journalists do not ask the question what the opposition can offer as a viable alternative program of government if they would be in power.

Cultural Scene: Rationalization. In the cultural scene, there appears to be the same malady: there is no unifying theme in cultural development, no grand vision on how to develop a cultural agenda that would redound to national pride and national identity. In the reportage of Philippine cultural activities, there are, in various provincial cities, occasional traditional cultural festivals with tribal costumes and dances; singers from abroad performing old melodies and current tunes in various Philippine cultural venues; local singers performing concerts abroad; Filipino-sponsored choral and dance groups performing locally and abroad, with some winning contest medals; and so on.¹⁵ While all these

¹⁵ There are so many of this news coverage from January to September 2006 alone. One may view the issues of *Manila Bulletin*, *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, and *Philippine Star* of 2006.

performances are welcome, they should be streamlined within the purview of a nationalist ideological agenda.

THE MAKING OF A CULTURAL IDENTITY

“Damaged Culture”

The present cultural situation has been described as the result of a “damaged culture” (Fallows 1987) where there is lack of nationalism¹⁶ and where what is public is viewed in low esteem, without much national pride. The argument is that the indigenous cultures of the mainstream tribes have been supplanted with Christian and Western values brought about by Spanish and American colonialism. Spain fostered docility and inferiority among the natives, while America introduced consumerism and the global educational outlook. Both Spain and America supplanted the native cultures with the combined cultures of Christianity, capitalism, and liberal democracy.

Christianity was imposed among the natives and accepted with reluctance, that is, it was blended with native religious and superstitious beliefs such that the resulting Catholic religious version is *theandric otonomy* (Mercado 2004), a blend of the sacred and the profane, a compromise between acculturation and inculturation (see Grialdo 2005c).¹⁷

The Chinese and Spanish mestizos (together with foreign transnational corporations) whose Philippine nationalistic sentiment is generally suspect, basically control capitalism in the Philippines. It is said, for example, that the brochures one reads on the planes of the Philippine Airlines, controlled by the Chinese Filipino, Lucio Tan, do not promote the

¹⁶ Fallows (1987, 56-57) says that though nationalism, when taken to the extreme, can lead to the Hobbesian state of nature, it can be broadly moderated, as to propel a nation to a progressive development at par with the rest of the developed states like Japan. To quote him: “Nationalism is valuable when it gives people the reason not to live in the world of Hobbes—when it allows them to look beyond themselves rather than putting their own interests to the ruination of everyone else...Japan is strong in large part because its nationalist-racial ethics teaches each Japanese that all other Japanese deserves decent treatment...Individual Filipinos are at least brave, kind, and noble spirited as individual Japanese, but their culture draws the boundaries of decent treatment much more narrowly...”

¹⁷ *Acculturation* is the process by which a culture assimilates parts of a foreign culture while *inculturation* is the process by which a foreign culture assimilates parts of the native culture. In Catholic theology, *inculturation* takes the form of a symbiotic give-and-take. John Paul II (1990) defined it in the encyclical *Redemptoris missio* as “The intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.”

many Philippine tourist spots and products while other Asian airlines promote theirs. A Philippine Airlines brochure, for example, had the Malaysian Petronas Twin Towers on its cover.¹⁸

The native political system, the *barangay*, was of different ideological persuasions, two of which were fully documented (see Scott 1994): the autocratic and the democratic. The autocratic, of course, was authoritarian or despotic while the democratic had a jury judicial system and a consultative legislative system. The *datu*, or chieftain, always consulted the elders. Spanish colonialism practiced the autocratic system, while American colonialism trained the Filipinos in the democratic system. However, the liberal democracy that developed was the presidential—not the parliamentary—system, and the Filipino version of it was always a clash, instead of a partnership, between the executive and legislative branches of government. The consequences were inefficiency in the passage of vital laws,¹⁹ delays in the approval of the annual budget that likewise delayed the needed financial increases in the delivery of basic services, nontransparent accountability of executive officials through the legislative system in terms of financial expenditures on certain projects (thereby fostering accusations of alleged corruption²⁰). This is also the apparent political opposition's penchant for legislative inquiries, not in aid of legislation but in aid of government destabilization. The net result of all these is the slow pace of national development.

Right now, a number of people appear to favor the shift from the presidential to the parliamentary system.²¹ In fact, many of them believe

¹⁸ I saw this brochure in my trip to Phnom Penh, Cambodia in 2004. Some Filipinos I talked with argued that they did not patronize the Philippines Airlines because it did not appear to promote Philippine tourism (aside from its relatively high rates).

¹⁹ The Philippine Senate is accused of sitting down on vital measures that Congress has passed, as in the case of the terror bill. According to Bataan Governor Enrique Garcia, "The Senate is taking its own sweet time in acting of a proposed legislation that would beep up our country's capabilities to face international terrorism" (Aben 2006a). No doubt the terror bill will ultimately be passed and signed into law, but it is so much delayed.

²⁰ One current case is that of former agriculture Undersecretary, Jocelyn Bolante, who went abroad apparently to escape from shedding light in senate hearings on the P728-million fertilizer scandal. In a parliamentary system executive officials are duty bound in parliament to make an accounting of their office activities. Under the check and balance concept of the presidential system, executive officials are coequals with legislative and judicial officials and are therefore not bound to make an accounting in Congress (see Luci 2006 and Ng 2006).

²¹ The senators accuse the congressmen, many of whom will finish their third term in office in 2007 and are not qualified—under the law—to run for a fourth term, to have the ulterior motive in supporting the unicameral parliamentary system to extend their term of office until 2010 since the president

that the main culprit why the Philippines lag behind its Asian neighbors in economic development is the slow-responsive presidential political system.²² They want distinct political programs such as a labor party that fights for labor rights as against a party that favors the rich or other sectors of society.²³

Identifying Cultural Goals

If culture is coextensive with history, then there should be one grand historical vision for the country—one grand goal—that is, the holistic and complete development of the nation in all areas: economic, cultural, political, scientific, etc. This overall development should be approached from all sectors, that is, sectoral goals, even of associations or societies with national orientation, should have their respective visions focused along this one grand vision. A rationalization of goals should be undertaken so as to avoid crisscrossing and conflicting goals that may impede or negate the realization of the grand vision. When South Korea, for example, decided to industrialize despite all odds, all national institutions focused themselves in the realization of this goal. It took them many years to fulfill this dream, but now South Korea is far more progressive than any country of Southeast Asia. Much earlier, the Philippines, in fact, sent a military contingent to help South Korea in its war against North Korea. And now South Korea has overtaken the Philippines in national progress. Congressman Jose de Venecia Jr. (2006) optimistically believes that the Philippines could become a second world country in a decade and a first world country in two decades, if the proper breaks are in place, one of which he thinks is the shift to a unicameral parliamentary system.²⁴ Here political decisions on

thought it wise to experiment on the system with the present set of legislators until the end of her term as president in 2010. The congressmen in turn accuse the senators of having the ulterior motive of preserving the presidential system because their house will be abolished. This debate on shifting to the parliamentary system should be decided on the basis of its merits and not on ulterior motives.

²² The other reason cited in connection with slow economic development is that the present Philippine constitution has economic provisions that in effect block the massive inflow of foreign investments in industrialization (see Aben 2006b and 2006c). Even assuming the parliamentary system will not be pushed through, the best that can be done is to amend the economic provisions of the 1987 Charter.

²³ Senator Angara (2006a) mentions, for example, the strong ideological causes of the Labor and Tories parties of the United Kingdom.

²⁴ Whether or not the parliamentary system will ultimately be pushed through, I personally believe that it is more cost-effective and more efficient than the presidential system (see “Law dean cites cost-effectivity...,” 2006). But the parliamentary system will work only on the basis of principled parties and honesty (see Defensor-Santiago 2006). When a minister, or even the prime

economic and other sectoral developments will be decided fast. Moreover, bills of national significance can be attended to immediately in a responsible manner, instead of taking so many years to pass the bicameral congress. Senator Angara (ANC Television Interview Program, 2006a),²⁵ for instance, says that bills dealing with sinking ships and oil spills, such as in the Solar I tanker disaster near Guimaras Island, have been pending in the Philippine Congress for eight years now. Even the United Nations international convention on oil spill calamities, that is, on environmental protection where the Philippines is a signatory, took a long time for the Philippine Congress to ratify.

Economic development normally carries with it cultural development. Economic and scientific advancement transforms the culture of the nation. The First Wave civilization has the agricultural feudal culture; the Second Wave civilization has the industrial modern culture, while the Third Wave civilization has the postindustrial postmodern culture. The Philippines right now is basically a First Wave (agricultural) country that experiences elements of a Third Wave civilization. That is why it appears logical for this country to shift or “pole-vault” from the First Wave to the Third Wave civilization.

Changing the Cultural Attitude of Filipinos

My impression of the Filipinos is that basically they love their country but they hate how their political leaders and public officials generally manage it. They particularly call those leaders they despise as *trapos*, which literally means “dirty rags.” Except for a few genuinely disgruntled Filipinos, many overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), only work abroad to earn a living, which in their own country is not possible, or, if they have work, it generally pays less. They would like to try a “greener pasture.”

Although Filipinos take pride in having worked abroad, except a few who had bad experiences, they generally consider the foreign job as temporary. Many still hope their leaders can make a turnaround and transform their country into a “greener pasture.” Many political leaders are aware of this distress and dissatisfaction among the populace, and the culprit—they argue—is the political system. The Filipino temperament is dynamic, volatile, and active, but the political system—the presidential system—is slow in delivering the needed shot to the economy and the basic

minister, becomes unpopular or is linked to corruption scandals, he should automatically give up his office. Otherwise, something like a *coup d'état*, as in the recent case of Thailand, may take place (see Faiola 2006).

²⁵ANC, a cable television station, stands for ABS-CBN News Channel. ABS stands for Alto Broadcasting System while CBN stands for Chronicle Broadcasting Network. There are more than fifty cable stations aired in Philippine televisions today, and ANC is one of them.

services. In particular, they blame the opposition as obstructionists, that is, the opposition employs any means to obstruct good measures in order to limit the achievements of the party in power. Moreover, the opposition exploits unsubstantiated petty accusations against the administration.

If many Filipinos live in poverty, that is, are essentially hungry and do not see any future in the Philippines for them and their children, then they lose hope. The consequences of losing hope redound to the development of the attitude of self-pity, a loss of human dignity, a self-abandonment, a refuge to drugs, and the commission of crimes.

Those who are above the poverty line²⁶—the upper poor and the middle class—those who still have hope for their country and themselves, generally try to find temporary relief in working abroad.

Colonial and Crab Mentalities

Filipinos are said to have twin evils, “colonial and crab mentalities” in their collective personality and culture which they individually ought to overcome.

On the one hand, there is the *colonial mentality*. It is an attitude which treats whatever comes from the local situation, be it by nature or by human production, as generally inferior to those which come from abroad. This may be in terms of the natural color or physiological makeup of the native. He or she would like to be white or to have the facial features of the Caucasian if he or she is dark-skinned or if his or her nose is flat, or the like. Reactions to this mentality is to claim that the nonwhite color is beautiful as in the expression “Black is beautiful” or “Brown is beautiful,

²⁶ According to Marivic Raquiza, the Global Call to Action against Poverty national coordinator, about “3.7 million families live on a measly P35.93 per day.” The poverty line per person per day is P41.10 in urban areas and P34.06 in rural areas. Translating the family to an average of four members, then approximately 16 million Filipinos live very much below the poverty threshold. The United Nations poverty threshold is \$1.00 per day per person or about P51.00 per day (see “4-M Filipino [families]...,” 2006). Some quarters blame the economic provisions of the present constitution which block foreign investments in industrialization as the cause of poverty and lack of jobs (see “Cha-cha advocates...,” 2006).

The 1987 Philippine Constitution adopted the “Countryside Development” philosophy which is “agriculture-based, labour-intensive, export-oriented economic development,” as against the “Nationalist Industrialization” school (see “The search for models...,” n. d.). I was against the former school, as I believed we could *simultaneously* develop in the 1980s both agriculture and industry (see Gripaldo 1985a, 1985b, and 1986). We can convert the past natural vertical-time economic development of history, of which we had no control, into the present horizontal *simultaneous* economic development (of agriculture, industry/superindustry, and services), of which we can now have a mediating control.

since, from God's point of view, it is fully cooked while white is half-cooked and black is overcooked." But colonial mentality may also take the form of products of human effort (foreign academic degrees are better than local degrees, imported products are better than locally-produced goods, etc.). This attitude results in the general denigration of what is local, thereby not taking pride in what is locally made (even if in truth and in fact—at least many of them at the present time—are better than the imported ones).

On the other hand, a *crab mentality* is essentially an attitude of envy (not wanting others to be so much ahead of oneself in many respects and, especially, in material successes) or of one-up-manship (I am better than you and should be ahead). Crabs in a basket appear to manifest this type of behavior. Those below the basket try to pull down those above while those on top try to push down those below. The net effect of this behavior is slow progress to get out of the basket for all of them. Crab mentality partly explains why politically, socially, and economically there is slow progress for the Filipino nation. Individuals excel but their successes are hampered by the envious behavior of others around them. True friends would help one excel, but nonfriends, including those who belong to the opposition, will do their best to push one down or pull down one who is up. If you have wronged someone, he or she will do everything for you to fail in your endeavor, and it does not matter if the entire community or both of you will suffer. In the national political scene, if the political opposition sees the party in power is making achievements, or is having good projects for the nation, then the opposition will put obstacles to those projects for these to fail or be delayed, and it does not matter if the collective, the nation, has slow progress or will be left behind by other nations.

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

No doubt something can be done that will attempt to restore pride and hope in the minds of the Filipinos. Conversion to nationalism should not only be in terms of lip service but in terms of deeds, in terms of behavioral manifestations. To convert communities and eventually the nation to nationalism is to convert the individuals that populate the communities.

The nationalist consciousness, says Renato Constantino and James Fallows, is the antidote to colonial consciousness. And, I think, this also applies to crab consciousness. The nationalist attitude—the broad type of nationalism—is a rational type, that is, it takes into consideration sacrifices from individuals or organizations to achieve nationalist goals of restoring nationalist pride and dignity in the individual, that there is hope for himself/herself and the nation to a rapid progress. It is a concomitant expectation that this restoration will generate the kind of attitude in the person to take pride in what is produced or found in the local or national situation.

Nationalists argue that the attitude of internationalism should first be grounded on the proper attitude of nationalism. Internationalism without nationalism is colonial consciousness, an open attitude towards what is foreign at the expense of what is local. If one's internationalism is rooted in one's nationalism, then he or she can select from the outside cultural and economic influences which he or she believes will strengthen his or her own national culture. Nationalists think this is the proper attitude at the present time. A nationalist can later become an internationalist—at least, in the regional sense as in becoming an ASEAN citizen—but that is a possibility very much later.

Reliance on Civil Societies

In the meantime, while waiting for the national economy to develop and provide—through sufficient job opportunities to the poor—the basic needs and services of the poor and the other underprivileged, civil societies may do certain wonders for certain groups of people. A civil society is one that lies between the family and the nation (McLean 2001). It is a grouping of men and women who believe that if nothing much can be obtained as aid from the local and national government, then the group (association, society, tribal community, or nongovernmental organization) must rely upon itself for raising funds and for satisfying the basic needs and services of the people or community and for the uplifting of personal, moral, and social values therein. The civil society must harness solidarity (unity) and subsidiarity (working together for the common good of the group or community) (see McLean 2005, 89-107).

I will discuss two examples of what I consider as civil societies. The first is the *Gawad Kalinga* movement (GK), which is the offshoot of the immersion experience of a Couples for Christ member in a poor community. This member (Antonio Meloto) has observed that the poor often lose hope in themselves and their family. They cannot rise above their poverty. Meloto tries to focus his observations on the male because in the Philippines the male generally carries the fortune of the family. As a consequence of losing hope, the person loses his human dignity and his personal values degenerate. He tries to find refuge in drinking spirits, in joining a *barkada* or gang, in taking drugs, and in committing crimes. His is a sunken spirit, a *patapon* (one whose life is useless). He does not love his work (like collecting newspapers, bottles, cans, and plastic from garbage dumps) but does it so that he can earn a small amount just so he and his family can eat something for the day. Meloto lived and talked with them, and on the basis of this phenomenological experience he came out with the plan to *restore* their sense of dignity and their capacity to hope. He thought of *Gawad Kalinga* (literally, “to take care of those in need”) to help the poor. The first step is to give each poor family a decent house, which is owned by contract and cannot be sold; provide the family with a decent self-help livelihood, and for several sessions regenerate the personal, moral,

and social values of the members of each family. In other words, each community—which will consist of 50 to 100 houses—will have a livelihood center, a multi-purpose hall, a health center, a school, a caretaker team that stays with the community for two to three years, and a set of 27 sessions of value formation that include love of country, love of neighbor, *bayanihan* spirit (helping each other), no drinking, and the like. He hoped to thus eradicate slums in the Philippines.

By 2003 he identified 700,000 houses in 7,000 poor communities that would be established in 7 years (to be accomplished by the year 2010). He called this the “777” project. It costs 50,000 pesos to build a decent concrete house (roughly 1000 dollars). By 2006, *Gawad Kalinga*—started in 2001—had established over 850 decent communities throughout the Philippines, and donations from individuals, schools, organizations, and cities locally and abroad kept on pouring in. Trust can be earned and right now the Filipino rich and some local governments both in the Philippines and abroad (Australia, US, and Canada) are giving donations. The *Gawad Kalinga* communities are usually named after the donor (individual, school, city, etc.). There are, for example, GKs named after San Bernardino (California), Ontario (Canada), Alberta (Canada), De La Salle University, Ateneo de Manila University, University of the Philippines, San Beda College, University of Santo Tomas, and so on. To diffuse any misunderstanding between Christians and Muslims, there are also right now seventeen Muslim GKs in Mindanao (see Meloto 2006). What is interesting is that the GK vision has been exported to other countries as in Indonesia, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, and India (Logarta 2006). In 2006, both Antonio Meloto and the *Gawad Kalinga* organization each receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award,²⁷ together with other recipients from India, Cambodia, South Korea, and Nepal.

The other group, I will discuss, but only briefly, is an academic community that aspires to present a united voice and gain group recognition and respect. Essentially marginalized, this community of professional philosophers and teachers of philosophy, has established the Philippine National Philosophical Research Society (PNPRS). They decided to spearhead their vision to unite various philosophical organizations of the country. The group works within the Philosophical Association of the Philippines (PAP) as the banner association because it is the oldest (founded in 1973). PNPRS recognizes the right of philosophy professionals to establish specialized philosophy organizations as healthy, for it means that more people are interested in philosophical activities. As in Great Britain, which has about fifteen philosophy organizations united in one umbrella (the British Philosophical Association), PNPRS encourages other Philippine philosophy associations to become institutional members of

²⁷ The Ramon Magsaysay Award is considered the Asian counterpart of the Nobel Prize Award (see “The 2006 Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership,” 2006).

PAP. Its journal, *Φιλοσοφία* [*Philosophia*]: *International Journal of Philosophy*, right now has become the journal of three associations—PAP, PNPRS, and PANL (Philosophical Association of Northern Luzon).²⁸ The PAP membership is expected to increase in light of the affiliation of PNPRS and PANL. Soon PAP will apply for membership to the International Federation of Philosophical Societies (FISP, *Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de Philosophie*), which sponsors the World Congress of Philosophy every five years. The Philippine philosophy community acknowledges its sluggish thrust. The PAP is older than the Korean Philosophical Association (KPA) in founding and yet was overtaken by KPA. In 2008 KPA will sponsor the Twenty Second World Congress of Philosophy in Seoul, South Korea.

It is hoped that other Philippine associations of each academic discipline will unite for active international participation on their own initiative, even without the help of local or national governments. It is important that every Filipino academic association should be able to link itself to the idea of nation building.²⁹

CONCLUSION

While culture develops in history and history feeds on culture for its development, some individuals and groups move faster in cultural and historical development, while others lag behind in various stages of growth. This is not only true among persons and tribes but also among nations or states.

Filipino nationalists and patriots describe the Philippines as a nation without a soul, a cultural shipwreck that does not know where it is going. It is said to be a “damaged culture,” with nothing much to be proud of historically as a nation. Its Christianity is sacrilegiously adulterated (see Gripaldo 2005c), its declaration of independence shortlived, its political leaders apparently directionless (their goals are at cross-purposes with each other such that the net effect was to cancel out), and its culture largely draped with colonial and crab mentalities.

At this point in time, the Filipino people should not think of what the Filipino nation or its political leaders can do for them, but of what they as ordinary citizens can do for their nation. Some ordinary citizens are better situated than others, and while their political leaders may still be wondering what is wrong with them, these better-situated citizens can take the lead in pursuing a grand vision for their country through civil society and civil associations. The task of these societies should be to restore hope among the hopeless, provide a means for them to develop a sense of human

²⁸ To view the journal, visit http://mysite.dlsu.edu.ph/faculty/gripaldor/filosofia_journal.asp.

²⁹ See Gripaldo on philosophy and nation building (2006a).

dignity, and to take pride in their own effort toward cultural development and nation building (see Gripaldo 2006a).

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CHAPTER 14

SOCIAL MEMORY AND THE ONTOLOGICAL ROOTS OF IDENTITY: KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

JOHN P. HOGAN AND MAURA DONOHUE

INTRODUCTION

Gulnara Bakieva's *Social Memory and Contemporaneity*¹ is not only important for the people of the Kyrgyz Republic; it is also an important contribution to the growing movement of "philosophy emerging from culture" and an evolving "intercultural hermeneutics." In our world—globalizing and homogenizing before our very eyes—some of us, at least in the so-called "developed-Western world" are becoming acutely aware of the need to retrieve our past, our spiritual roots. Indeed, as one writer puts it, there is *No Life Without Roots*.² As the philosophers Bakieva cites remind us, we need to go beyond a superficial view that absolutizes the present and to reconnect with our ontological roots. Personal identity, social identity, and cultural identity—the "I" and the "We"—need to be grounded in Being.

Social memory, though not in the sense of a simplified "nostalgia," is focal for existential freedom. The history that lives on, questions the present, and helps create the future—a living tradition, not a dead past—is what Bakieva is after. She beautifully carves that future and seeks an integral personal and social identity out of Kyrgyz history, myth and culture. She gets ample assistance from Marcel's "presence," Heidegger's "*dasein*," Gadamer's "fusion of horizons," Berger and Luckmann's "social construction of reality," Jaspers' "axial time," and Popper's "asymmetry of past and present." In our current global context, self-affirmation of values and belief—the foundation of existential freedom—too often is forgotten. Identity includes economics and politics, but it is much more; it is the

¹ Gulnara A. Bakieva, *Social Memory and Contemporaneity* (Washington: National Academy of the Kyrgyz Rep. and CRVP, 2007). (Page references in parenthesis). The presentation here is a revised version of papers given in Bishkek, on July 25, 2008 at the symposium held for the fifth anniversary of the death of Professor Bakieva. The symposium was sponsored and funded by the Jusup Bakieva Foundation, the Kyrgyz University of Economics and the Kyrgyz Ministry of Education and Science.

² Thierry G. Vershelst, *No Life without Roots: Culture and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1990).

freedom of a people writ large, "... it is the traditions they hold dear and the cumulative freedom which they pass to new generations."³

In some ways, Bakieva's work resonates with some of the ongoing discussion around history and tradition in the United States and, we would, guess in much of the rest of the world. What was interesting for us, was that she did not cite Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* or Fukuyama's *End of History*. But, she did list Michael Kammen's *Mystic Chords of Memory* in her bibliography. This was revealing. Kammen's task is somewhat like Bakieva's. He is not interested in nostalgia, or in politically manipulated memory, but in tradition—and its role in history and historiography. He plays on Abraham Lincoln's dramatic plea to our nation at one of its darkest hours—the Civil War. In his first inaugural address, Lincoln called all Americans "to relive meaningful memories." Kammen quotes Lincoln's famous lines:

Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.⁴

These "mystic chords" are much closer to Bakieva's approach than either Huntington or Fukuyama. "Clash" or "End" are not her leitmotifs. She begins her work by setting the reader on the right path. Contemporaneity includes past, present and future, but it is more than a space-time continuum. It concentrates material, spiritual, and social values passed on in symbol, myth, and history. It is "present" but it returns us to origins. In this sense contemporaneity is closely related to contemplation. "So, in the very meaning of the word "contemporaneity" there is information about the complicity of the past and future. And the contemporaneity of the three historical time spaces is provided, thanks to social memory" (p. vi). Social memory is the historical consciousness as it moves backward and forward in its creating and understanding of the present. It is where spiritual and intellectual traditions are tested. It is in this historical stream that the great perennial questions arise—"What am I?"—

³ John P. Hogan, ed., *Cultural Identity, Pluralism and Globalization*, Vol. I (Washington: CRVP, 2005) p.3.

⁴ Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993) p. 100. See also, Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Touchstone, 1997) and Francis Fukuyama, *The End Of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992. Note that Fukuyama, in subsequent works, has moved away from his "End" thesis.

”Who are we?” and, increasingly, “Will we be?” Questioning social memory finds our place in the world (p.vi).

The book is, indeed, a phenomenology of social memory. The role of social memory in the construction of reality is illustrated with materials from Kyrgyz history and its Soviet and post-Soviet periods. Bakieva develops a “Social Mnemology” and presents “mnemonic models” for retrieving Kyrgyz identity, culture, and history. Her retelling of the epic tale *Manas* and how it represents the “mnemonic mind” of her people resonates with the great epic novels and myths which are the defining stories of other cultures and peoples. These are the stories to which people return in moments of deep suffering or elevated joy. They provide ontological roots.

By social mnemology, Bakieva means the study of the cognitive and social parameters of memory. It seeks to correlate social memory with society and can be national, ethnic, political, collective, familial, and autobiographical. It presents a system for preserving and coding the products of social memory. It is a discipline for understanding, coding, and interpreting. In short, Bakieva claims we cannot know who we are as individuals or as a people unless we can somehow return to the root of our being. She unpacks this metaphysical search for being through the history of the Kyrgyz and other Central Asian peoples. Each chapter unveils key pieces of the ontology of memory. Her approach illustrates what Heidegger meant by “Man is the shepherd of being.”

A PHENOMENOLOGY OF SOCIAL MEMORY

Bakieva begins by following Gabriel Marcel in his warning against the “spirit of abstraction” and towards “presence” which means coming into relation with the world.⁵ This happens in “recollection,” that is being “experienced for the second time.” This kind of meditative thinking can be the basis for finding a new and deeper self. This was Bakieva’s quest. Like Heidegger, she understood “memory as the ontological resistance to the power of time.” And, like Ricoeur, she seems firmly convinced that we can and should forgive, but not forget.⁶

In unpacking “The Semantics of Social Memory,” Bakieva uses Karl Jaspers’s “axial time.” She proposes the need for a cultural “home;” thus the importance of founding myths, scriptures, epic stories and tales that, in different ways, embody the spirit of a people. Language is an essential ingredient in the production and maintenance of that spirit. She leads her readers through a retrieval of the folk culture of the Turkic peoples and especially the moving epic story, *Manas*. For her, *Manas* is the

⁵ Gabriel Marcel, *Pour Une Sagesse Tragique et Son Au-Dela* (Paris: Plon, 1968).

⁶ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2004). See also, David Pellauer, *Ricoeur: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Continuum, 2007) pp. 120-126.

“mnemonic mind” of the Kyrgyz people—really an “*aide-memoire*” for Kyrgyz identity. The orally transmitted story, passed down through the ages, provides a recognizable and communicable way to enliven the “being” of a people. Bakieva also refers to the great role religion played in the development of the metaphysical conceptions of Turkic peoples. Through Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Gnosticism and Christianity, Islam would gradually determine the religious philosophy of the Turkic people and, by the Middle Ages, systematize and rationally articulate the world as Mind: Divine, Supreme, and Absolute (p.53). Different models are proposed, building on the past, but open to new horizons and needs. Drawing on Marx—what shall I do?—knowledge and values come together in praxis and can be applied to social policy and civic tasks.

She draws on Kant’s third critique and begins with an aesthetical understanding of social memory. Spirit resists time and the limits of the past. It creates an integrated picture and allows the human person to be open to the transcendent, to culture, and to the future. It is creative and hopeful but also practical and usable. In Kyrgyz culture, *Manas*, in spite of harsh scenes of oppression, exile and war, opens the memory to a wholistic and beautiful story as a basis for action and behavior in the world. The reverse is a repressed memory that creates only illusions. This pragmatic, ethical application to individual behavior, social institutions, civil society and governments comes from a social metaphysics that Bakieva constructs with the help of the Sociology of Knowledge.⁷

Bakieva moves the reader beyond memory as in any way a static phenomenon and turns to a hermeneutic of memory. Using Gadamer, the author makes the case for understanding, interpreting, and applying the past—at least that small portion of the past that remains alive and preserved in social memory.⁸ It is that small portion—the living tradition that cries out to be communicated. It is that “tradition” that puts a person and a people in touch with their being—past, present, and open to a new future. Here Bakieva raises the important point of education as a mnemonic and communicative system. Like Hegel, education is self-reconciliation and self-recognition in the “spirit.” Education, done correctly and well, allows the person to see herself/himself in a new mirror. “Responsibility” is education’s most important goal and is obviously of great importance in the construction of a new society, especially in a situation such as that of post-Soviet Kyrgyzstan.

⁷ See, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Anchor, 1967).

⁸ See, Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Crossroad, 1975); see also, George F. Mclean, *Hermeneutics, Tradition and Contemporary Change* (Washington: CRVP, 2003) pp.1-17; John P. Hogan, *Collingwood and Theological Hermeneutics* (Lanham, MD: 1989) pp.43-70 and John Hogan, “Gadamer and the Hermeneutical Experience,” *Philosophy Today*, 20(1976) 3-12.

In her final chapter, Bakieva takes on the immense issues of modernization and, by extension, globalization. Bakieva seeks to overcome the apparent clash between tradition and modernity. Modernization does not necessarily imply the demise of tradition. Tradition and contemporaneity can be better understood within a framework of the synchronic—diachronic system of the mnemonic approach. She applies Popper's concept of the asymmetry of past and present to wrestle with the current attempts of newly independent states to construct civil society. Given such a fractured past, how might they build a civil society, open to a creative future of opportunity?

Bakieva realized the implications—good and bad—of the process of globalization. The impact on social memory and identity is profound. Nevertheless, she was hopeful, but honest and down to earth—even blunt! She states candidly, “Kyrgyzstan may be compared to a beautiful girl who will be very lucky if she marries a rich man” (p.128). It sounds like she understood well the current, cutthroat global competition!

This whole approach has a ready dialogue partner in the hermeneutics of Gadamer and Habermas. The latter adds the dimension of critical appropriation but here we limit ourselves to brief comments on Gadamer. His “conversation” with a text seems especially close to Bakieva's approach and the search for cultural, national and personal identity at this crucial time in Kyrgyz history. Gadamer provides the “ontological turn” for hermeneutics. His hermeneutical description as a “fusion of horizons” is also relevant to Bakieva's concerns for education, communication and cultural identity. He claims that “without the horizon of the past, the horizon of the present would have no form at all.”⁹ Our author follows this line. Her philosophical reflection on Kyrgyz tradition was her attempt to feel the pulse of her country and all of Central Asia. Like a caring philosopher-physician, she shows us how to bring a tradition to life.

When Gadamer's words above are translated to our concerns here, “fusion of horizons” is a most apt metaphor for what needs to happen from a hermeneutical perspective when one wants to retrieve a tradition. Our author wanted to retrieve her tradition, not to live in the past, but as a platform to shape the future. In this regard, she again follows Gadamer's counsel and, indeed, his understanding of the interpreter-hermeneut-translator. This is the mid-wife role she played—thought patterns were articulated in Kyrgyz; she wrote in Russian, using sources in Russian, English, French, and other languages. She even did her own translation into English.

Moreover, as to education and communication, as Bakieva was well aware, the stakes are high and not just academic. Her important work indirectly touches many critical topics, not only for the Kyrgyz Republic but for the whole planet: the use and abuse of history and patriotism for

⁹ From Gadamer's *Truth and Method*, quoted in Hogan, ed., *Cultural Identity*, p. 6.

political or economic gain; the need for integral, participatory, and sustainable development; care for the environment; the need for inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue; the need to counteract fundamentalisms—whether of religions or the neo-liberal market; an adequate religious/spiritual response to Secularism; and most of all, the need for peace. These and other issues will increasingly effect personal, social and cultural identity and will be either filtered through social memory and acted upon, or be obliterated by social amnesia.

Most importantly, the tradition lives and should be passed on. The epic story, the *Manas*, and the Kyrgyz writer, Ch. Aytmatov, provide backdrop and context, but one can hear faint echoes of writers like the Irish poet, Yeats, and the African novelist, Achebe. “Responsibility needs to be the new philosophy for the new century.” Bakieva places much hope in the Kyrgyz concept of *Mamyk*, translated as the “center”—a center that is surrounded by life, knowledge, ideas and thoughts. It is the core of existence and meaning—a center that “holds” (p.153).

CONCLUSION

It is clear that for Bakieva, national identity and ethnic identity play key roles in the unfolding of the new Kyrgyzstan. However, for her, freedom lies buried much deeper. A great deal of excavation is still needed. Freedom is buried within national self-consciousness, but must be unearthed in order for a people to create their own being. The historical and cultural “amnesia” caused by Soviet rule is gradually being overcome by a return to spiritual, cultural, and social roots. Renewed interest in Islam and Sufism, was for her, a clear indicator of this. This kind of new awakening is contrasted with the ambiguous and threatening implications of the globalization and homogenization of social memory. Nonetheless, the author puts great stock in what she calls social creation.

“Social creation is the productive activity of people aimed at creating a new, more socially-organized community...the notion ‘social creation’ presupposes the activity of a transcendental subject, and leads to new creative social forms and to new contents of social life...Thus social creation is embodied in the rational forms and content of society. It is the process of concentrating intellect, spirit, and moral will” (p.138).

For Bakieva, “Social memory can be a source of communication, providing the connection between the people of different times and countries.” She invites her readers down the same country road the later Heidegger walked—a meditative and reflective search for ontological roots.¹⁰ After personal and social oppression, being human, being historical, being social—simply Being—needs to be grasped in a new light. Oppression does that to a people, and Bakieva understood that. It is a

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking: A Translation of Gelassenheit* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966).

difficult road, but like the “pied piper,” she musically leads us along the path with her “mystic chords of memory” and mystic chords of Being. Her epic tale is from Kyrgyzstan, but her message is global.

CHAPTER 15

NATIONAL IDENTITIES AND CULTURAL GLOBALIZATION: VIETNAM

NGUYEN NGOC HA

INTRODUCTION

In the following comments, the impact of globalization on particular and common cultural characteristics in Vietnam will be examined. The impact has, indeed, already been great. This summary will then move on to suggest the eventual inevitability of globalization and some of the great changes in culture, governance and law that that entails. Globalization is strongly influencing the economic, political, and cultural lives of the nations of the world. I believe cultural globalization is inevitable. However, Asian cultural identities will not disappear. This paper examines cultural characteristics, national cultural identity, and cultural globalization from a Vietnamese perspective.

CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The cultural characteristics of a nation can be grouped into two kinds: particular cultural characteristics, belonging to one nation, and common cultural characteristics, belonging to many different nations. For example, virtues such as tolerance and bravery are common values for many nations, whereas attire and the way we dress are an example of a cultural characteristic that is particular to a nation or cultural group. Furthermore, these cultural characteristics can also be described as those that are highly valued by a culture, and those that have come to be devalued by a culture. Laws also reflect national cultural characteristics. Laws, of course, are highly valued by the government of a nation and must be respected by its citizens.

Nonetheless, in every nation there is not always a completely shared common conception of cultural values. Some national cultural characteristics are valued and accepted by leading groups, but are undervalued and not accepted by other social groups. For example, the one-wife/one-husband marriage is a valued cultural characteristic in Vietnam and is now the law there, but there are some social groups who reject the value of this cultural characteristic. Likewise, western dress is a valued cultural characteristic for the French majority, but many French Muslims consider western dress, especially for women, a negation of their values. In short, each national culture has a system made up of both particular and

common, highly valued and devalued, legal and non-legal, cultural characteristics.

Common national cultural characteristics create similarities among national cultures. Particular cultural characteristics provide the differences. Identity is in the particular, not in the common, so national cultural identity involves those particular cultural characteristics. For example, the cultural identity of Vietnam bears all the particular national cultural characteristics which belong to all Vietnamese and only to them. These characteristics can consist of both valued and devalued ones. Thus, every nation should know its valued characteristics which need to be preserved, and its devalued characteristics which might be rejected. It would be better to speak not about “preserving national cultural identity,” but rather about preserving those highly valued national cultural characteristics.

Every nation has its own particular cultural characteristics but these are influenced by cultural exchange with other nations and cultures. Cultural exchange among nations has been carried out for thousands of years. Today those exchanges are broader and deeper. However, national cultural barriers still present problems. Historically some governments have created cultural barriers that prevent the freedom to apply other nation’s cultural characteristics within their own culture.

GLOBALIZATION, CULTURE AND GOVERNANCE

It is becoming clearer that cultural globalization is primarily fostered by economic globalization. Economic globalization has been ongoing for a long time and is still in process. Nonetheless, there are economic barriers to complete economic globalization, such as trade barriers as well as the practical need for passports and visas.

What is becoming clearer to me, at least, is that a future of economic globalization needs a common global government with a common system of laws. Such an institution would, in turn, lead to full cultural globalization. With no national cultural barriers and a global government with international laws, everyone would have the freedom to apply the valued global cultural characteristics within their own nations. First, there would be a common system of international laws. Second, those devalued national cultural characteristics would be reduced. Some would disappear completely. However, valued cultural characteristics, such as national language, dress, food, art, customs, creeds and religions, would continue to exist. Third, differences among national cultures would be less, because cultural exchanges would be stronger and broader. For example, there would be more Western cultural characteristics accepted by the Orient, and more Asian cultural characteristics accepted by the West. Smaller nations could apply cultural characteristics of major nations as they see fit in order to complement their own cultures. Every nation would be a part of a united world. The question would not be “what nationality are you?” but rather “what is your multinational community?” Fourth, there

might eventually even be a common formal language. This would, I believe, be a necessity for a common global government with common international laws. It appears to me that English would be the most suitable language for such a government.

EXAMPLE OF VIETNAM

Vietnamese culture has been developing for thousands of years. Vietnam has been greatly influenced by the Chinese and Indian cultures. Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are three religions introduced by China and India that have formed the core of Vietnamese culture and spiritual life. Under the rule of French colonialism (1884-1945), French culture had a great impact on Vietnamese culture. Western cultural characteristics valued by the French such as science, democracy, and market economy have contributed to Vietnamese culture. Perhaps most importantly, Vietnamese language changed from using Han writing characters to using Latin characters. This is the most obvious western impact on Vietnamese culture; China, Japan, and Korea still use Chinese characters.

Vietnamese culture imported and accepted many cultural characteristics from great national cultures (mainly Chinese, Indian, and French). This was an advantage for Vietnam in the process of global integration. Vietnam has its own particular cultural characteristics of language, art, food, dress, and customs, but these cultural characteristics are not seen to be in opposition to a common global culture.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, cultural globalization appears inevitable, but it will not abolish national cultural identities. Moreover, national cultural identities need to change in order to adjust to positive international developments. This adjustment means preserving valued cultural characteristics and rejecting devalued ones. In my judgment, cultural globalization makes sense as a means for constructing a more just and peaceful world—a global common cultural village—a unity but with diversity.

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CHAPTER 16

THE ROOTS OF DEMOCRACY IN INDIAN CULTURE

CHINTAMANI MALVIYA

INTRODUCTION

This summary of the discussion traces democracy back to Indian history and culture. The ancient Indian thinkers were concerned with good governance—more as a practical than theoretical matter. Neither in ethics nor in politics did they indulge in pure speculation. They dealt with the welfare of all beings (*praja*) and the cosmos but did not knit a theory of state and government. The context is: government of the people; supreme power is vested in the people and is exercised by their elected representatives in a free electoral system.

Vedic literature—the four Vedas, especially the *Rigveda* and the *Atharva Veda*—enunciates values of the commonweal, consent of the governed and accountability of rulers. Sears in the *Rigveda* says “O King, prudent people appointed you monarch to uplift the people, they appointed you as a guardian of disciplined subjects of this nation. Subjects are like your parents and you are like a son of your subjects” (*Rigveda*, 1-31-11). This Mantra is clear: the people control the king from being arbitrary. *Rigveda*, 10-124-8 speaks of the king serving the people:

Twaharshmtredhi dhruvastushshthavichachlih.
Visastwa sarva vanchhantu ma tvadrashttramdhibhragat

‘Savishoanuvyachalat’ (*AtharvVeda*, 15-9-1) reiterates the “servant” idea. The emphasis is more on duties and responsibilities than on rights and prerogatives. The ruler attains happiness by ensuring the well-being of his people. And Kautilya expands the scope of duties to cover the whole world because Dharma is cosmic and universal: “*Dharanaddharemityahu dharmena dharyate prajah*” say *Mahabharata* and *Manusmrti*. Maintenance of law and order, *danda*, represents dharma as well. It secures public order and is a legitimate political power to the extent that it promotes human happiness and enriches life (Manu, 7. 14). The goal is to achieve *sarva mangala* (universal good).

CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WELFARE

Sustainable development is generally defined as “the development

of natural resources to meet the immediate needs of the present population without hampering the requirements of future generation as well as endangering the ecology and environment as such. “It has also been defined as “improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystems” (quoted from *Sustainable Development* (Editors) N.L. Gupta and R.K. Gurjar, p. 1). The concept has acquired popular currency for socio-economic developmental policies and strategies with a concern for quality of life, inter-generational and intra-generational justice, preservation of eco-systems, forestry, natural capital, etc. *Rajdharma* provides broad guidelines for achieving this.

The traditional Indian perspective of development represented by the vedic terms ‘*gain*’, ‘*svasti*’, ‘*sivam*’, ‘*kalyana*’, ‘*mangala*’, etc. has been genuinely sustainable by virtue of its being holistic, integrated, all-comprehensive and futuristic; it takes into account individual, social and cosmic dimensions of existence in its material as well as spiritual aspects. It envisions no incompatibility or antagonism or conflict among these as they are all conceived and experienced as inter-related and inter-dependent elements of one and the same whole (*Tadekam*). That is why in Indian culture, there is no divisive language like intra-generational or inter-generational justice; rather, the culture speaks of the integrative *asteya* (not to usurp what does not legitimately belong to us) and *aparigraha* (not to accumulate more than what is needed. These are highlighted in the Jaina and Yoga traditions: a spiritualistic vision that projected fifty ideals as *purusarthas* (supreme human objectives) which a rational, free and responsible human being can realise. Going beyond materialism is very helpful, even needed, for this endeavor—even as Indian culture sees no antagonism between spiritual and material (kama) development; it rather aims at abhjudaya (all-round material progress).

Cosmic unity and universal perfection (Brahman or Puma) are seen in terms of being one family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*); this perfection is inculcated as an attitude of self-sameness (*sarvatra sama drsti*) and being engaged in the well-being of all existence (*loka samgraha*) without any selfish consideration (niskama bhava). The *Gita* and *Bodhi Caryavatara* give the highest expression to unity: hatred and malice towards none, friendliness and compassion for all, absence of deprivation and exploitation in all respects—the essential elements of Indian culture (See also: *Yajurveda Samhita* 36/17 *vajasaneyi Madhyandina Sukla*). These may be summarized as peace and prosperity in outer space and inner space, on earth, in the waters, in the life-giving animal kingdoms, in plants and trees, in the entire cosmos, in the entire *Reality*, everywhere and at all times. May there be peace and prosperity. The world renowned principles of *pancasila* of mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual tolerance, mutual accommodation and mutual interaction at national and international levels can contribute to a genuinely sustainable development. Sharing the goods of the environment and trust in nature’s ability to regulate and preserve itself prompts humans to cooperate with nature.

The regeneration of humans and the transformation of nature are other constituents of sustainable development. These include policy efforts which enable us to safeguard and sustain nature as well as human social capital. For this task it would be ideal to have some form of global planning and strategy but this would first require considerable social transformation. The establishment of a social order—an organization in a democratic form oriented to equality, justice and freedom—requires discipline, tolerance and mutuality. These are the features that are characteristic of democracy as it is understood today.

POST-VEDIC PERIOD

This period is characterized by an expansion of the king's powers and thereby a decrease in democracy. The king was elected from the beginning of the Vedic era. His power was limited and he remained under the control of public leaders; gradually he wielded enormous power: he became arbitrary and despotic. Underlying these changes was the post-Vedic view that held the king as celestial or divine—head of the region and of religion, and thus, an autocrat. The *Mahabharat*, *Puranna*, *Sutra Granthand Smriti*—among others—support the divinity of the king.

DEMOCRATIC STATES IN THE BUDDHA'S PERIOD

The Lord Buddha's period had a strong democratic tradition. There were 16 'Ganarajya' Democratic States at that time: Ang, Magadh, Kashi, Kaushal, Bajji, Malla, Vatsa, Chedi, Panchal, Kuru, Matsaya, ShoorSen, Ashmak, Awanti, Gandhar, and Comboj. These democratic states were swallowed by the great empire which was a Greek invention. The states had been governed by a council called, 'Sabha' or 'parishad'—that had the right to decide on governmental issues. The head or king (called *Raja*) had administrative rights; and, in time of war, he was also the chief of the army.

SABHA AND SAMITI

To control and advise the king there were two types of predominant institutions in the Vedic tradition, especially during the Post Vedic and Buddha period: the *Sabha* and the *Samiti*. The *Samiti* was a national committee of people which elected the king; it dealt with matters of state, policy making and social and public issues. These issues were debated freely and peacefully with the king himself in attendance at times. The *Sabha* was larger than the *Samiti*. It dealt with foreign policy, treaties and trade. It met in 'Santhagar' presided over by the 'Ganapramukh'. Decisions were by majority rule; voting was direct {*Vitarak*} and secret {*Guhayk*} (*Bauddha Rajdarshan* A.K. Dube Narden Book Center, New Delhi, page 143). In *Bauddha Sangh*, voters used colored ballots {*Shalaka*};

an officer of the government {Shalaka Grahak} would cast his vote before the election. The *Sabha* even appointed cabinet members. One must remember all of this occurred some 2500 years ago.

In spite of these positive systems, common people did not participate in elections—their leaders did. Later Alexander's conquests weakened the states. But Chandra Gupt Maurya organized the defeated states and was victorious against Seleucus, Alexander's governor. He then established a centralized government—the Maurya Empire, which eventually lost out to petty monarchs. In 720 AD Muhamad Bin Qasim conquered Sindh, and a series of wars was followed by Muslim rule established in Delhi. Nevertheless, democratic processes continued in the villages. However, in 1857 the British imposed their rule on India, and terminated village democracy. On 15 August 1947 a free India adopted democracy again—parliamentary democracy which had developed in the United Kingdom.

Diversity is a characteristic of India—including—numerous religions, 24 important languages and several dialects, and geographic and climate differences. Diversity poses difficulties for democracy. Hindus are by far the majority. Muslims number 150 million (15% of the Indian population); Sikhs, 20 million; Christians—mostly in tribal areas and coastal areas and especially in Kerala, Goa and Tamilnadu—account for about 2% of the Indian population but have a much stronger political influence in certain areas than numbers indicate. The effects of caste and region are another challenge for democracy. There are more than 2,000 castes (*jatis*) with practically no intermarriage; ethnic culture correlates with the different regions—some political parties are based on region. In the tribal Northeast the government has faced periodic armed insurrection since independence—especially in Assam, Nagaland, Mijoram. Kashmir has had a special status under Article 370 of the constitution, with Kashmiri separatist struggling for a free Islamic nation.

Lack of education presents another challenge to a democratic India. Many voters might not know what democracy is and undervalue the right of suffrage. The high number of parties and independent candidates complicates the situation—voters often rely on personality, caste, region or religion in place of a political platform as the basis for their choice of party or candidate. Further, the incorporation of religion-based rules of conduct in the civil code is not consistent with India's status as a secular state. Laws on marriage and divorce impinge on Islam; the civil code applies only to Hindus and not to Christians and Parsi. Thus, demography really matter.

CONCLUSION

India has democracy in its tradition; it needs to employ its values, drawn from history and culture, to shape its practice of democracy today. Selecting a ruler, disciplined use of power by the ruler, and control of the people over the ruler are germane to democracy. However, correction is

also needed. The roots of democracy are there in India's remote past, but democratic rights were exercised only by select elites. Widespread as the underlying values might be, the task today is to enable and empower the common Indian to exercise these rights.

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PART V

EASTERN EUROPE, RECLAIMING

THE PAST TO BUILD A FUTURE

CHAPTER 17

THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPTS “CULTURE” AND “CIVILIZATION:” HERZEN’S CREATIVE WORK

ELENA GREVTSOVA

INTRODUCTION

Given our topic “History and Cultural Identity,” it will be useful and interesting to get acquainted with some of the ideas of Russian philosophical thought. The greatest interest in this project represents not the achievements in the field of ontology and epistemology but elaborations in the field of the philosophy of history and philosophy of culture. We owe the richness of ideas precisely to the fact that Russia historically had always been at the cross-roads of civilizations, and Russian philosophical thought did not just reflect this situation but also produced new schemes and forms of existence.

Like Russia itself, Russian philosophical thought is “at the cross-roads between East and West”. And being “between” was not passive but active and creative. The necessity in solving geopolitical problems, so that Russia could protect its interests, induced our social thought to creative work. As a result, Russian history is not only rich in events of a social and political character, but also in ideas which go far beyond just one culture.

The subject of the dialogue of cultures (civilizations) and cultural identity is one of the priorities in Russian thought. Great interest in this subject can be traced from the times of their conversion to Christianity (10th century) until today. Every century presented its own variant of the solution to this problem. However, for me, the nineteenth century approach has the most appeal. It was not only full of events and ideas but also it created the basis for a period of great change. The temper of Russian culture in the twentieth century was formed, and made it possible for Russia to influence the world community in many fields—from science and art to politics.

Russian social consciousness has been split into two parties, two camps for a long time. The history of Russian thought can be represented in the distinction of two directions, two “guides”—“Westernism” and “Slavophilism“. The remains of this contradistinction can still be found today. We should stress the fact that this contradistinction was, in its original form, a dialogue. We should also mention that such a contradistinction is typical and not only in Russian society. All communities sooner or later have to face the problem of “who and what form our orientation?” Not only culture but also foreign policy depends on

the solution to this problem. The answer to the question “who and what forms our orientation,” depends on understanding the meaning of this or that culture and the development of relations with neighbors: dialogue or confrontation.

Russian philosophical consciousness has been trying to solve this problem and still finds it pressing. The process of integration into European and the world community continues, and no one has offered a simple solution which can be accepted by everyone. We are searching for some kind of integration during which we would not have to face the problem of losing ourselves, losing our cultural identity. We are interested not in anonymous, featureless blending with the world community but in a kind of entry that would enrich us and the world, as well.

Russian philosophy of culture is rich in attempts which might be called “dialogue of cultures”. The history of our thought gives examples of steady dialogues in the field of philosophy, both with European countries and with the North American continent. As a rule, the problematic of the philosophy of culture is one of the priorities for a Russian philosopher. However, for this seminar of all Russian thinkers I would like to single out Alexander Ivanovich Herzen whose creative work has been the subject of my research. For me, he is just the kind of philosopher who, while looking into philosophy of culture and creating the basis for integration, did not forget about protecting a civilization’s peculiarity, and its unique cultural identity. As I will attempt to show in this paper, his ideas are still relevant today, not only for the Russian scientific community but for the whole world.

HERZEN ON CULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

The philosophy of culture of Alexander Ivanovich Herzen (1812-1870), a talented Russian writer, publicist, and social representative, is a product of a complex intellectual development, which included an original perception of European life of that time. The perceptions of the Russian nationalism about social ideals, freedom and sovereignty, and, suffering humanity are all reflected in his personality.

Herzen didn’t create any conceptual philosophy of culture. However in his numerous compositions of a philosophical and journalistic character important theoretical problems of spiritual culture are covered. The contradictions of European civilization are revealed, and an original exposition of culture and civilization is presented.

An early period of Herzen’s creative work is characterized by interest in problems of natural science. The works he wrote after graduating from the Department of Physics and Mathematics at Russian State University include: “About Man’s Place in Nature” (1832). “Analytical Exposition of Copernicus’s Solar System” (1833).

The study of the socialistic ideas of Saint-Simon and Fourier produced by Herzen, together with N.P. Ogarev, began the period of

Herzen's ideological development. It is obvious that the strongest impact on the young thinker was Hegel's philosophy, which is reflected in such early philosophical works as "Dilettantism in Science" (1842-1843) and "Letters on the Study of Nature" (1845-1846). Initially Herzen (until 1847) developed a nationalist philosophy, influenced by Western thought. Hegel influenced his attitude towards the East and this shows in his underestimation of classical Arabic and Muslim philosophy.

Not only the underestimation, but also his evident disdain of Eastern culture in general can be seen in Herzen's lines from "Letters on the Study of Nature". He writes that the East "used to live by a fantasy and never formed to an extent to which it could clarify its thoughts."(III; 142)¹ and further: "Asia is a country of disharmony, contradictions; it doesn't know its limit in anything while a limit is the main condition of a steady development. The life of Eastern peoples formed itself either in the periods of catastrophic revolutions and upheavals or in dull quietness of monotonous repetition." In ten year's time, after Herzen wrote these lines, he became a witness of "terrible revolutions" but in the West, not in the East. Before his immigration in 1847, Herzen remained a passionate disciple of Western civilization. He was a permanent reader of Saint-Simon, Fourier and Hegel. He read the works of Saint-Simon, Fourier, Hegel, Leibniz, Descartes, Spinoza, Schiller, Hoffman, Herder, Rousseau, Byron and many other Western authors.

Just as of Hegel's "Lectures on the History of Philosophy," Herzen looks at the basic periods of the development of the philosophical mind—from antiquity to the Middle Ages to the then New Age. In his third "Letter on the Study of Nature," Herzen writes: "The first free step in the element of ideation has occurred when a man puts his foot on precious European soil, when he went beyond the limits of Asia Ionia is the beginning of Greece and the end of Asia... When entering the world of Greece, we feel that a guiding spirit is around us,—this is the West, this is Europe" (III; 143). One can compare this to Hegel: "The East has separated itself from everything specific and definite while the West has put itself into the intensity and the presence of spirit."² Hegel's Eurocentrism is also evident in the fact that he decided not to give "a special description," even of the highest achievements of Arabic philosophy: "This is what we can say about the Arabs: their philosophy does not form a specific contribution to the development of philosophy."³

A.I. Herzen, just like his Moscow friends—M.A. Bakunin, N.P. Ogarev, V.P. Botkin, T.N. Granovsky, N.V. Stankevich, V.G. Belinskiy,

¹ Note the first figure in brackets means the number of the volume from the collection of A.I. Herzen's works in thirty volumes (M., 1954-1960), the second is the page number.

² Hegel G.F. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*. W. V. XI. M.-L., 1935. p. 99.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

considered the achievements of the new European science and philosophy, especially that of Hegel, to be the highest achievement. He calls the principle of identity of existence and thought “the most powerful strain of pure thought”. This position is very different from the ideas of the representatives of the “Moscow school”—Slavophiles A.S. Khomyakov, I.V. Kireevsky, brothers I.S. and K.S. Aksakovs, Y.F. Samarin. These Slavophiles attempted to create a nationally oriented philosophy based on Orthodoxy instead of studying German Romanticism and German classical philosophy. In addition, they criticized Hegel’s eurocentrism. Herzen, however, did not really critique the limits of Western understanding of culture and civilization until he went abroad.

The most important idea, adopted by Herzen in the early period, was “freedom of personality”. This topic can be traced throughout his whole life. The freedom of getting closer to European culture in all its aspects, freedom from police tyranny, and being able to do creative work without any fear of censorship were the values which Herzen sought.

When he left Russia, Herzen also carried the conviction that European civilization was the highest achievement to which other countries should aspire. This was the example to be followed—a boundary or a model. Herzen was convinced that Russia’s “peripheral” civilization must be overcome. He also intended to contribute to the needed change using the power of the “free-spirited Russian word”.

Originally Herzen identified the notions of “civilization” and “culture”; putting them totally within his image of Europe. However, later, when he found himself in the West and became a witness of revolutionary events of 1848, he changed his opinion of Europe dramatically. After moving abroad in 1847, Herzen wrote his main philosophical and popular writings. Even the first, entitled “Letters from France and Italy”, already demonstrated the very thing which N.A. Berdyaev called “an absolute uprising against the world process, against the universal spirit in the name of a living person, in the name of personality.”⁴ Herzen wrote against “world harmony”. He developed a philosophical polemic against Hegel, as well as against Saint-Simon, De Mestres, Gizo, Shatobrian, Lamenne, Mishle and other theorists of European civilization.

Differentiation between the notions “culture” and “civilization” became the basis of Herzen’s changed views. According to N.A. Berdyaev, such a differentiation is a common feature in Russian thought. It is related to what Berdyaev defines as “the justification of culture”. He pointed out that the difference between the notions of civilization and culture and also “the justification of culture” could only be perceived by the most outstanding minds, “the most intelligent Russian people”. Berdyaev also mentioned that the “Russians made differentiation between the notions of “culture” and “civilization” long before Spengler and emphasized

⁴ Berdyaev N.A. *The Russian Idea //Concerning Russia and Russian Philosophical Culture*. M., 1990. p. 108.

"civilization," even when they continued being supporters of "culture". This differentiation, in fact, though in other terms, was also supported by Slavophiles, like Herzen, K. Leontiev and many others.⁵

Acting as a "critic of civilization," Herzen, first of all doubts the idea of "civilizational universalism", the confirmation that an integrated (European) civilization makes everyone equal. This is the final goal of historic movements of peoples who haven't reached the "condition of maturity". While the "select", more civilized peoples, have already moved towards "the end of history". Therefore, Herzen anticipates the contemporary criticism of Fukuyama's concept of "the end of history."⁶

The critics of understanding civilization as a definite normative condition in the history of humanity repudiate the "linear" and "formational" concepts of the historical process and a move towards a more productive, civilizational approach. This shift is currently being discussed in the contemporary science literature.⁷ The differentiation between the concepts of "culture" and "civilization" is common for a number of Russian philosophers, as it was for Herzen. This is a distinctive contribution to the substantiation of a civilizational approach. The protest against civilization is treated as "an external aspect of culture" which resists the inner development of personality. Finally, the tradition of "national culture" can definitely be seen here as a protest against the scientific and technical attempt necessary to control nature in a civilization. This limits culture to a system of values, ideals, norms of behavior." In such an interpretation, civilization is seen as something superficial, external and even alien to people, while culture is looked at as a system of deep, national, traditional value.⁸

Herzen's first acquaintance with Europe is represented in "Letters from France and Italy" and shows radical changes in his views of European civilization. First, he experienced positive and excited impressions of a traveler around Europe. This was replaced, according to the author's words, by "ominous doubt". In the preface to the edition of 1858 he mentions that: "Having started with a scream of joy at moving abroad, I ended up with my spiritual return to the motherland" (V; 10). Herzen expresses doubt about

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁶ See: Mejuev V.M. *Russia as a Cultural Alternative to Modern Civilization // Russian Civilization. Ethnocultural and Spiritual Aspects*. M., 1998. pp. 49-59; Panarin A.S., *Revenge of History: Russian Strategic Initiative in the XXIst Century*. M., 1998.

⁷ See.: The First International Philosophical Symposium "Dialogue of Civilizations: East—West". M., 1994; The Second International Philosophical Symposium "Dialogue of Civilizations: East—West". Ed. 1, 2. M., 1995; Yakovets Y.V. *The History of Civilizations*. M., 1995; Mchedlova M.M. *Questions of Civilization in French Social Studies*. M., 1996.

⁸ Naydish V.M. *Civilization as a Problem of the Philosophy of History*. M., 1997. pp. 14-15.

European civilization truly being a “boundary”, a sort of a normative ideal condition, based on a “strictly and orderly formulated life”. This civilization presented to him an odd combination of legend and modern times, it included “the greatest contradictions, historical habits and theoretical ideals, the remains of antique capitals, and churches, knight’s spears, pieces of the Tsar’s clothes and tablets of laws of freedom, equality and brotherhood.

Beneath there are the Middle Ages, at the bottom were the masses. Above them were free citizens and higher educated free men and philosophers. There were representatives of all kinds of savageness—starting with the Duke of Alba and ending with Cavaignac. “Civilization” was represented by trends from Hugo Grotius and to Proudhon, from Loyola to Blanqui” (V; 12). More than once, Herzen expressed the thought that this civilization was made “not for us”, that in Europe “our people don’t feel themselves in the right place”. Rather, they are almost in the condition of feeling “alien among family members”. Herzen was shocked when he first became acquainted with Europe. This led him to “the edge of moral death,” from which there was only one salvation—“belief in Russia” (V; 10).

Herzen understood that Europe was not a civilizational single whole, but rather that it contained many differences. These differences are formed under the influence of various circumstances of peoples’ ways of life, national character and, also, under the influence of material, economic and financial interests. Thus, specific civilizational traditions and habits are formed in various parts of Europe. However, all these civilizational peculiarities are seen by Herzen in dark colors, with the exception of, probably, Italy, which is characterized by Herzen in bright and vivacious colors. The reason for this is probably that Herzen got acquainted with Italy just when it was in the period of *Risorgimento*, and national upsurge. Herzen was also acquainted with the main participants of the *Risorgimento*—Mazzini, Garibaldi, Orsini and others, and he, himself, was basically a participant. His writings were published in Italian editions, and he gave financial support to the Italian republicans. The reason for this special attitude to Italy was that Herzen considered Italy, just as Russia, to be a special part of Europe. From this special status, he drew his comparison of Russian and Italian national characteristics.

Using his literary talent, Herzen saw himself as a critic of civilization (precisely civilization, not culture). Satire and irony become his favorite weapons. He laughs at the conceited German burger: “German people are great in science, but they are the hardest, the worst, the most stupid, and above all, the funniest philistines” (V; 17). He parodies German “culinary tastes”; he criticizes French militarization of social life: “France has been infected with militarism since the times of Napoleon” (V; 164). Making fun of English practicality, he mentions: “Money is a good thing; I love it so much. This is not about hating money; this is about a decent person not subordinating everything to money, about not everyone being corrupt and venal in his soul” (V; 30). Irony turns out to be a special form

of philosophical stylistics. Its goal is "to get rid of idols" and to show "plain truth as it is," which is far better than "lying for the benefit of something". Besides that, Herzen also mentions that irony and allegory, love of antimony and paradox are the true companions of the freedom of thought: "Only those who are equal laugh with one another. Walter's laughter destroyed more than Russo's crying» (V; 89).

Herzen's ironic criticisms of Western civilization undoubtedly became a national treasure of Russian philosophy and influenced its future development. The Russian philosopher, V.V. Zenkovsky, pointed out that "Herzen's writings are typical in general, of the acquaintance of the Russian soul with the West."⁹ He wrote that the critics of western civilization "matchlessly depicted" in Herzen's creative work, are developed in the traditions of D.I. Fonvizin, N.M. Karamzin, P.A. Vyazemsky. Likewise, the criticism is close to the ideas of A.S. Khomyakov, I.V. Kireevsky, K.S. Aksakov, V.F. Odoevsky. Zenkovsky's monograph, dedicated to Herzen, concludes with the following memorable words: "And the fact that Herzen's creative work has become especially intimate and understandable for the contemporary Russian intelligentsia cannot be doubted. This is why the history of Herzen's spiritual development is extremely important and valuable for us, though in Europe, despite his huge superficial success and fame, he remained alien and distant to the great majority of people."¹⁰

The outstanding piece of evidence of misunderstanding Herzen's view of Western civilization is the hostile perception of Herzen's personality itself, by Marx, and especially, Engels. The absolutely groundless and unreasoned criticism of Herzen by the founders of Marxism was never revealed to the public in the USSR. At the same time, Western theorists of Marxism talked about the hostile attitude of Marx and Engels towards Russia and the Slavs. Some noted, in particular, that the founders of Marxism directly continue Hegel's concept of "historic" and "nonhistoric" nations, meaning that Slavic peoples, who were under Austrian and German dominance and didn't have their own nationhood, were nonhistoric. Antislavic sentiment was especially strong during the revolution of 1848-1849, when Marx and Engels expressed contempt and disdain of Slavic peoples. They called for enhancing control of them on behalf of the German middle class, as well as the Austrian and Hungarian nobility and their allies.¹¹ This could be explained by the fact that Marx's and Engel's views were formed in the atmosphere of antislavic sentiments that were popular in Germany and Austria during the time of the Hapsburg monarchy."¹² Besides that, Marx and Engels always supported the

⁹ Zenkovsky V.V. *Russian Thinkers and Europe*. M., 1997. p. 61.

¹⁰ Ibid. p. 61-62.

¹¹ Nerod Ch. *The Nation in the History of Marxian Thought. The Concept of Nations with History and Nations without History*. The Hague, 1976. p. 2.

¹² Ibid.. p.3.

advancement of Poland, as they viewed it as Russia's opponent that would offset the influence of the Russian Empire in Europe.

The sharpest teachings of Marx and Engels were not open to the public in the USSR. However, those that were published, including later correspondence, show how vulgar and senseless that criticism really was. For instance, in his letter to I. F. Becker, dated June 14, 1872, Engels considers Herzen to be a person from the category of "Russian aristocrats" and "charlatans", contrasting them with the "better people"—and "ordinary, peasant people".¹³ Engels disdainfully called Herzen "a famous Russian, half German, who had illegal connections with Russian nobility" (this is a not so subtle hint that Herzen was the illegitimate son of a nobleman, whose name was I. A. Yakovlev). Engels' claim is that he tried "to show 'holy' Russia in the best light, in comparison to a rotten West and to describe his mission—to rejuvenate and restore, if necessary even by using weapons this rotten, the aging West."¹⁴ In the epilogue to his work *About the Social Matter in Russia* Engels accuses Herzen of many sins—Pan Slavism (Herzen was not a Pan Slav, unlike M.A. Bakunin, F.I. Tuytchev and others), anarchism (Herzen was Bakunin's friend, however he did not share his views), reactionary links to P.N. Tkachev (which is totally unreasonable) and of aspiring to restore the West "by means of arms" "hinting that Herzen was close to the Russian government."¹⁵

We should also mention that Herzen, to his honor, never paid attention to his critics by answering them. In his creative work, we find only a short reference: "All of my enmity with Marxists is because of Bakunin" (XXX; 201). There is enough evidence to think that Herzen was acquainted with Marx's creative work. He received necessary information about Marxism through many of his friends and correspondents—P.V. Annenkov, M.A. Bakunin, M. Hess, N.I. Sazonov, G. Herwegh, C. Vogt, A. Everbeck and others. The papers that have recently been published are a proof of this.¹⁶ They prove that all the attempts of the European socialists, who were close to Marx, to persuade Herzen about the eventual triumph of communism and a bourgeois revolution in the West, were not successful. Herzen was absolutely certain of the inability of the West to have a "social reform" during the period of the mid to late 1800s. "Social ideas had a heroic introduction,"—he wrote,—"neither the velvet jacket of Father Enfantin, nor the phalanstery of Fourier, labor rights, nor "*bonum*

¹³ K. Marx and F. Engels, *Revolutionary Russia*. M., 1967. p. 40.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.112-113.

¹⁵ Characteristically V.I. Lenin also never mentioned K. Marx and F. Engels' hostile attitude towards A.I. Herzen, and G.V. Plekhanov, in fact, hid this hostility, looking at it as at a "misunderstanding". (G.V. Plekhanov. W. V. XXIII. M.-L., 1926. P. 443).

¹⁶ Some resources of Herzen's information about K. Marx and F. Engels (1850-1851) are // *Literary inheritance*. V. 96. Herzen and the West. M., 1985. pp. 643-658.

commune" (E.G.:common character of property), the destruction of family, denial of property—will do more than they already did..." (XVIII; 364). Therefore, "scientific improvements", such as Marx's theory, will not do any good, because "science by itself can't save the fall of civilization, and in addition there's no interest in saving it; it is not dear to any land" (XX; 667).

Herzen presents his view of culture and civilization, which is totally different from all well-known rationalist schemes—starting from enlightening theories and ending with Hegel's and Marx's ideas. It is presented in his major work, *From the Other Shore*.

According to Herzen, the desire of the social sciences to get rid of all evil, stupidity, and hopelessness, which take place in the world, is baseless. If the world was formed according to various recipes of scientists and philosophers instead of subordination to the will of kings, aristocrats and priests, then overall happiness would have been reached. Perception, of course, helps make a person free, and gives him confidence in his strength. However, there are various opinions about the world, and, by themselves, they cannot contribute to reaching automatic progress. History follows no libretto; no clue, no formula can solve the problems of personality. The goal of human life is life itself, and people should not be eager to give senseless sacrifices at the shrine of history, though some circumstances may make them do this. For Herzen the Revolution of 1848 was proof of this.

Universal solutions and decisions based on abstract and universal goals are useless from the human person's perspective. Every period of history has its own particularities and its own questions and problems. However, the human person is a unique being, and "the death of one person is in no way less tragic and senseless than the death of all of the humanity" (VI; 37).

The goal of life is life itself, not various "theories of life". "Life has its own process of embryonic development, which does not coincide with the dialectics of pure mind" (VI; 29). Civilization, like history, in general, does not follow any kind of plan in the process of self-development, it does not belong to any definite point or limit of growth. "Who limited civilization?", "Where is its limit?"—asks Herzen and answers: "It is endless, like thought, like art, it draws the ideals of life, it dreams of deifying its own life" (VI; 31).

HERZEN'S CRITICISM AND HIS CRITICS

Many of Herzen's speeches are against senseless historic abstractions—his criticism of a unilinear conception of a civilization, mixed with paradoxes about history being "a boring fairy tale, which had been narrated by a fool" (Shakespeare)), led the researchers of his creative work to a dead end. Zenkovsky believed that there was a hidden well of religious energy coming out of his so-called "secularized" devoutness. He proposed his thesis about Herzen's "historic (historiosophic) alogism". Zenkovsky

wrote that “historiosophic alogism made too big of a breach in Herzen’s religious world. However, he could not deny religious immanentism, and that is why his philosophic constructions remained incomplete. All that was left for Herzen was the tragic circumstances in which to acknowledge “the tattered improvisation of history.”¹⁷ However this is not a satisfying explanation. On the basis of what Zenkovsky called “a historiosophic alogism,” lies neither a particular type of irrationalism nor devoutness. Herzen’s incredulity is not a form of escape from reality. It’s just the opposite; what he formulates is an original approach, taking into account “a personal measurement” of civilization and culture, not an abstract approach, but a vital, real one.”

Criticism of European civilization is not a goal for Herzen, it is actually a means of showing that abstract theoretical formulas, that logically justify the regularity and imminence of European progress, become a threatening weapon in the hands of fanatics and devotees. Such people long to use these weapons against common people by imposing forcible and violent ideals on them, not related to their real needs. Herzen laughs at “smart people”, bourgeois people, who are ready to explain everything in the world. These, according to his words,—“are the people who talk about any case until it becomes nonsense. They explain everything, understand everything, but every vital question comes out of their own heads, as a green leaf, that has been put into chloride,—pale and faded” (XX. B. 2; 555). “A number of smart people”, in which Herzen includes journalists, parliamentarians, “failed revolutionaries”, put long to put into practice the ideas of “philosophical fatalists”. The opinions of the latter are characterized in the following way: “. . . events do not depend on people, people depend on events. We might rule the movement, but, basically, we follow a wave to where it takes us, without even knowing where it will take us” (XX. B. 2; 588). Decisively opposing fatalistic determinism, Herzen expresses his own opinion: “Events are realized by people and have their impress on them—thus the interaction. . . In order to become a blind weapon of fate, a whip, a divine executioner, one needs to have some sort of naive faith, simplicity of behavior, wild bigotry and an endless infancy of thought” (XX. B. 2; 588).

Herzen’s decisive criticism of “philosophical fatalism“, and antagonism against metaphysical systems, which infer a transcendental goal, as the purpose for the development of history and civilization is strong. His assertion of freedom and independence of the personality, his feeling of spiritual loneliness and distance from the dominance of Europe bourgeois values bond Herzen with the thinkers of an existential orientation.

For the Russian philosopher, an immediate way out of “the spiritual drama”, of the antagonism and closedness of European civilization,

¹⁷ Zenkovskiy V.V. *The History of Russian Philosophy*. V. 1. Paris, 1989. p. 301.

was the corresponding antagonism of "the Socialistic choice". This later took the form of "Russian socialism", and was existentially depicted and established in personal spiritual experiences of philosophical thought. People famous during the Soviet time studied Herzen's life and work. However, A.I. Volodin, A.T. Pavlov, Z.V. Smirnova and others were not correct in claiming the existence of a clear connection between his "the spiritual drama" and the development of "Russian socialism". For example, Z.V. Smirnova wrote that "Herzen found a way out of the spiritual drama in the idea of "Russian socialism."¹⁸ In this article we will not deal with Herzen's project of "Russian socialism". Thus, we will only say that in such works as *Letters from France and Italy* and *From the Other Shore* (where the spiritual drama is presented) there is no specific mention of socialism, except criticisms. There is, nevertheless, much about Herzen's "spiritual return" to his motherland, to Russia. Moreover, even later, when, in fact, the development of "Russian socialism" started (in the middle of the 1850s), Herzen more than once spoke up against populist, especially Bakunin's views on socialism.

We turn now to the words of Alexander Herzen's son that are the epigraph to *From the Other Shore*: "Do not look for solutions to problems in this book—they are not in it, a modern person does not have them anyway" (VI; 7). This quote, in my opinion, expresses exactly Herzen's existential orientation.

In Western and Russian literature the comparison of the Russian thinker with existentialism is not new. In the West, Herzen's "existential interpretation" for the first time was expressed by the American historian, Martin Malia, who pointed out a "deep similarity" between Herzen and Kierkegaard.¹⁹ Z.V. Smirnova in her article²⁰ and monograph²¹ critically looked at the parallel, "Herzen—Kierkegaard". Smirnova defined this parallel as "tendentious," as it is based on the work, *From the Other Shore*. Here the links are external, not internal, guided by the similarity of thought and parallels between Herzen and Kierkegaard. Nonetheless, Smirnova claims that the comparison "Herzen—Kierkegaard" ignores the concrete political context of Herzen's writings, because, as mentioned above, the final goal of the Russian thinker—the way out of "the spiritual drama" was the basis of "Russian socialism".

However, Z.V. Smirnova's arguments are not perfect. First, "existential thoughts" take place in Herzen's later works; especially they can be seen in *My Past and Thoughts*. Second, as mentioned above, any

¹⁸ *The History of Philosophy in the USSR*. V. 2. M., 1968. p. 370.

¹⁹ Malia M. *Alexander Herzen and the Birth of Russian Socialism*. Cambridge, Mass., 1961. pp. 381-382.

²⁰ Smirnova Z.V. *One Fallacious Historic Parallel// Questions about Philosophy*. 1968. № 10.

²¹ Smirnova Z.V. *A.I. Herzen's Social Philosophy*. M., 1973.

doctrine especially political, was absolutely alien to Herzen.—He was already in opposition to any “final decisions”. In his philosophy and politics, Herzen was a free thinker, who was not tied by any “party responsibilities,” and there is no foundation to consider “political context” as a priority in his works. He is, first of all, a philosopher but clearly aware of the political and social spheres. Furthermore, existentialism, itself, can combine philosophy and political polemics, and the proof of that, of course, is the works of Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. Camus valued Herzen’s creative work and called him “a great thinker.”²²

Nonetheless, Smirnova is right that similarity between Herzen and Kierkegaard is superficial. There are ideological differences between the Dane and the Russian. Kierkegaard was a deeply religious philosopher, and Herzen was “a faithless aesthete” (I. Fudel). However, as we can see, “superficial similarities” are enough to have a parallel “Herzen—Kierkegaard”. Eventually, both Herzen and Kierkegaard belong to the same culture—that is European philosophical culture, they both reject Hegel’s criticism in their philosophy. They both widely use the method of irony and paradox.²³

From my perspective, when discussing Herzen, we can use the definition proposed by P.P. Gaydenko about Kierkegaard’s philosophy—“the tragedy of aestheticism.”²⁴ Unfortunately, besides Smirnova not one Russian author suggested the parallel “Herzen—Kierkegaard”. Here we can gain insight from the experience of Western thinkers, who have studied at this topic. The best interpretation available is by the American author, William Weidemaier.²⁵ Unlike another American researcher, J.Clive, who speaks about Herzen’s “intuitive world outlook.”²⁶ Weidemaier uses that term “existential world outlook” when talking about Herzen. From the American Slavist’s point of view, one can see a similar world outlook in F.M. Dostoevsky, L.N. Tolstoy, V.S. Solovyov, K. N. Leontiev, L. Shestov,

²² Camus Albert. *The Rebel*. Trans. by Anthony Bower. N.Y. 1961. P. 153.

²³ A detailed analysis of this method can be found in the following works: E.V. Lavrentsova. *The Problem of Absurd in Søren Kierkegaard’s Philosophy*. Abstract of candidate’s thesis. M., 1999; Cherdantseva I.V. *Irony: from the Notion to the Method of Philosophism*. Yekaterinburg, 1999.

²⁴ Gaydenko P.P. *The Tragedy of Aestheticism: (The experience of the characteristics of S. Kierkegaard’s world view)* M., 1970; Also turn to K.M. Dolgov’s work. *From Kierkegaard to Camus*. M., 1990.

²⁵ Weidemaier W.C. *Herzen and the Existential World View. A New Approach to an Old Debate // Slavic Review*. Vol. 40. № 4. Winter 1981. Pp. 557-569.

²⁶ Clive G. *The Broken Icon: Intuitive Existentialism in Classical Russian Fiction*. N.Y., 1972.

V.V. Rozanov and, especially N.A. Berdyaev.²⁷ Weidemaier rejects the view of another Western author, T. Blackham, who does not accept the comparison of Herzen's and Kierkegaard's ideas, on the basis that the Danish thinker was religious and Herzen was not.²⁸ According to Weidemaier, we cannot look at Herzen as at a representative of religious existentialism. He rather should be viewed as a thinker, who belonged to the atheistic line of existential philosophy.²⁹ However, it should be mentioned that Herzen was not a "fighting atheist". His attitude to religion was not an antagonistic one, but rather "existential". He condemns the Western church for turning out to be powerless and not being able to stop revolutionary bloodshed: "Blood poured in rivers, and they (churchmen—churches) could not find words of love, reconciliation" (VI; 47). In general, religion, as everything, belongs to the human's "judgment of mind". Religion, faith in the immortality of soul, is a personal matter for every person: "Executing beliefs is not as easy as it may seem to be; it is difficult to part with thoughts, with which we grew up" (VI; 45). Herzen also mentions that the proclamation of atheism by itself is not enough to abolish or annihilate religion—"as if it is enough to kill Louis XVI not to have monarchy".

Herzen's criticism of Western civilization as the result of inner dissension can be more precisely characterized as "an existential criticism". In a methodological way it is quite important to draw the difference between Existentialism as a specific direction of philosophy of the twentieth century and "existential philosophy" or philosophy of an "existential type". Defining this type of philosophy, Gaydenko writes: "Here we can actually see an attempt of self-expression with the help of artistic means, a desire to share a personal inner experience, mood, and direct emotional affection."³⁰ Gaydenko also stresses the adherence of the supporters of such philosophy to a "confessionary style". This adherence, in

²⁷ Weidemaier W.C. "Herzen and the Existential World View. A New Approach to an Old Debate" // *Slavic Review*. vol. 40. № 4. Winter 1981. P. 557.

²⁸ Blackham T. "The Comparison of Herzen with Kierkegaard" // *Slavic Review*. vol. 25. № 2. June 1966.

²⁹ W. Weidemaier dedicated a special article to another parallel: "Herzen—Nietzsche". By comparing "two great pessimists" he says that "Nietzsche considered Herzen to be one of the greatest historic characters and compared himself with him" (Weidemaier W.C. "Herzen and Nietzsche: "A Link in the Rise of Modern Pessimism" // *Russian Review*. vol. 36. № 4. 1977. P. 477). The basis for such comparison is Nietzsche's letter to Maldiva von Meyzenburgh, dated August 27, 1872, which Weidemaier analyses in his article (Nietzsche to Maldiva von Meyzenburg, August 27, 1872 // *Selected letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*. Chicago, 1969. p. 99).

³⁰ Gaydenko P.P. N.A. Berdyaev's *Mystic Revolutionarism*. // Berdyaev N.A. *About the Meaning of Man*. M., 1993. p. 6.

my opinion, is by Herzen, just as for Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. Most importantly, it is style typical of Berdyaev.

Looking at Herzen's understanding of civilization and culture in general, we can say, that its supreme goal is a detailed exploration of historic meaning of the notions discussed above. Herzen often refers to "living manifestations" of culture and civilization, which carry the impression of "existential" influence of human personalities and a way of life, national character, and values. Cultures and civilizations, according to Herzen, do not change in history. Concrete people form a stock where "personality and creative work settled". Therefore, the movement of civilizations and cultures forms, according to Herzen, a substantial side—the characteristics of history. Such an understanding of the philosophy of culture also defined the direction and character of Herzen's criticism of the West. According to him, Western civilization is rich in external forms. However, it is poor in inner human resources. At the same time, the criticism of civilization, although emphasized and sharpened by Herzen towards the West, is also directed at Russia. Here it is even of importance that Russia (just as America) is a young civilization, unlike "mature Europe". There are some unique products of civilization (Herzen looks at scientific and philosophical theories as one of these products) which are perceived and spread everywhere. That is why the high influence of European civilization is dangerous for all peoples.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, let us mention, that the main resources of Herzen's philosophy of culture, such works as *Letters from France and Italy* and *From the Other Shore*, are truly masterpieces of Russian and European philosophical thought. Discussing these works, a great English specialist in the field of Russian culture, Isaiah Berlin stated that "Herzen is a political and social thinker of supreme value,"³¹ "a thinker, whose ideas are unique not only by Russian, but also European standards."³²

Turning to Herzen's philosophy of culture gives us a chance to "rehabilitate" the meaning and importance of these works not only in the context of Russian philosophy, but also in the context of European philosophy. These works were definitely underestimated and even put in a bad light during the Soviet times. Herzen's early works, still little-known in Russia and in the West, deserve world-wide acclaim. Likewise, his early immigrant compositions, merit the same respect.

³¹ Berlin I. Herzen and Bakunin, *Individual Liberty // Russian Thinkers*. N.Y., 1979. P. 83.

³² *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 18

RUSSIA—A SPECIAL DESTINY IN HISTORY?

ELENA GREVTSOVA

INTRODUCTION

At present in Russia you can definitely see an interest in Russian Philosophy of History. There is a significant number of reasons for this phenomenon. One of the main reasons is related to the crisis of identity. Our society is facing crucial questions because of previously formed social structures and also the ideological basics of social consciousness. Today these are changing. Therefore, there is much scientific research dedicated to philosophy of history in Russia.¹

“Who are we? Where are we heading?”—such questions have always been at the center of Russian historical and philosophical reflection. They were especially appealing and thought-provoking in times of social and spiritual crises and perhaps most clearly raised by the thinker, P.Y. Chaadaev (1794-1860).

THE BASIC PERIODS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIAN HISTORIOSOPHIC THOUGHT

- Chaadaev’s challenge emerged from the following:
 - the controversy of Slavonophiles and Westernizers as an answer to the crisis of “expert absolutism”;
 - the experience of scientific reflection related to history and the theory of progress; orientation on the subjective method as the basis for a “judgment of history”; a reaction to the socio-political crisis of the 1960s and the 1980s;
 - Solovyov’s eschatological search for the basis of ecumenical universalism as an explanation of Russia’s mission in world history;
 - the religious and historic renaissance at the time of the overall crisis of the absolute monarchy;
 - and finally, on the one hand, expansion of an apocalyptic mood of Russian classical philosophy of history—and on the other, after October of 1917 assertion of the historical materialism, as the only true doctrine in terms of official ideology—these are the basic periods of the development of Russian philosophical and historiographical thought.

¹ The most interesting and appealing among the researches are the works of Sizemskaya I. and L. Novikova, “Russian Philosophy of History”. Moscow, 1999; and also A. Malinov’s “Philosophy of History in Russia“. St.Pet., 2001.

With the above in mind, let us think through some issues.

IS RUSSIAN PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY ORIGINAL?

Starting from the moment when the philosophical world view appeared in Russia crucial interest in questions about the meaning and “the end” of history emerged. This is basic to the human culture and historical thought from the very beginning of “Holy Russia“ to the later “Great Russia”. A famous historian of Russian philosophy, *V.V. Zenkovsky (1881-1962)*, wrote that Russian philosophy was mostly “interested in a person, his destiny and paths of possible development, in the meaning and goals of history”. This characterizes the special “attention of Russian philosophers to the social problematic. One can discover that the brightest thinkers turned their attention to the problems of historiosophy (philosophy of history). Russian thought is overall historiographical; it is in the constant search of answers to questions about “the meaning” of history.”² *S.L. Frank (1877-1950)* had the same opinion: “The philosophy of history and social philosophy... these are the main topics of Russian philosophy. The most significant and original, thought by Russians, is related to this field.”³ And, finally, “Russian original thought wrote *N.A. Berdyaev (1874-1948)*, was born as a historiosophic thought. It tries to find answers to enigmas about what meaning the Creator gave to Russia. What is the path of Russia and the Russian people in the world. Is it the same path as of the people who live in the West, or is it something special, Russia’s own path?”⁴

However, along with such opinions there exists a quite disparaging attitude to Russian philosophy and to the philosophy of history, in particular. It is often blamed for not being original, as it has grown up out of Western and European philosophy, that it is too ontological and even “utilitarian,” as it is concentrated on rethinking the problems of Russia’s historical development. In this view, supposedly, there is no place for historical acknowledgement, or for historical epistemology, in Russian philosophy.

One cannot agree with such an opinion. Russia’s philosophical thought did develop in the European paradigm, however it solved problems of Russian historical existence in its relation to the world historical process. In this field it was both independent and original. Considering the reproach for not having a historical epistemology, this is also unfair. A number of historiosophical problems included both the methodology of history and the interpretation of historic process.

² Zenkovsky V., *History of Russian Philosophy*. Leningrad, 1991. Vol. 1. Part. 1. pg. 16.

³ Frank S., *The Essence and the Leading Motives of Russian Philosophy*, Philosophical Sciences. 1990. № 5. pg. 86.

⁴ N.A. Berdyaev, *On Russian Philosophy*. Sverdlovsk, 1991. Part 2. pg.5.

Preference, indeed, was given to interpretation; however, it would be wrong to say that Russian philosophy of history wasn't interested in methodology at all. An interest in the historical processes is not in the least replaced by the question "how historical knowledge is possible." Traditionally, this question was in the competence of the *historical sciences*. However, starting from the middle nineteenth century, Russian philosophy acquired the status of an independent system of knowledge.

HISTORIOSOPHY

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Russian historical science had stored up humongous material and started asking the same questions as philosophical thought: the meaning of historical existence; the paths and destinies of Russia's historical development in the world's historic process. When these questions finally became public property, there appeared another tendency of rapprochement of history with philosophy. As a result, on the one hand, the question "how is historic knowledge possible" started being included in the system of philosophic knowledge. On the other hand, some people thought that philosophy of history was supposed to explore the basics of historical knowledge and the specifics of history as a cognitive science that should give answers to most of the questions. This trend moved to the union of the two fields of knowledge under the aegis of the Philosophy of History.

At the same time, the term *historiosophy* entered a wide scientific day-to-day existence, having its own distinct place. In particular, if the term *philosophy of history* was used for the directions and schools and of explaining the historic process, the term *historiosophy*, put the accent on the idea of *sophia*. It had a *methahistoric* nuance. Therefore, Russian philosophy of history should be evaluated precisely in this context, that is in its indivisible connection with Russia's spiritual traditions. Also it is necessary to note that without taking into consideration their specific character one will hardly define the scientific importance, meaning and magnitude of the ideas that are being developed by the Russian philosophy of history.

RUSSIA'S SPECIAL DESTINY IN HISTORY

Starting from the fifteenth century, the idea of Russian messianism essentially influenced our culture and world view. It was then ideological basis of Russia's interior and exterior politics, both in its imperial displays, and in the quite peaceful claims for a special role of the Russian people at home and in the world.

The Roots of the Idea. The Theory: "Moscow as the Third Rome"

At the root of this idea is the theory, "Moscow as the Third Rome".

It is usually related to a monk of Pskov Elizarov monastery, *Philoheus* (near 1465—1542), who substantiated this idea in his message to Moscow's grand duke Vasiliy: "Save and listen, pious Tsar, to the fact that all the Christian realms have been gathered together into your Land, that two Romes have fallen, and the third still stands. There will never be a fourth Rome."⁵ This statement has become a classical expression of the concept of Moscow as a third Rome.

As mentioned by Philopheus' formula, the two fundamental ideas of that time were expressed: one that the Russian people have been selected by God and the succession of reigns that gave an acceptable explanation of history and the grounds of Moscow's rising—its messianic role in the future.

Russia was assumed to be the savior of the only truly Christian—Orthodox—faith. After the decline of Constantinople and south-slavic Orthodox principalities, Orthodoxy becomes "Russian" and the Russian state the only truly Christian commonwealth. This opened the possibility of turning a providential idea into an imperial ideology argument. In the sixteenth century, the convergence of Moscow's religious and political missions seemed quite natural.

Russia—The Great Power

Following the idea of Moscow being the Third Rome came the idea of Russia being a Great Power, part of European civilization. Peter the Great is considered to be the founder of this idea. Most important has become the clarification of Russia's attitude towards the West in terms of the search for its own path of development. At each new branch of Russia's historic development the problem reemerged. This can be explained by various traits of Russian history and spiritual culture.

One particular trait is Russia's geopolitical location. Russia is both East and West. The Russian state system formed itself on the eastern edge of Europe. It straddled a great historic arena and accepted Christianity. This was accomplished when the opposition of churches (Catholic and Orthodox) was extreme. On the other hand, Russia had its own East—the steppes with its nomads and tribes]. Russia not only fought with them but also led dialogues and covenants, so that, as a result, there took place an ethnic and cultural rapprochement. There was considerable thought about what kind of East would be formed: Christian or pagan. This discussion was opened while a philosophy of history was actually being formed in Russia.

⁵ *Monuments of the Literature of Ancient Russia*. The End of the XVth—first half of the XVIth centuries. Moscow, 1984. pg. 441.

Russian Philosophers on Russia's Special Mission

The “Obshechestvo Lliubomudriya” (Society of Lovers of Wisdom), was formed by Prince *V.F. Odoevsky (1803-1869)* in 1823. The group discussed Russia's special mission to serve as a link between the East and the West. The idea was that just as Christianity gave new meaning and strength to the ancient world, the salvation of Europe would only be possible if a new nation stepped on the stage of history. This would have to be a nation that did not bear a heavy burden of traditions from Europe's criminal past. The nineteenth century would belong to Russia. The topic of Russia's destiny became the most appealing and important in the thought of Russian philosophers.

The formation of the philosophy of history as a system of knowledge in Russia is credited to *P.Y. Chaadaev*. He thought that the meaning of history is realized with “God's will”, which will rule for ages. God's will leads humanity to its final goal. History is the creation of the Kingdom of God, that's why the historic process may be correctly understood only in the context of divine providence. Russia is seen as a country that has been forgotten by Providence and has “lost its way on Earth”. “The point is,” writes Chaadaev, “that we have never gone with other peoples, we don't belong to any famous families of humanity, neither to the West, nor to the East. We don't have the traditions of this or that side. It seems like we're standing apart from history, the worldwide education of humanity didn't expand its influence on us.”⁶ However, Russia has its own historical mission: to give answers to questions that inspire arguments in Europe. The absence of history and our own traditions may become, in Chaadaev's opinion, an advantage of developing peoples. Russia can build up its future by using the historical experience of European peoples, without making the same mistakes.

This idea was later repeated by *A.I. Herzen (1812-1870)*. Freedom from the “the burden of history” makes Russia open to revolution. The same arguments were used by *N.A. Dobrolyubov (1836-1861)*; he thought it was good that the Russian people stepped into the historical life later than other peoples. This facilitated our path, so we were able to proceed to the phase that Western Europe so slowly arrived at. This is why we “must develop more decisively and firmly, as we gain experience and knowledge.”⁷

The “Russian Idea”

The challenge, made by Chaadaev, has conceptually formed itself in an argument between “Slavonophiles” and “Westernizers” concerning

⁶ *P.Y. Chaadaev. Collection of Works. Moscow, 1989. Pg. 18.*

⁷ *N.A. Dobrolyubov. From Moscow to Leipzig. Selected works. Vol. 1. Moscow, 1948. pg. 470.*

“the Russian idea”. Its axes became “Russia-Europe” and later acquired a wider meaning: “East-West”. The new-born thought was that Russia was predetermined for a great future and that it was supposed to become the center of the Eastern-Slavic culture. This historical and theological thesis gained a philosophical basis.

The first vector of the discussion of the problem was critical, as Chaadaev maintained, the attitude towards Russia’s past and present. It’s important here to note *I.V. Kireevsky’s (1800-1856)* article, “The Nineteenth Century,”⁸ in which he states that Russia, as distinct from Europe, didn’t create its own civilization (the ancient heritage didn’t become its cultural basis). However, this reason determined a specific character for Russian life that permits an optimistic look at the future. Kirievsky was opposed to the rationalism and individualism of Western life. He called for ecumenicity, community, the unity of Russian people in faith and love to Christ. He saw in this love and faith the root of what might have been harmonic development in Europe. The Russian people are not the only ones to hold to a notion of holiness of individual interest or private property. They are not the product of European rationalism; the contrasting of Russia and Europe, East and West by Kireevsky with the contrasting of two types of social connection: the individual and the team, a personality and society. He saw this as eventually two phases in the development of human civilization. Progress, in his opinion, can be reached only by the joint efforts of humanity. At the same time, each people has its own time of “prosperity.” Russia’s time is still coming; its meaning is in returning the whole world to the truly Christian roots of culture, so that they prevail over the European enlightenment, not by supplanting it, but by giving it a new higher meaning. However, first of all the Orthodox enlightenment should master everything that it has inherited from the past history of humanity. This task is Russia’s historic mission.

The idea of Russia’s historic mission is a principle in the works of another Slavophil, *A.S. Khomyakov (1804-1860)*. He admits the logic of historical movement, the laws of history, freedom (understood as an aspiration for necessity—for destiny). In Khomyakov’s teachings the idea of messianism is joined by the idea of purpose. The idea of the oneness of the Russian people, that only allows prophetically mystic justification, which, in fact, is replaced by the idea about its cultural mission. Khomyakov affirms the idea of Russia’s future dominance both over the Slavic world and the whole world itself. The same nuance of the nationalism, of the “Great Power” is typical for solving the problems of Russia’s relevance to the East. For Khomyakov eastern people should eventually amalgamate with the Russian people. Later this “tendency” of historiosophy of Slavonophiles will be deepened by *I.A. Aksakov (1823-1886)* and *N.Y. Danilevsky (1822-1885)*. Such extreme faith in Russia is based on, on the one hand, the acceptance of equality between the universal

⁸ *I.V. Kireevsky. Full Collection of Works*. Vol. 1. Moscow, 1861. pg. 75.

and orthodox, and, on the other hand, the Orthodox and Russian. We should note moreover, that Khomyakov still had doubts considering this question. However, we cannot say the same about F.M. Dostoevsky (1821-1881), who saw the Russian people as a “holy people”—the ones who aspire to particular intimacy with Christ.

Later on, while evaluating Slavonophile philosophical and historical ideas, Berdyaev wrote that “a touch of pagan nationalism in *славянофильстве*⁹ obscures the universal problem of East and West, it isolates Russia from the rest of the world. The world needs Russia, in his opinion, not for “a nationalistically selfish prosperity,” but for the salvation of the whole world. Later, S.N. Bulgakov (1871—1944) will say that the idea of “Russia as a chosen nation” opens to responsibility and deepens the sense of oneself.¹⁰ But this easily turns into “the idea of being self-privilege”, when it should create a strong feeling of what Father Sergey himself proved—that though every nation has its own special “light” and that the most important thing for a nation is not the ability to isolate itself because of the feeling of being special, but to unite your own special light with all the others in the unity of *pleroma*. In other words, Russian messianism doesn’t have a positive meaning if it expresses a segregating foundation. Rather it expresses a uniting foundation—a foundation for overall unity. This is truly Russian messianism.

The 1860s put an end to the Utopian dreams of Slavonophiles. The problems they raised, and above all the problem of “East and West”, remained unsettled. The philosophy of history did what it was supposed to do, it lead to a time for political action and social reform.

What about this idea of messianism? Here we turn to the thought of the great Russian philosopher, *V.S. Solovyov (1853-1890)*, and a new branch of philosophical development. Solovyov connects his ideas to the doctrine of theocracy that represents the Kingdom of God on the earth—the unity of church, society and state. For Solovyov theocracy and Russia belong together. It is Russia’s historic mission. The reason for its existence in world history is to create a theocratic empire of the future”...the idea of the nation is not what it thinks about itself, but what God thinks about it in eternity.”¹¹ Realization of theocracy is the essence of the Russian national idea that was blessed by God. It needs the mobilization of all national goals and values—all the political power of the empire, and all the spiritual power.

By the end of his life, however, Solovyov was disappointed in Russia’s messianic predestination. This was influenced by the complete indifference of Russian society during the hunger of 1891, in which Solovyov saw evidence of the absence of spirituality and of civil society in Russia. “The Third Rome is lying in ashes, and the fourth Rome will never

⁹ *N.A. Berdyaev. A.S. Khomyakov.* pg. 229.

¹⁰ *S.N. Bulgakov. Two Hailstones.* Vol. 2. Moscow, 1911. pg. 290.

¹¹ *V.S. Solovyov. Russian Idea.* Moscow, 1992. pg. 187.

appear,” sadly prophesied Solovyov. The disappointment in Russia cast doubt on his theocratic theory. Solovyov understood that there was no place for any state system in the Kingdom of God. When he was asked a question whether there exists some world power, that can unite a holy basis with the human basis in history, Solovyov answered negatively in his work *Three Conversations*. The world that is based on the division of individuals, states, and belief, cannot be a true theocracy. Spiritual unity and the renaissance of humanity are possible, but only on the other side of history. This, in his opinion, is the conclusion of the world process. And though one of the participants of the conversation mentions that “there will still be a lot of talk and fuss on the stage, the end of the tragedy was long ago written, and neither the audience nor the actors are permitted to change anything.”¹²

This way the *historiosophic* problematic goes through a complete cycle in Solovyov: starting from the search for the meaning of history, passing through the temptation of eschatology, it ends up with the apocalypse. Later Solovyov’s close friend, philosopher *E.N.Trubetskoi (1863-1920)*, will say that the dream about a special messianic task of the Russian state was broken. And together it broke the basis of Russian *мессиянизма*. Although the hope that Russia didn’t implement a universal Christianity was lost, it was not because it’s a miserable, despised country, but rather because, in the Lord’s house, Russia was meant to occupy only one of the cloisters. This sense still gave some optimism to the Russian people. This is the deduction Solovyov comes to after being disappointed with the idea of Theocracy. The Russian nation is not the only one, but rather is chosen, with other peoples, to perform the great work of God.

The crush of messianism may and should be considered to be a condition of discernment of our present mission. In his prophetic vision, Solovyov still hoped for Russia’s true spiritual view. The idea of a “holy nation” was replaced by the idea of “three branches of a united Christian tree” (Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism). At the same time they equally prepare for the arrival of the true Messiah. As Trubetskoi said, one thought, that will put an end to the history of Russian messianism, will be a daring “thought that the great synthesis of universal Christianity will go beyond Russia—but will model Christianity to St. John’s view of an Orthodox and Mystical Church perspective. This Synthesis in “The Three Conversations” (V.S. Solovyov’s) is performed not by one nation, but by all nations in Christ, who will descend from heaven to earth. But Russia has a small part: It doesn’t unite the entire Christian world on earth, only one necessary particularity among Christianity. This is that mystic Christianity that is personified by *never-dying* apostle John—the Christianity of apocalyptic revelations.”¹³

¹² *V.S. Solovyov. . Collection of Works in 2 vol-s. Vol. 2. Moscow, 1988. pg. 761.*

¹³ *E.N.Trubetskoi.Old and New Messianism. Moscow, 1992. pg. 256.*

The *historiosophic* paradigm mentioned by Solovyov defined in several aspects the subsequent development of Russian philosophy of history. Berdyaev, Bulgakov, Karsavin and Frank all followed this line of thought, but in their own ways.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I would mention that as a whole, Russian philosophical thought has never been abstract—a passionless theoretical comprehension of truth. The question of truth has always had a specific character—not only by means of a theoretic adequacy of the image of reality, but also in regards to the category of “truth”. The search carries a large moral and ethical impulse. This trait is connected with the constant search for moral rectitude and with the desire to improve the world through the principle of justice.

It is not be an exaggeration to say that Russian philosophical thought appeared and developed in a constant effort to solve, what the Creator thinks about Russia. “What is Russia’s and the Russian people’s path in the world, whether it is the same as the Western path or, whether Russia has its own, special path?”¹⁴ With every period of our history the above mentioned question expanded the sphere of reality and gained new arguments. There were times when it grew to huge proportions, putting into the shadow everything else. This created an illusion that the destiny of not only Russia, but also of Europe and the whole world depended on its expansion, and that Russian people “were historically supposed to lead all of the humanity”—if not to the Kingdom of God, then at least to the sparkling heights of a promising future.

Unfortunately, today we are still not free from this illusion. One may hope that overcoming the illusion and searching for a socio-cultural consensus, we will find a new paradigm for spiritual development, a new “Russian idea”.

¹⁴ N.A. Berdyaev, *On Russian Philosophy*. Sverdlovsk, 1991. Part 2. pg.2.

CHAPTER 19

CHASING THE GLOBAL: THE “WORLD” IN BULGARIAN HISTORICAL THOUGHT

IVELINA IVANOVA

THE DISCOURSE ON BULGARIAN HISTORY

The issues I discuss here are based on my research concerning the discourse on Bulgarian history. It explores how the meaning of Bulgarian history was researched and reconstructed during the period 1920-1944, between the two World Wars.

The main research question was how the authors (historians, but also journalists, writers, critics) were trying to make sense of Bulgarian history, to find out, define and describe its meaning and significance; a meaning able to explain not only the events from the past but also the present condition, thus bringing together past and present, and even enabling future predictions. There were several additional key explanatory strategies, each requiring profound examination but beyond our present task.

One of the fascinating features of this period is that many of the problems, ideas and answers given in Bulgarian history to the present were invented in that period or earlier. The only thing that has changed today is the place of a Marxist explanation of history. Between two World Wars the Marxist grand narrative was widespread and even influential in certain circles. By the 1990s, as you can imagine, Marx was more or less abandoned.

The most popular explanations of history at the time (and even today) were the ones drawing from folk psychology. Folk psychology tried to explain historical events by some psychological or moral features of Bulgarians. The usual structure of that kind of explanation was: “because Bulgarians are *blank*, their history is *blank*, or it led to “blank”. Those explanatory strategies were very popular and probably the reader is familiar with them from one’s own culture. In the Bulgarian case, authors proposing such explanations claimed that they were scientific and therefore could not be refuted.

An interesting feature of the period was that folk psychology explanations were sometimes combined with racial theories (very popular in Germany at the time). It is surprising, but they were used to explain historical failures by the racial impurity of Bulgarians. Ironically, it was proposed that impurity could be more successfully dealt with if Bulgarians

followed the Jewish example.¹ The racial component of the explanations disappeared after 1944. And while racial discourse diminished, Marxist discourse rose (An interesting relation between the two discourses is that they cannot be mixed). There were attempts in the period at bringing together Marxist theory and folk psychology, but they were rejected by official Marxist doctrine.

Folk psychology and its patterns are still very popular as historical or cultural explanations in Bulgaria. But examining folk psychology more carefully will reveal that it tends to produce stereotypes, prejudices, and that some of its statements have racial implications. Thus, we should be careful with such explanation strategies.

In the same period (1920-1944), there were also several projects for a philosophy of Bulgarian history. The need of such a project was stated explicitly in the very beginning of the period by the influential historian, Peter Nikov. Nikov was responding to the works on philosophy of Bulgarian history published by Stojan Mihajlovsky², Petar Mutafchiev³ and Petar Darvingov⁴, Najden Shajtanov⁵ and Janko Janev.⁶ We will skip the details here. Their projects were very different but shared some common features, not only among themselves, but also with Marxism and folk psychology.

THE PARAGON

The research on discourse in Bulgarian history reveals a pattern, which appears in all the strategies. All take into consideration what is called the paragon. I believe that it is not something we can find only in Bulgarian discourse on history and culture. Probably most of you will recognize it from your own experience.

Speaking on behalf of the paragon entitles one to claim what *ought to be*: Bulgarian history or some aspects of it, and Bulgarian culture or some phenomena in it are proclaimed as ideals. Such claims appear even in

¹ In one such essay a distinguished Bulgarian poet, Kiril Hristov, referred to the Jewish community as an example of solving the impurity problem in the best way possible; see (Hristov 1929, 1939).

² Mihajlovsky saw philosophy of Bulgarian history as philosophy of Bulgarian politics; cf. (Mihajlovsky 1924).

³ (Mutafchiev 1925: 1-34; 1931).

⁴ (Darvingov 1932). Academic historians, Mutafchiev and Darvingov both understood the project of philosophy of Bulgarian history as an enquiry that could reveal those key events in Bulgarian history which could explain it as a whole.

⁵ (Shajtanov 1936).

⁶ (Janev 1925, 1926, 1927a). Being philosophers, both Shajtanov and Janev considered their project more philosophical than historical.

everyday life, media, etc. The presence of the paragon moves that *ought to possible*.

I will skip here the particular textual examples and will try instead to describe only the functions of that pattern in the discourse on Bulgarian history, and how it generates a description of the world of which we should be aware.

But first I will try to explain the conditions making that pattern possible. Its meaning, and key notions are connected in the discourse of Bulgarian history. I will describe its principal functions—being a source of authority and legitimacy, being a normative standard itself and a source for other norms. I will also discuss its relation to Eurocentrism, its implications for the *other* in Bulgarian history, for the notions of historical space and time, as well as its political use.

CONDITIONS OF POSSIBILITY

First, any historical narrative always involves others, and its protagonist is always compared to them; narratives tend to inscribe others in some kind of order (closeness or distance, hierarchy or correlation, etc.). Second, the particular cases (like Bulgarian history) are embedded in the universal scene of history shaped by grand narratives, and built on the idea of a general course of history consisting in steps or stages of historical development, as well as in the transition between those stages. That scene invites the idea of what Kosellek called “simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous”⁷: societies live at the same time but on different stages of historical development, hence they share the same time but not the same history since they belong to different historical stages. And that implies peculiar hierarchy among the actors in the historical process. In every single moment of history some of the actors represent development and progress, while others are behind the times [Blaut 1993:1]. All the different historical actors on the scene are *in* history but not as equals. They are inscribed in a hierarchy and those who represent some development are believed to represent the future of the others. They were a vanguard and represent the history others *will* have or *ought to* have.

The emergence of a paragon requires belief and recognition. It’s not something that one can impose by force. And, last but not least, it is related to desire: desire to be other, like the other, to be in other’s place. It is desire inviting a psychoanalytic rather than a rational explanation. The paragon patterning implies the idea of another society, another culture and another history that embodies the object of desire. But above all, the paragon is a discursive phenomenon, which one should recognize in its functions.

This paragon in Bulgarian history and culture was a structural position in the sense that it was believed to take place. It emerged out of the

⁷ See (Kosellek 2002: 204, 1976, 1997).

constitutive *gesture* of pointing out the example. Its emergence was a symptom of the development of a *hierarchy* with the paragon on its top. The ordering principles of the hierarchy were often shifting and unclear. One could say that what enabled its operation were the symptoms of desire and the images of the paragon. The hierarchy emphasized the situation of *inequality* with the paragon other, and the awe and the desire (especially the desire for recognition) inscribed in it that invoked a kind of Hegelian master /slave dialectic.

The discourse on Bulgarian history associated the paragon with the essentialist notions of the West,⁸ —“developed cultures”, civilization, etc. The notion of the “West,” for example, implied unity and wholeness, but the reference was to an unclear image of a coherent and united cultural entity.⁹

Yet one could hardly find a consistent notion of the West in the discourse on Bulgarian history. Notions were usually conflicting, and so were the historical explanations referring to the paragon. Notwithstanding this, the conflicting features historians ascribed to the West had never been put under critical examination and generally evaded reflection. Writers constructed an image of the West with incoherent desires and unclear generalizations.¹⁰

References to the paragon were used only in particular examples—indications, comparisons, or correlations. This was done where authors needed to point out the lack, the divergence, the difference in Bulgarian history and culture. Because of this, the allusions, examples, and comparisons inevitably emphasized backwardness, faults, and deviations from the paragon.

The principal function of the paragon was to establish authority in the discourse on Bulgarian history. This position enabled one to speak the truth about development, history, society, culture, and science. The authority of the paragon in its turn provided a source of *legitimacy*. This was exploited in justifying a vast range of heterogeneous practices, practices of exclusion as well as inclusive. One of the practical uses of that source of legitimacy was the most powerful argument in Bulgarian historiography, the argument from “the developed science”, in which the success of the claims about the meaning of Bulgarian history depended not

⁸ Paragon patterning emerged also in other discourses, and later changed, disappeared, or limited its functions. For example, classical antiquity was a paragon of the West European culture until the 19th century., perhaps even later.

⁹ See [Dirlik 2000:26 ff.; Young 1990:18-20]. The problematic nature of the essentialist notion of the West is discussed, for example in Delanty: 1995.

¹⁰ Though interrelated, the discourse on the West and the paragon strategies in the discourse on Bulgarian history should be distinguished. They emerged in different discourses, functioned in differing ways, involved differing practices, and were applied in different areas.

on theoretical or practical considerations but rather on model examples.¹¹ Therefore, the ability to speak on behalf of the paragon gave the writers on history unmatched discursive power.

The use of examples was made possible by the *normative* function of the paragon. One important feature of that function was that its normative power was not directly accessible to Bulgarian authors. So unequal to the paragon, they could plausibly claim only the authority to understand, apply or adhere to its norms; thus, if one tried to explain or describe a period in Bulgarian history, the only available strategy was to detect the corresponding phenomena in the "Western" past. For example, if a poet wanted to legitimate its poetics, the best s/he could do was to refer to a "Western" movement he followed, and even if a political actor tried to advocate social transformation or any kind of change, s/he tended to lean on the fact that "the West" had already done it.

One could suspect that the paragon patterning I am describing would coincide with Eurocentrism, yet in my view there is a difference. Eurocentrism tends to focus on the center, on West European cultures and societies, inviting us to see the "periphery" from the point of view of the "center".¹² The paragon, in contrast, invites us to see the "center" from the point of view of the "periphery", thus implying a different perspective. One can see the paragon only from the outside, from the "periphery", and in view of the fact that it is the normative image of that periphery. One could say that it is functioning as a kind of mirror enabling the "periphery" to reflect, judge, evaluate and measure itself, or describe its deviations from what it *assumes* is behind the mirror. So, despite the obvious affinity between Eurocentric and paragon patterning and because of their divergent perspectives, they generate different descriptions of the world and deal with different problems and practices. One could say that the Eurocentric picture of the world makes the paragon possible only after being appropriated and reshaped from a "peripheral" point of view.

One of the important practical consequences of the paragon was related to the discursive figure of the "others". The "others" of Bulgarian history were heterogeneously situated in the hierarchy of historical development; they were not merely "outsiders"; they were hierarchically ordered in accordance with their "stage of development". The paragon initiated a substantial transformation of the figure of the others—it produced the model figure of the others embodying historical development with endless possibilities. And, in a sense, *the history of the future* of the backward others was to stand *behind* them forever.

¹¹ Hence the differing notions of Enlightenment: while Kant conceived it as the ability to use autonomously one's own reason, the discourse on Bulgarian history represented it as an ability to fit the paragon.

¹² Similar definition of Eurocentrism offered (Blaut 1993:1; Dirlik 2000:26, 30).

The figure of the backward others, in contrast with the figure of the developed others, was more heterogeneous, unclear and ambiguous. Yet the very split between the two types of others made the scene of history a scene of conflict. Being “peripheral” meant being banned from one’s object of desire and being pushed into backwardness. This generated a somewhat surprising hostility of the periphery towards itself, towards anything deviating from the paragon.

In my view, studying the hierarchy inscribed in the scene of history could explain, to some extent, when and how “foreigners” become “barbarian”, or when “weakness” and “poverty” become “backwardness” and “inferiority”. It could also explain how and when societies move from “expectations of great a future” to the trap of relentless self-examination of itself.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF SPACE

Shaping the “world” in accordance with the paragon led the discourse on Bulgarian history and culture to a discursive redistribution of space. A symptom of that redistribution was the thriving of discourses like Byzantinism, Orientalism, Balkanism, Eurocentrism, as well as of discursive phenomena like the West, the East, etc. Bulgarian history was situated in a well-known coordinate space, between the poles of the West and the East, which shaped any description of Bulgarian history and culture, and stimulated extensive use of Orientalist and Occidentalist discourses. Additionally, the Balkans were generally believed to be in-between the East and the West, which led to the emergence of a specific discourse geared at explaining that in-between condition.

Notions like “world”, “worldly”, and “humanity” were often embedded in specific discursive strategies. The world was often referred to as the subject of universal history, for example, in phrases like “the development of the world”, “the achievements of the world”, and it was even more often invoked in questions like “what have we given to the world?”

The relation, world/local, was another (spatial) way of giving expression to the fundamental relation Bulgarian/world history. The paragon was not merely the highest point of historical development, it was also the highest position in the world, and was believed to represent the world and the humanity along with the paramount achievements of human history. That belief however put the “peripheral” cultures in a peculiar situation, because if the paragon was the world, and they did not belong to the paragon, they did not belong to the world. Thus, the world turned out to be somewhere else. Someone else spoke on behalf of the “world culture” or “humanity”.

TIME

As mentioned earlier, grand narratives tended to divide time in order to describe historical development. Historical time was located in certain places, which were passed through by the line of historical development. As a result, a single moment of great import time often turned out to represent different historical times.

Inscribing Bulgarian history within the scene of universal history caused further complications in the notion of historical time. It had to reconcile the notion of universal historical development with the particular history of an "underdeveloped" culture, as well as with its particular perspective on universal history. From the point of view of the "historically developed" nations, historical time was always "in its place". However, from the point of view of "underdeveloped" culture it was radically misplaced. The *present* of the "underdeveloped" was believed to be the *past* of the paragon; the *past* of the "underdeveloped" was a past even deeper, the *past of the past* of the paragon; the *future* of the underdeveloped was represented as the *present* or even the *past* of the paragon.

So the scene of Bulgarian history was unavoidably split between two historical times—the historical time of the paragon, and the time of Bulgarian history and culture, always lagging behind from the point of view of the paragon. As a result, *future*, *past*, and *present* in Bulgarian history turned out to be mysteriously and inextricably entangled.

One consequence of this was that the discourse on Bulgarian history implied an already known, and in that sense, a closed *future*. Since the future of the backward culture was the paragon, it was believed to be somehow predetermined, a future that had already taken place. This closed future could not be thought in the same terms as the "ordinary" historical future: undecided; unknown, and, therefore, still under question, posing questions that the present had to solve. In view of that, the *predicted*, *already lived* future was not future in the proper sense, it was practically replaced by the present of the paragon. The future still retained its nature of a project, yet it became a project of compensating for or overtaking underdevelopment, which in turn provided historical time with a clear, already proclaimed goal.¹³ So the "underdeveloped" culture was left with a limited range of options already tried out by the paragon one, and if anything remained open, it was the question how to catch up with the "developed".

Since the future was replaced by the present and the past of history, the "*past*" also underwent transformations. Another odd consequence of the entanglement of historical times was the split of Bulgarian culture between its own and the past of the paragon, relegating the first to a "past of the past". And this transformation produced a phenomenon known in Bulgarian

¹³ The understanding of that specific future and its goals could be furthered by the discussion of the notion of acceleration in (Kosellek 2002).

history as “denial of the past”. Being so busy to catch up with the “history”, Bulgarian authors often tended to treat the “past of the past” as something of value only for local significance, and even pointless in the pursuit of development. What was more, the backward past seemed in a way compromised, precisely by being backward; it seemed to be a wrong past. Therefore, its basic function in the writing on Bulgarian culture was to help detect the deviations from the past of the paragon. Therefore, it helped to explain what went wrong in Bulgarian history that gave rise to a range of notions like “historical mistake”, and even to attempt to classify various types of historical mistakes. Finally, this backward, underdeveloped past triggered another symptom of the paragon understanding of history—shame, the shame of backwardness infused the perception of both past and present.

In respect to the *present*, backwardness urged “returning to historical origins”—in order to correct the historical mistakes, and to reproduce correctly the “right” historical course of development. The theme of the “new and right beginning” incessantly recurred in the discourse on Bulgarian history. The new beginnings however had always been doomed in advance to failure, leading only to other already doomed “future project”.

This could explain why cultures and societies living in the shadow of a paragon are always destined to be “in transition”. They are “in transition” by their very constitution, because—despite the belief that the future is always already *decided*, known and clear—“backward” cultures are always engaged in anxious waiting for that *clear* future to come, and this waiting turns the present into a constant apprehension of the future that never comes. That apprehension makes backward cultures neglect the present, erodes the nexus between past and the future, thus turning the paragon history into a utopia (a temporal utopia of, perhaps even a perfect world that will solve all problems).¹⁴

The puzzle of “culturally developed nations”—intended to dazzle the backward ones by their very constitution—spurred two questions: the first one, how to compensate for the underdevelopment. This was related to the present (what *ought* to be done now), as well as to the future. How to help Bulgarian culture *become* what it ought to be). The second question is how did Bulgarian culture turn out to be backward, and why. This is related to the past. And while the second question dominated Bulgarian historiography, the first question has prominent political and practical overtones.

POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES

The scene of history described above legitimated the superiority of the developed over underdeveloped, and gave them unlimited power.

¹⁴ See Dirlík 2000:26; Carter 1991.

Development, progress, and culture were good for humankind, developed nations represented the development, progress, and culture, therefore they were supposed to know what progress, development, history, and culture required. That notion in turn made it possible to legitimize colonialism, and to represent it as a benevolent enterprise colonizers ran on behalf of, or even for, the benefit of the colonized.

The underdeveloped clearly needed guidance, education, training, even compulsion, if necessary. They had the same status as children, or perhaps slightly lower, in view of the fact that they were "grown children", in a sense unable to develop naturally, by themselves. Therefore, they should be represented, guarded, paternalized by others, their claims could be disregarded, and even more rightfully than the claims of normal children, since they were unable to speak for themselves or reason for themselves.¹⁵ In a word, the underdeveloped were excluded by means of the same mechanisms that made possible the exclusion of the mentally ill, prisoners, or the workers, as described by Foucault.¹⁶

Thus the paragon was an important political recourse for any *legitimation* of *politics* or *political practices*. It provided the opportunity to justify any behavior, idea, or theory, by referring to the paragon, or by appropriating the right to speak in its name. Of course, speaking for the paragon was equally able to legitimize any claim for change, as well as any resistance to change, by representing them as steps leading closer to or further away from the paragon. In addition, there was a popular strategy of deferring changes by claiming that they were untimely, inappropriate for an underdeveloped society and advisable only after reaching a certain stage of development. Moreover, the argument from underdevelopment of Bulgarian society still has the power to undermine any innovative policy.

The paragon also provided to the political actors the possibility to construe any problem in Bulgarian history, culture, or society, as a consequence of the deviation from the paragon, thus allowing one to legitimize any violence as a *war against deviation*.¹⁷ Oddly enough, arguments from development rationalized any limitation of rights, and led to persistent intolerance towards anything that could be shown to deviate from the paragon.

PROBLEMS

In the discourse on Bulgarian history the paragon was unachievable by definition. There were many reasons for that—the inconsistent reality,

¹⁵ See for example the project of democratic enlightenment of people described in (Schmitt 1985:28).

¹⁶ Cf. (Foucault 1996b). Similar description of the political consequences of Eurocentrism offered for example (Dirlik 2000:30).

¹⁷ That attitude is embedded in the very texture of the grand narratives, see (Dirlik 2000:30; 2000b:82-6).

the conflicting notions, the divergences of historical times, the impossibility of repeating its past or predicting its future, the split between the different historical worlds. In a word—the very logic of the discourse on Bulgarian history,¹⁸ always oscillated between divergent historical pasts, developments, and worlds that never meet. The same reasons overturned any attempt at catching up with the developed nations, and so the very project of development *turned out to be an endless task, a pursuit of an impossible desire*. One could say that the project of development engaged Bulgarian culture in an endless and practically unattainable Enlightenment. Enlightenment, in the words of Kant, was the process of coming to maturity, the project circumscribed Bulgarian history and culture in a scene of continuous deferral of “maturity”. Even pointing out its contradictions could be assimilated by the proponents of the project as a sign that the paragon was not yet adequately understood, thus closing the vicious circle of the metaphysics of underdevelopment.

Of course, the paragon patterning was displayed not only by the discourse on Bulgarian history and culture. The Middle Ages and the Renaissance, for example, used classical antiquity in much the same way. However, there was one important difference—the classical age was already buried under the ruins of the past and, therefore, could not initiate the quest for the future. Yet that was the trauma in which Bulgarian history had been trapped.¹⁹

POSSIBLE CHANGES

Between 1920-1944 the paragon pattern for discourse on Bulgarian history was still emerging, today it has permeated any evaluation of Bulgarian history—from public discourses to private talk, from journalistic to academic writings on history. Will the Bulgarian public finally turn to the present ignoring, at least temporarily, the problem of “deviation” and the always failing projects on the future?

In my view, the paragon pattern will face significant difficulties, or at least will be forced to find new forms of expression after Bulgaria joining the European Union. Nonetheless, the pattern—the paradigm of Bulgarian history—should be studied and will undoubtedly be relevant to all future discursive practices.

¹⁸ Inscribing Bulgarian history in the scene of universal history brought about a variety of lonely and disconnected attempts at addressing the problem, doomed to failure by their very nature. Lonely and disconnected, because they could not be inscribed in the paragon itself, and could achieve nothing more than the marginal position of a curious historical details, ghosts from the past trying to incarnate themselves in the world of history in order to find meaning.

¹⁹ If we define trauma as the constant recurrence of something that thwarts or resists desire; see (Lacan 1977, Bhabha 1994:1-19).

CONCLUSION

One important reason for this rethinking of history is the need to honestly confront our own past. Recognizing the possibility of other significant historical experiences advances our understanding of the universal course of historical development. This might help us understand a culture as a paragon—and paradigm—that resolves its own contradictions and ambiguities by focusing on some elements and neglecting others. This shift overcomes an overly simplified reduction of history as “developed” or “underdeveloped”. Moreover, understanding and changing the paragon pattern can increase our freedom and make us more open and curious about a world that is not predetermined and ordered ahead of time. Overcoming the old pattern will bring Bulgarians closer to the possibility of peaceful global coexistence.

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CHAPTER 20

MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN POST- COMMUNIST ROMANIA: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE RECENT PAST

WILHELM DANĂ

INTRODUCTION

Seventeen years have passed since the collapse of the Communist regime in Romania, a time in which transition from dictatorship to democracy has been under way. This has been a period of reforming institutions, of finding one's place in a changing world, of confrontation between the old and the new, the past and the present. To some it seemed too long and hard a time, for which reason they left the country, especially right after the revolution. To others it seemed too short a time, considering the many opportunities of enrichment the collapsing Communist regime was leaving behind. They stayed home to live in the country they love. Most people tried their best, each according to his/her ability to understand and adjust. They faced the challenges of change and opened up towards a new life. Looking back down the road covered so far, one may notice that inertia, good and bad habits, and mentalities that survived since the Communist days have held sway longer than one might have guessed. Similarly, one could easily see that some have rather quickly forgotten the negative aspects of the recent past; others have not stood up to the temptation to live solely in the present. For example, for many of the young generation, born since the revolution, there appears to be little or no interest in Romanian tradition, national culture or symbols. Nonetheless, it seems that in the process of transition from dictatorship to democracy, the link between past, present and future has played a major role

Undoubtedly, not only the Romanian people have known and experienced such turmoil. Generally speaking, one may say that all East European countries have gone through crises of identity. The ambiguous character of this crisis feeds itself upon the levelling pressures generated by globalisation, politically correct thinking and the tension between universalism and particularity on the one hand, and on the other, tradition, memory and history that one resorts to, often abusively, in order to find suitable answers to new challenges. Yet, the human history of post-Soviet Europe carries significant nuances. The more eastwards one goes, the more difficult it becomes to control the correct use of collective memory in the context of the assertion of institutions of liberal democracy. Huntington predicted that there would be a dividing line of different civilisations, even

opposition¹ perhaps, between the Catholic-Protestant Europe and the Orthodox. Indeed, the Romanian part of this humanity-in-crisis bears its specific marks, apparently conflicting ones, imposed by its belonging to the Orthodox tradition, by its long domination by the Ottoman Empire and the belated, vacillating and incomplete character of modernisation, coinciding with the state unification and integration within European civilisation. The Communist regime has considerably added to the old deficiencies and it has itself yielded to some others, even more serious, so difficult to overcome.”²

The fact that memory plays an important part in the equation of so many problems of contemporary Romanian society is confirmed not only by Romanian historians and philosophers,³ but also by the contemporary poets and writers,⁴ who have lately paid more attention to the social function of memory.⁵ The present study is a plea for a culture of social

¹Cf. S. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster Inc., 1997).

² Al. Zub, “Școala memoriei și memoria colectivă” [The School of Memory and Collective Memory] (Sighet, 2006), in *Convorbiri literare [Literary Discussions]*, August/2006 (edition online). For the historian of Jassy, the longevity of this regime “can be explained not only through the geopolitical realities imposed after World War II (the Soviet occupation, the Communists seizing power by fraud and terror, the subservience and perverting of the institutions with a formative role, the abolition of the old system of property), but also through an internal policy meant to destroy the elites of many fields, first of all those from political life, army, diplomacy, the legal system, education, the denominational sphere. Institutions of vital importance for the Romanian state were abolished or reformed. The professional *bodies* disappeared, as sources of models, respectability, aspirations, a reality which brought serious damage to the social body, in terms of functionality, balance and regenerative dimensions etc”.

³ Cf. M. ȘORA, “Un muzeu al memoriei într-o țară fără memorie” [A Museum of Memory in a Country without Memory] (interview), in: *Observator cultural [Cultural Observer]* 74/27 July—2 August 2006, p. 9; R. RUSAN, “Rezistența la uitare” [Resistance against Forgetfulness], in *Școala memoriei: Sighet 2002 [The School of Memory: Sighet 2002]* (Bucharest: FAC, 2002), p. 9.

⁴ Cf. A. BLANDIANA, “Memorialul durerii a fost primul dedicat victimelor comunismului” [The Memorial of Pain was the first dedicated to the victims of Communism] (interview), in *Universul Radio [The Radio Universe]* 89/31 July—6 August 2006, pp. 3-5; D. C. MIHĂILESCU, “Sighetul, o bună umilință” [Sighet, a good humility], in *Ideii în dialog [Ideas in Dialogue]* III, 8/August 2006, pp. 7-8; R. PALADE, “Închisoarea Sighet: memorial și școală” [The Prison of Sighet—Memorial and School], in 22 XVII, 855/25—31 July 2006, pp. 15-16.

⁵ Cf. T. T. COȘOVEI, “Omul cu două memorii” [The Man with Two Memories], in *Adevărul literar și artistic [The Literary and Artistic Truth]*, 5076/1 November, 2006 (edition online). T. Coșovei writes here a review of a

memory. Taking into account the confusion of identity at the European level, and Romania's forthcoming integration into the European Union, this study approaches the possibilities of consolidating the identity of certain social institutions as specific *loci* of the exercise and good use of memory: family, school, church. Social memory is not a goal in itself, but it aims at promoting the dialogue between cultures, an openness of identities through the renewal of attachment to values.

HISTORY AND MEMORY

Usually people make a distinction between history and memory. "History thinks, explains, analyzes. Memory is based on reminiscences, feelings, with all that is subjective about them."⁶ Such a distinction may be exemplified by the difference between understanding and judgment: if understanding, "anti-Manichaeism and contextualising par excellence, places the deeds of the past in their historical perspective, that is, in relation with everything that can explain them", judgment "is eminently ethical, setting out the responsibilities of the authors of such deeds."⁷ In this case, it may seem that the historian's "truth" stands under the sign of a general relativism, deriving from the inevitable imperfection of the observer and of his research means, and furthermore, from the very object of his study, which inextricably combines the past and the present. "The material of history is not stable, nor petrified, it is in movement; the present continuously generates the past." That is why the historian has to assume the drama of relativism: "Whatever his knowledge, skills and talents... may be, [his] vision [of] the past [will be] fatally outdated in two or three generations' time, and sometimes even faster than this."⁸ In such circumstances, the historian offers a limited, problematic "truth", a momentary or progressive one, confined to the combination of two

volume of poetry, entitled "The Man with Two Memories", by Olivia Sgarbură and published by Brumar Publishing House in 2006, in which he emphasizes the lyrical tension created by O. Sgarbură, which vacillates between "the map of the mind" and "the map of the soul", reason and love, brain and heart, human realities that intersect one another and create unexpected textures. According to the author, we are the cumulation of our memories, and conflicts often emerge between the inner memory and the collective one.

⁶ J. SEVILLIA, *Corectitudinea istorică. Să punem punct trecutului unic* [Historical Correctness. Let us Put an End to the Unique Past], translated from French by Anca Dumitru (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2005), p. 375.

⁷ Al.-F. PLATON, "Istoria între comprehensiune și judecată" [History between Comprehension and Judgment], in *Contrafort* [Counterfort]1 (135)/January, 2006 (edition online).

⁸ N. DJUVARA, *Există istorie adevărată? Despre relativitatea generală a istoriei. Eșeu de epistemologie* [Is There True History? On the General Relativism of History. An Epistemological Essay] (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2004), pp. 5-7.

elements: a) as much as possible internal coherence, the truthfulness of the image that [the historian] projects and of the explanations that he presents in order to justify it...; b) the historian's good faith, the authenticity of his faith in what he re-creates; the certainty that nothing but the quest for reality has guided him."⁹ Therefore, "the historian has to resign himself to the thought that his work can never represent an edifice built forever, but only one brick or patch in the wall of a building that ceaselessly caves in, as in Master Manole's legend;¹⁰ a building we are doomed to go on erecting forever, as in the myth of Sisyphus."¹¹ However, not all historians share the same idea.

Some historians are of the opinion that behind a good or, more precisely, a plausible reconstruction of the past, there lies "a method of analysis ..., the source used, read through particular reading lenses, a certain fertile research perspective and even several conclusions, having a considerable life expectancy. Thus, not everything is relative when it comes to historical reconstruction. The historical edifice does not permanently cave in, but—and this should be the correct image—it becomes enlarged. It grows upon whatever remains valid from the forerunners' work. That means, on what is less ... relative."¹² Indeed, at present, "the historical discourse is questioned, history is contested, often vehemently, a relativism full of consequences is in full expansion [...] The legitimate plurality of discourses could be understood as an equal justification in the line of truth, which is not accurate. The versions of reading may be many, but not infinite

⁹ N. DJUVARA, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

¹⁰ The concept "mioritic" is related on the legend of Master Manole. The legend tells that the prince Negru Voda, who lived around 1290, wanted to build the most beautiful monastery in the country so he hired Master Manole, the best mason of those times, along with his nine men. Because the walls of the monastery were always crumbling, the prince threatened him and his assistants with death. Manole had a dream in which he was told that, in order to build the most beautiful monastery, he had to wall in someone very beloved by him or by his masons. He told his masons about it and they agreed that the first wife who came there on the following morning should be the victim. Manole's wife, Ana, came first and she was told that they wanted to play a little game, building walls around her. She accepted and soon realized that it wasn't a game and implored Manole to let her go, but he kept his promise. Thus the beautiful monastery was built. When Manole and his masons told the prince that they could always build an even greater building, Radu Negru had them stranded on the roof so that they could not build something to match it. They fashioned wooden wings and tried to fly off the roof, but, one by one, they all fell to the ground. A spring of clear water, called after Manole, is said mark the spot where Manole fell.

¹¹ N. DJUVARA, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹² AL.-F. PLATON, "Cât de relativă este cunoașterea istorică?" [How Relative is Historical Knowledge?], in *Contrafort* 9-10 (131-132)/September-October 2005 (edition online).

and in no way equal, in terms of truthfulness.” But “to push relativism to the limit appears to be ... counterproductive. Not everyone who feels the urge to give his/her opinion on one or the other aspect of history is also authorised to do so...” Only those discourses are legitimate that are founded on a certain historiographical experience, a permanent exercise of method, rigorously carried out together with an as exhaustive analysis of facts as possible. For, beyond the hardships paving our way beyond history and the discourse that we bring forth, a particular certainty is still emerging, a gradual coming closer to truth, to which we all ought to contribute.”

Against the historiographical relativism promoted by Lyotard, Foucault, Deleuze and their disciples, we have to say that the historian's *raison d'être* lies in the attempt to order things and to take them out of formlessness and discontinuity, thus providing them with meaning, coherence and logic. “The appeal to meaning and order remains essential... That is the reason why the historian's mission is tragic, even impossible, because he has to believe in meaning and order, although everything around him looks like disorder and nonsense... Out of the world's formlessness the historian is called to extricate the elements of coherence, those that may confer meaning to people's life and becoming.”¹³ As a consequence, the historian's writing and interpretation are accompanied by a tragic consciousness. But even if the pursuit of truth, served by the open, intelligent historian, with an unquenchable thirst for knowledge, is problematic, more so due to the lack of virtue in those called to unearth it, the attempt is still worth being made and reiterated.¹⁴

The discourse about the virtues that historians should possess approaches, sooner or later, the question of relating oneself to memory, as a source of knowledge and wisdom. Understanding memory in this way is indebted to the contribution of Saint Augustine, for whom memory is something more than the ability to remember and the actual act of remembering; it comprises all cognitive powers. Memory is the deposit of knowledge and of all personal experiences. Memory includes sensations and perceptions, fantasies and dreams, hopes and fears, emotions and self-awareness. Memory is the locus of personal identity. Due to the transience and mutability of the present, memory is the sore point of any sense of lived continuity. Through memory the past and the future, together, become the present. Knowledge resides in memory. Considering all these coordinates, we may say together with Saint Augustine, “Great is this power of memory, exceedingly great, O my God,—an inner chamber large and boundless!

¹³ Al. ZUB, *Clio sub semnul interogației. Idei, sugestii, figuri [Clio under the Question Mark. Ideas, Suggestions, Figures]* (Iași: Polirom, 2006), pp. 41-43.

¹⁴ Cf. Al. ZUB, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Al.-F. PLATON, “Istorie și conștiință critică” [History and Critical Conscience], in *Contrafort* 4-5 (138-139)/April-May 2006 (edition online).

Who has plumbed the depths thereof? Yet it is a power of mine, and appertains unto my nature.”¹⁵

Besides memory, Augustine identifies two other faculties inside man, the intellect and the will, both of which exert their power over memory. When memory, the intellect and the will are hypostatized as the image of the Holy Trinity within man,¹⁶ memory corresponds to the first person of the Trinity,¹⁷ as the locus of the self,¹⁸ the power that binds the past to the present and confers identity. Yet memory is not just a faculty of the past, but also one of the present.¹⁹ Concerning the evanescent reality of the present,²⁰ Augustine said that it slides back to memory so quickly that we, in fact, do not know the present proper, the fleeting instant that holds the balance between past and future, for the moment we are able to know the present, then we know, in fact, the memory of the present. Hence, for self-awareness, the paradox of the memory of the present (“*praesens memoria*”) represents both a condition and an effect.²¹ Finally, Augustine’s discourse on memory, especially in his *Confessions*, aims at finding an answer to the question to what extent man can encounter God, since he does not know him yet. The answer lies in memory; Augustine finds God in his memory, and it is here, as well, that he finds himself. Memory lies at the basis of identity, of self-awareness.

If Augustine’s lesson about memory is true, then the mutilation of memory is a tragic act. Indeed, the confiscation of memory, as it happened in Romania (and in other countries of the Soviet block) has represented an act of individual and collective destruction, leaving deep marks until today. As a matter of fact, the restoration and restitution of memory is a heavenly exercise, an exercise of immortality, of eternity in act. According to this

¹⁵ St. AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, X, 8.15.

¹⁶ Cf. St. AUGUSTINE, *Espositio in De Trinitate*, XI.

¹⁷ Cf. St. AUGUSTINE, *Espositio in De Trinitate*, XI, 8.14.

¹⁸ Cf. St. AUGUSTINE, *Confessions*, X, 8.14.

¹⁹ Cf. Le BLOND, *Les Conversions de saint Augustin* (Paris, 1950), p. 16.

²⁰ Cf. St. AUGUSTINE, *Confessiones*, XI, 26.33: „*praesens, quia nullo spatio tenditur*”; XI, 27.34: „*quoniam praesens nullum habet spatium*”; XI, 28.37: „*quis negat praesens tempus carere spatio, quia in puncto praeterit*?”.

²¹ “L’instant n’est pas pour lui un limite abstraite déterminée par le mouvement. Il est un acte de l’esprit—non certes un acte immobile, comme serait celui de la pensée séparée, mais un acte réel, formé par la superposition d’une tension et d’une détente ... Quant à l’instant, il est, dans cette histoire, le point critique où sous l’effet de l’espace la tension de l’esprit se brise et s’éparpille. C’est un événement de conscience, puisqu’il ne saurait exister sans une conscience expectante pour le prévoir et une conscience remémorante pour le retenir. De la conscience il est à la fois la condition et l’effet”. Cf. J. GUITTON, *Le temps et l’éternité chez Plotin et Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1933), pp. 234-235, apud J. O’DONNELL, „Excursus: Memory in Augustine”, commentary on the text of 10.8., in *The Confessions of Augustine*. An electronic edition by James J. O’Donnell (<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/conf>).

view, “pains, failures, doubts, though they exist and have existed, do no longer preserve their initial quality in the light of the regained paradise.”²²

Thus, history and memory are different, though related to each other by their object of study; the “truth” of history is the meaning of the analysed events, whereas the “truth” of memory is the well-being of the individual or of the community (social, political, cultural, academic, religious etc). In other words, history is not justice-rendering, but justifying; history is related more to the epistemological level of knowledge, and memory to that of ethics. In order to have a good value judgment on historical events or persons, what is first of all needed is an historical reading that justifies those events. Otherwise, we are at the mercy of our own reading lenses, selectively marked by feelings and personal reactions, and therefore limited. By means of several examples from Romanian society, I will illustrate the negative effects of ignoring this relation between history and memory, pleading for the need of memory clarification or purification, both through symbolic acts, and through acts of a contextualised knowledge of events.

THE DECLASSIFICATION OF SECRET POLICE (“SECURITATE”) FILES

The National Council for the Study of the Communist Secret Police Archives (CNSAS) was entrusted, through Law 187/1999, with the task of investigating those persons who have violated the fundamental human rights and liberties of people, or who were involved with the “political police” during the Communist regime. The state may then, through administrative means, impede their access to public positions of authority. Though quite late, Romania has shown through this law the sign that it is willing to acknowledge its Communist past and to detach itself from the anti-human methods practised by the old regime and its Communist Secret Police. Initially, CNSAS promised a lot, but so far the institution has not been able or has not been allowed to do its work. Among other causes, one might mention the following: until 2005, the archives were under the control of the present Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI)—the successor of the former Secret Police; members of the managing board are elected and appointed based on political criteria; decision making is conditioned by having a quorum; there is legislative confusion when it comes to passing judgement on the political police; and finally, CNSAS allows for information leaks and lends itself to endless, partisan wangling.²³ It is in this context that all kinds of accusations have piled up against

²² H.-R. PATAPIEVICI, “Interviu acordat lui Dan C. Mihăilescu” [Interviewed by Dan C. Mihăilescu], on the site of the Humanitas Publishing House: autori.Humanitas.ro.

²³ Cf. T. UNGUREANU, “La ce bun CNSAS?” [What is CNSAS good for?], in *Contrafort*, 2-3 (136-137)/February—March, 2006 (edition online).

CNSAS: CNSAS is the one hyping up a national hysteria; it has no professional expertise; it is unsure of its verdicts; it has an innate deficiency—a political bias—and it is based a distorted law. As a consequence, it has been concluded that CNSAS should be dissolved and everyone should have free access to its files.

But beyond this discussion, one may ascertain that once again “the past, like an open wound” is difficult to handle,²⁴ and moral judgments on the past, unless they take into account the historical context, may generate monsters, granting a “certificate of angel” to criminals, or a “certificate of devil” to the innocent.²⁵ Under the pressure of circumstances, philosophers plead for clarity of judgement, whereas the CNSAS administrators of the past have fallen prey to infinite shading and extreme relativism. Historians cast doubt upon the truthfulness of the documents produced by the Secret Police, advancing the commonsense argument that every document is composed with certain intentions in mind and within certain circumstances. Since, in this case, the one producing the document is the Secret Police, which played the role of the “political police,” historians assert that we cannot rely on the content or truth claims. In various reactions one may find a mixture of absolute moral judgment with a relativistic moral judgment, of the need to punish those who harmed their fellow humans with Christian forgiveness, of ambitions, resentments, passions and frustrations with scientific or commonsense arguments. This is the consequence of postponing an honest look at our own past. This happened for too long time a period, first of all in order to heal ourselves from that past and second, to free ourselves from its debris. But the question must be asked; was this the responsible way?

Present-day debates on this topic lay stress on two interesting things: Romanian society wants to find out the truth about the past; while those responsible for this past do not want to tell the truth. They see no need for contrition, even this late. At the moral level, people are responsible only to their own consciences and, if believers, to God. But the problem is deeper, for we cannot part with this past without a radical divorce from it, no matter what the personal costs may be. By remaining prisoners of our own past, we are not only prone to blackmail and recruitment, but also responsible for the present, and especially for the way the future will be built. By fostering a sentimental perception or a self-interested attitude, we do nothing but increase the evil.²⁶

²⁴ Cf. R. PALADE, “Dosarele de Securitate, mal negru și fetid” [The Secret Police Files—a Dark and Fetid Shore], in 22, year XV, 858/18—24 August 2006 (online edition). R. Palade quotes the Romanian critic of literature and dissident Virgil Ierunca who died in 2006.

²⁵ Cf. C.-T. POPESCU, “Certificat de Înger pentru Dracu” [Certificate of Angel for the Devil], in *Gândul* [The Thought]/22 September 2006 (edition online).

²⁶ S. VULTUR, “Printre dosare” [Among Files], in 22, year XV, 860/1-6

Access to the archives of the Secret Police and the declassification of files has been seen as the opening of a real Pandora's box. The archives started to talk. There were not only surprises, but also real difficulties. The first of them: no one is to be blamed. The lesson one may learn here is that the recent past is unpredictable, that the past is more difficult to grasp than the future. From medicine we know that there are no diseases, but only sick people. So here there is no information, only informers. The question that arises is who can judge? How is one to disentangle the infinite nuances separating absolute evil from relative evil? Historians say that any document is at one and the same time a ray of light and a mystery. Each asks for an interpretation and leaves the possibility of error. In shadowy places, doubts will never be completely removed. Documents show that there were some who signed papers collaborating with the Secret Police out of pride, stupidity, weakness or plain evil. At that time, morality meant those "who said no" to this.²⁷ Hence the dilemma: is there an ethics of refusal,²⁸ a nobility of disobedience, a kind of ethics of resistance?

By virtue of the unpredictable past and the present dilemma, post-Communist Romania is facing an inferiority complex, which I will call the "mioritic identity syndrome."²⁹ In comparison with other countries in the

September, 2006 (edition online).

²⁷ Cf. S. TĂNASE, "Normalitatea înseamnă cei care au refuzat" [Normality Means Those who Said No], in 22, year XV, 860/1—6 September, 2006 (edition online).

²⁸ Cf. I. VIANU, "Ocazia istorică" [The Historical Opportunity], in 22, year XV, 860/1—6 September, 2006 (edition online).

²⁹ In the Romanian folk poem *Mioritza* (*The Little Ewe*), a shepherd boy is warned by his beloved ewe, *Mioritza*, that his fellow shepherds plan to murder him and take his flock. Instead of resisting, he accepts his fate, asking only that *Mioritza* go in search of his mother and tell her the story not of how he was betrayed, but of how he was married to the daughter of a powerful King. Thereafter, wherever the ewe wanders, she tells the story—not the true, unadorned facts of death and betrayal, but a beautiful fiction of a transcendent wedding. This simple story, told and retold in countless versions, is Romania's most enduring cultural text. The popularity of the *Mioritza* can be attributed to the power and simplicity of its poetry, but even more to its mythic structure. The myth has been used to define the Romanian character by several authors, including Mircea Eliade, who has called the "cosmic marriage" of the *Mioritza* an example of "cosmic Christianity"—part pagan, part Christian, but in any case wholly Romanian—dominated by a nostalgia for nature sanctified by the presence of Jesus Christ. But the most controversial concept of Romanian identity to be derived from the poem is the concept of "mioritic space," defined by the Transylvanian poet and philosopher Lucian Blaga. For Blaga, the path of *Mioritza*'s wandering delineates what he calls "mioritic space", a geography of the Romanian poetic imagination, or, a philosophical attempt to explain the Romanian spirit through the Romanian landscape, which Blaga saw as the stylistic matrix of Romanian culture. Blaga's critics have charged that this

region (“which have more flocks to keep/handsome, long-horned sheep”³⁰) the *Mioritza*, the Romanian epic-folk poem, aims first of all to strengthen pride in being a Romanian, and second, demonstrates the possibility to learn from the others’ successes. For instance, in the long-delayed process of “lustration,” the models applied by the other post-Communist countries are noted, with the specification that each lustration model specific to the post-Communist world corresponds to certain aims determined by the circumstances of the particular country, and that later examples like Romania, may reach their goal, if applied with intelligence and justice.³¹

concept has become a liability, nationalistic, escapist and fatalistic. For political analysts, Blaga has been criticized as a romantic aesthete, self-absorbed and disengaged from political realities, while pursuing a mystical communion with nature. In this view, mioritic space is an escapist dream of a romantic nationalist that encourages political apathy. For ethnographers, it is a romantic distortion of the Romanian peasantry’s connection to the land that ignores political and historical reality. These critics suggest that it may even account for the tendency of the Romanian people to suffer oppression passively. But to Blaga, mioritic space was simply a way of locating the Romanian poetic spirit.

³⁰ Translated from Romanian by William De Witt Snodgrass.

³¹ Initially, lustration represented a procedure of counterespionage practiced in the 1970s by the Czech Secret Services in order to expose the double agents. Czechoslovakia was the first post-Communist country to adopt lustration in 1991. With the split of the federation, the Czech Republic continued the process of lustration, while Slovakia abandoned it, resuming it in 2001. Lustration was adopted in Bulgaria (1992), Albania (1993), Hungary (1994), Poland (1997 and 2006) and Serbia (2003). There are four models of lustration: automatic lustration (the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Albania and partially in Serbia), lustration as recognition of the past (Hungary and partially in Serbia), lustration as reconciliation (Poland), mixed lustration (Germany). Automatic or exclusive lustration (Czech Republic): the official associated with the old regime has no access to public offices; exclusive lustrations are efficient and final; they have an inversion effect, that is the government and the former leaders of the opposition switch places; clashes of the past are overcome by the defeat, humiliation and marginalisation of the former elite; it is a suitable system for homogeneous societies, with political clashes only. Lustration as the recognition of the past or inclusive lustration (Hungary): within certain circumstances and if elected by vote, the official associated with the old regime may remain in power; inclusive lustrations maintain experts in key-positions, providing continuity, in the absence of the alternative elite; it includes the elites of the past in the new government; the society remains ideologically divided; it represents a suitable system for heterogeneous societies. The reconciling model (Poland): the official associated with the old regime may continue within the system, provided that he admits his guilt of having collaborated with the „political police”; the consequence is the conversion of those who have committed evil, by giving them a second chance; the model is suitable for the deeply polarized societies, wherein the need to overcome the past clashes and the establishment of national unity is highly imperative. The mixed model

Yet, it seems that the “mioritic” identity syndrome goes through an acute stage of manifestation, because the dichotomy between memory and forgetfulness is suffocated by various political uses of the Communist past. One perverse effect of this struggle is smothering the arguments that prove the criminal character of the Communist totalitarian regime in a sea of unessential details. This feeds the indifference of one part of the Romanian public towards past events. On the other hand, a good thing is that the Secret Police files have been declassified and the process of condemning Communism by the president of the country has begun, a fact which will make a lustration law all the more legitimate.

It is often stated, and with validity, that the young post-1989 generation does not manifest a strong interest in the Communist past. They have no memories of it, and no information about it.³² This is exactly the reason why a lustration law should be supported, certainly within proper legal limits. It is very important for young people to get to know the entire history of their community and nation. The past does not belong to one single person or group, but to everyone. Young people must understand why the Communist Party betrayed Romania, as it becomes obvious from the archives of the Secret Police. They need to understand the context of that age, in which some people were forced to be informers, others did it of their own will. One must make the necessary distinctions. Young people need to know the whole history, not just fragments that correspond to states of mind or preconceptions. For instance, they should know that the “tradition of informing” started some time around the 1930s, thus before the Communists came to power, that Romanians have experienced few times of authentic freedom, and that the history of Romania is made of several layers of deceit and sadness.³³ All these experiences have been mixed up in the

(Germany): the official associated with the old regime may or may not hold a public office, depending on the decision of the authorities; the cases are each of them settled according to the perspective of their particularity, on the basis of the principle of procedural correctness, it does not automatically give a second chance to those who confess their collaboration, unlike the reconciling model; it offers the possibility to adopt the instruments belonging to all the other lustration models; it is a system suitable only for the societies possessing qualified human resources in order to perform an impartial control of files. Cf. D. ZAHAREANU, “Cum a învățat Europa să facă lustrație” [How Europe Learnt to Perform Lustration], in *Cotidianul—Special [The Quotidian]*—the special edition online; L. STAN, “Modele de lustrație” [Models of Lustration], in 22, year XV, 861/08—14 September, 2006 (edition online); R. TEITEL, *Transitional Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

³² Cf. M. BERCEA, “Și noi am fost turnători” [We Were Informers Too], in 22, year XV, 860/1—6 September, 2006 (edition online).

³³ Cf. D. DELETANT, “Istoria României este compusă din foarte multe straturi de tristețe” [The History of Romania is Made Up of Many Layers of Sadness] (dialogue: “Cine-i Blaga ăsta?” [Who’s this Blaga?]), in *Dilema Veche [The Old Dilemma]*, year III, 145/5 November, 2006 (edition online).

collective memory and, therefore, there is need for historical contextualisation and a better ordering of personal memory.

A former French ambassador in Bucharest, towards the end of the Communist regime and the beginning of the period of transition, noted that immediately after 1989, Romanians pleaded for change, but they were not willing to pay the price of change. Now, in 2006, Romanians know better where to look for the truth about the past, and about the present as well. They can see who is in favour of finding out about the past, and who is against that. The past, with all its consequences, needs to be recognized and faced.³⁴

THE CONDEMNATION OF COMMUNISM

On January 25, 2006, one part of the European Council voted against a decision that morally condemned the crimes of the Communist totalitarian regimes. One month later, under pressure from civil society groups, the President of Romania requested the establishment of a presidential Commission that would investigate the Communist past and report back to the nation. This was done to solemnly and symbolically proclaim a break from the Communist past, and to condemn the illegitimate, terrorist and criminal character of the Secret Police.

The fact that the Romanian society is again late in terms of its official condemnation of Communism is related to the general politics, strongly influenced by the neo-Communist wing in the first place and, secondarily by the tight grip of a manipulating collective memory. This was due to the fact that throughout the 17 years since the collapse of Communism, Romanian society has not experienced a radical renewal, nor has it been reborn in the sense that it is able to acquire another vision. It is still marked by the forgetfulness of its roots, as experienced in that system, sometimes without realising it, sometimes without being able to do anything against the inertia inside itself. As proof, we have the nostalgia on the part of some of the old generation for Communism and the indifference of young people towards the condemnation of Communism. Other reasons for this nostalgia persist. For instance, inside the European Union, unlike Nazism, Communism has not been seen as a compromising totalitarianism. The Nazi label is, for the normal human being, a compromised system; the Communist label does not seem to arouse such disquieting suspicions. As long as things are not clear in the West, in the sense that the Western world has a sort of reserve or reticence when discussing the deficiencies of the Communist system, Communism remains coloured in a tolerable pink shade. For those who have experienced Communism in Eastern Europe, this

³⁴ Cf. Al. GUSSI, "Prețul schimbării" [The Price of Change], in 22, year XV, 861/8—14 September, 2006 (edition online).

is distressing. Nevertheless, the young generation must be informed; the bloody devastating period of our national history must be kept alive.³⁵

As for the condemnation of Communism, several distinctions have to be made. There is a legitimate condemnation of Communism in the minds of those who have suffered due to the system. Then, there is a symbolic condemnation of the Communist regime, as to suggest the breakaway of the Romanian society from the terrorist past controlled by the military arm of the Communist party, namely the former Secret Police. Finally, there is also a real, legal condemnation of Communism, having legal effect, which implies the assuming of responsibilities. These are rather complex issues. Life under Communism cannot be reduced to a scheme. It means a huge amount of work that has to be done with discernment and critical judgment, as objective as possible, and which takes a lot of time. But in order to come that far, there is need for a principled condemnation of a dictatorial system at the collective level. Otherwise, the past with its mentalities and behaviours may re-emerge under another totalitarian form.

Nonetheless, it is encouraging that the present political system in Romania also manifests interest in the consequences of the Communist period over the present. The symbolic condemnation of Communism seeks to be a sort of cleansing of memory, an exorcism of the evil of the past, a breakthrough and a message of confidence conveyed to the Romanian society in order to face the past. The fear of the past, manifested so far, may be explained both psychologically and sociologically. Psychologically, because it is difficult to contemplate the evil in all its dimensions, without asking yourself how you have contributed to its perpetuation as well, even by the fact that you did not want to know it or to look it in the face. Undoubtedly, there is no question of being responsible for others, since responsibilities are strictly individual, but the fear of evil has been the major instrument of subjection and manipulation. It has continued to be, until this day, a source of aggression and social distrust.³⁶ In a sociological sense, this is because the Communist regime took over power in 1945 by fraud, abuse and lies. First, it got rid of the Romanian elite, those persons who excelled in their own fields of activity, who understood from the very beginning the dimensions of the threatening evil. The persecution, arrest and killing of the elite propagated a wave of fear among the people, which lasted for forty-five years and is still present.³⁷

³⁵ Cf. A. PLEȘU, “Comunismul a produs un tip de om foarte greu de recuperat într-un teritoriu de normalitate” [Communism Has Generated a Human Type Hard to Restore in a Space of Normality] (interview), *Radio Europa Liberă [Free Europe Radio]*, the radio programme “Punct și de la Capăt”, 21 May, 2006.

³⁶ Cf. S. VULTUR, *op. cit.*

³⁷ Cf. G. LIICEANU, “Talentata Doamnă Muscă sau despre minciuna în extaz” [The Talented Mrs. Muscă or on Lying in Ecstasy], in *Cotidianul—Special [The Quotidian]*—the special edition online.

Romanian society has not yet managed to recover from this shock. By destroying the elite, the Communist regime succeeded in erasing the past from collective memory. However, the past continued to be spoken about, albeit in whispers, in isolated places, within families and most of the time with fear. The public space was filled solely with discourse about the present and the future, but they were equally censored. This dramatic situation was accepted by the rest of the Romanian people as fate.

But what is the relation between the past and the elite? First of all, the elite belonging to any population category proves the fact that one cannot be free and creative other than within a tradition, be it academic, professional, religious, etc. In other words, the absence of an elite leads to the stagnation and death of a tradition, to the loss of the sense of freedom. Second, the elite have a public function of bringing together and conferring dynamism on the community it is part of, by embodying certain specific values. In the past, Romania had a peasant elite, destroyed by collectivisation and prison; a workers' elite that was manipulated and destroyed; a political elite that was annihilated; an intellectual elite that was cut off; a religious elite imprisoned or put under house-arrest until it disappeared. "Everything valuable, everything *outstanding* in terms of competence, honesty and efficiency was destroyed at all levels."³⁸ The annihilation of the elite has caused a final split between the inter-war Romania, "the old world", with its landmarks and norms, and Communist Romania, "the new world" of "the new man," without schooling and without character. The aftermath of this historical disaster is still visible today.³⁹ It is true that some of the elites have survived, but in minor, marginal forms. With the exception of the dissidents, who tried to think and live normally in a world that had forgotten what it meant to behave normally, the rest of the population started to assume abnormality as a way of being, going as far as changing their structures, thinking and behaviour to such an extent that they became inert. This can be felt today long after the collapse of Communism. The scale of values was completely distorted by Communism.

Coming back to the distinction between putting Communism on trial and the condemnation of Communism in general,⁴⁰ one must say that the Communist system should be condemned since its catastrophic implications for the country and the people is so obvious. There are already numerous studies that give evidence for Romania's suffering.⁴¹ The

³⁸ A. PLEȘU, "Communism Has Generated...".

³⁹ Cf. C. TARZIU, "Arestarea gândirii libere" [Free Thinking under Arrest], in *Cotidianul [The Quotidian]*, 10 October, 2006 (edition online).

⁴⁰ Cf. A. PLEȘU, "O comisie pentru condamnarea comunismului?" [A Commission for the Condemnation of Communism?], in *Dilema Veche [The Old Dilemma]*, year III, 118/28 April, 2006 (edition online).

⁴¹ Cf. C. IONIȚOIU, *Dicționar. Victimele terorii comuniste [Dictionary. Victims of the Communist Terror]* (Bucharest: Editura Mașina de Scris, 2000-

symbolic value of condemning Communism in general, as an illegitimate and criminal system, aims at the purification of memory. This is a gesture whereby Romania, as a historical subject, admits that it also lived through and with a Communist dictatorial system. The actual trial of Communism, as an ideology, is much more difficult, involving detailed investigations and exposing those guilty persons in a legally sustainable way.

Recently the head of the presidential commission for the analysis of the Communist dictatorship has informed the Romanian people that he has concluded the report that the president will use to officially condemn Communism. This proclamation is scheduled for December 18, 2006. The aim of this political, historical and symbolic gesture is to consolidate collective memory. If George Orwell was right when he said “who controls the past, controls the future,” it is now high time for Romanian society to gain control of its past.⁴² Indeed, this chance should not be missed.

PURIFICATION OF MEMORY

The declassification of the Secret Police files and those of the Communist Party, the condemnation of Communism in general and the long awaited “lustration laws” are important steps towards what one might call “the clarification or purification of memory.” But if the past is understood in its entire dimension, who can grant the forgiveness of the evil done in those years? Should it be the citizens by the democratic exercise of elections; the state by the lustration law; the Church by the sacrament of

2006); F. MATRESCU, *Holocaustul roșu sau crimele în cifre ale comunismului internațional* [*The Red Holocaust or the Crimes of International Communism Counted in Figures*] (Bucharest, 1998); A. OVSEYENCO, *The Time of Stalin: Portrait of Tyranny* (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); V. BÂRSAN, *Masacrul inocenților* [*The Massacre of the Innocent*], (Bucharest, 1993). C. Ionițoiu argues that there were three million political prisoners in Communist Romania, out of whom at least 200,000 died. It is not known exactly how many peasants died because they opposed collectivization and how many partisans living in the mountains were killed by the Secret Police. According to F. Matrescu, only within the present-day confines of Romania no less than 800,000 people died, to whom some more 350,000 Bessarabians should be added, killed by the famine caused by Stalin between 1946 -1947. Also, between June 28, 1940—June 22, 1941, over 300,000 Romanians were taken to the concentration camps of the Frozen North, other 500,000 Bessarabians and Bukovinians being deported between 1945-1954, and it is not known how many of them survived. A. Ovseyenco estimates the total number of the victims of Communism in Bessarabia and North Bukovina only, to 1,500,000 persons.

⁴² Cf. V. TISMĂNEANU, “Funestul rol conducător” [The Fatal Leading Role], in *Evenimentul zilei* [*The Event of the Day*], 11 October, 2006 (edition online).

penance? Since Romania wants to be a democratic and Christian country, all these moral institutions must be called to action.

The first and most urgent aspect of the purification of memory has a political character. Indeed, it has been ascertained that in the 17 years since the collapse of the Communist system, the dark past of politicians which they themselves hid under the carpet has piled up so much that it has started to suffocate an entire country. Politically speaking, Romania has become a sullied country—with a bad smell. Lifting up the carpet, turns everyone dizzy. However, the house must be cleaned.⁴³ Finally, the purification of memory depends on the will of all citizens to break with the Communist past and its hold over the present. The ultimate gift that Romanian society received after 1990 was freedom, but that freedom has a corollary—responsibility. The cleansing of memory is a test of common responsibility. The entire Romanian society is called upon not to deny the seriousness of the problem of the recent past. It is not about covering up something, or about judging without discernment and nuance. The clarification of memory is a test of the ability to will, search for, and endure the truth.⁴⁴

From a political point of view, both individually and collectively, this work of putting order in memory is an inner exigency, manifesting itself as a historical confession or as a contribution to the knowledge of historical truth. In fact, when an individual or a community accepts its destiny and confesses the truth about oneself/itself, about what happened in the past, then he/it enters the path of forgiveness and purification. Repentance and confession, as such, are a real chance for moral recovery. Unfortunately, in Romanian society we do not have many examples of public admittance of collaboration with the Secret Police. There were, however, several exceptional cases, indicating that after confession, the person had regained his freedom, eg., the writer Alexandru Paleologu,⁴⁵ the

⁴³ Cf. G. LIICEANU, “Umbra părintelui Marchiș la Cozia” [The Shadow of Father Marchiș at Cozia], in *Cotidianul—Special [The Quotidian]*—special edition online.

⁴⁴ Cf. M. VASILEANU, “Biserica, între deconspirare și mărturisire” [The Church between Exposure and Confession] (in dialogue with B. Tătaru-Cazaban), in *Adevărul literar și artistic [The Literary and Artistic Truth]*, 5049/30 September, 2006 (edition online).

⁴⁵ Cf. AL. PALEOLOGU, *Sfidarea memoriei [The Defiance of Memory]*—discussions with S. Tănase (Bucharest: Du Style, 1996). Alexandru Paleologu, who was investigated and imprisoned, tormented by the “pact with the devil”, confessed his sin to N. Steinhardt before 1989. At the beginning of 1990 he made this episode public in the journal *Cuvântul [The Word]*, speaking about a “severe moral fall”. In his *Defiance of Memory [Sfidarea memoriei]*, he resumed more extensively these regrettable events, emphasizing the fact that he realized how bad his conduct had been, but how human as well, in the sense that he was fallible. However, the episode is considered blameworthy, because the most compromising thing about it was accepting to make such a pact.

orthodox Metropolitan Nicolae Corneanu and a few other politicians and journalists.

From the perspective of the consequences of memory purification, the essential thing is the reaction of the people. In the above-mentioned cases, Romanian society appreciated their gestures and regarded them with more sympathy. This human reaction brings into discussion a new element, namely that the nation or communities themselves (social, religious) have a heart and a conscience; that they behave like human beings and want to put order in their memories. This appears to be a moral and historical goal. It is important to mention here the gesture, on March 12, 2000, "Forgiveness Day," of Pope John Paul II, who in the name of the Catholic Church asked for God's forgiveness from all people who have been wronged by church leaders and members in one way or another. By this asking for forgiveness, the Pope wanted the Catholic Church as a whole to get free of the burden of past sins, in order to walk more lightly on the path of faith in the third millennium.⁴⁶ Romanian society as a whole wants to behave now in a similar way, because it understands that it cannot be free, democratic and transparent unless it breaks away from the burden of its past. It cannot change its mentality, renew itself morally, nor hold itself together around a major national project, unless it first has its wounds from the past healed. It cannot begin a new chapter of history, if the pages of the previous one are either inaccurately written, or misinterpreted. In short, it has been understood that when not accepted and not purified, the memory of the Communist experience weighs too heavily. Undoubtedly, the purification of collective memory needs reflection, discernment, and public debate, but it also needs historiographical re-working. In the present case, the political and civil aim is obvious: strengthening democracy and the transparency of public offices, consolidation of the human fundamental rights, reconciliation of external and internal freedom, etc. Perhaps less obvious is consideration of the Christian message, but it is there. This is because the purification of memory depends on a consciousness whereby meaning for a person or a nation is not limited to history and is not final in itself. History has a meaning that derives from the future (final judgment). In the end, distinctions between individuals are made in terms of worth and value.⁴⁷

A delicate question about the purification of collective memory in Romania is still present: why now? For some analysts of this phenomenon, the season of memory purification has come to us with a characteristic time lag, evoking all the differences between the "winter school" of Ceausescu's

⁴⁶ Cf. INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past* (Vatican City, 1990).

⁴⁷ Cf. R. PREDA, "Securitatea și insecuritățile deconspirării ei" [The "Securitatea"/Secret Police and the Insecurities of Its Exposure], in *Adevărul literar și artistic [The Literary and Artistic Truth]*, 5049/30 September, 2006 (edition online).

Communism and the “summer school” of *glasnost* Communism. No matter how many efforts of memory Romanian society makes, combining personal memories with data provided by recent historiography, it will inevitably feel the specifically modern disorientation when it faces the problem of breaking with the dark years of the past. The first question that arises is who represents the centuries-old authority that may grant absolution? Again, should it be the citizen who has been wronged, public opinion? Any society is a historical subject, and history corrupts, everywhere and always. That is why one must understand that evil has its specific context, good needs a preparatory introduction, whereas radicalisms of all sorts are damaging. The cases mentioned above (Al. Paleologu and Metropolitan N. Corneanu) confirm the thesis that the present good can redeem past evil, that the past is not definitive and the present is not past perfect.⁴⁸

The second question, and even more delicate aspect of memory purification, has a moral and Christian character. How should one consider collaboration with the former Secret Police? How should Christians behave towards the exposed collaborationists? The pathological form of collaborationism is in colloquial terms, “informing.” Generally, informing/ratting is accepted as an immoral act. Passing on injurious information is not only immoral, but illegal as well. Informing of any kind has a hidden character and, as such, it is similar to terrorism. Its explicit aim is noble: the truth. But the moment when only the discourse about what one has done matters, one may notice in certain people the voluptuousness of informing in the name of truth. By practising it openly, they assume their own responsibility. If someone feels injured, he may sue for libel. This is the advantage of democracy, of transparency of information and of the “informers.” (This might be related to what is called “whistle blowing” in the West.) The evil that open or hidden informing yields is multifaceted: it destroys a person’s reputation; leading to prison, deportation or physical annihilation; it hinders that person from getting deserved credit; it fosters distrust among people; it destroys the inclination towards the common good in favour of a common evil, or towards social disintegration and isolation.⁴⁹

Moreover, those who leaned toward collaboration, but did not fulfil it in the sense of doing evil to individuals, were not informers, but unwillingly or not, they contributed to social evil. These cannot be accused of violating human rights. Nonetheless, they might have contributed to a regime in which such rights are “legitimately” violated in the name of an abstract entity: the fatherland, Communism, the national being, the ruling class, etc. The Communist totalitarian regime turned informing into a well-financed state policy, in the name of vigilance towards the enemies of class,

⁴⁸ Cf. M. NEAMȚU, “Dificila uitare, iertarea necesară” [The Difficult Forgetfulness, the Necessary Forgiveness], in 22, year XV, 862/15—21 September, 2006 (edition online).

⁴⁹ Cf. S. FITZPATRICK, *Everyday Stalinism. Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

state, ethnicity, or fatherland. The Communist regime primarily benefited from obligatory ratting, but also secondarily, from voluntary ratting.⁵⁰

From a moral perspective, the social and political climate improves if people know that they are personally responsible for their mistakes and pay for them accordingly. Indeed, there was an active collaborationism and a passive one. The latter cannot be quantified and there is no way to punish it other than each person's own conscience. The democratic and morally healthy state must punish active collaborationism. This should be the main objective of the declassification of files: making a clear and graded hierarchy of guilt, in compliance with the rigours of the Penal Code, wherever that may lead. Then, "lustration" comes next, as an administrative sanction, and public opinion as public sanction. Finally, one's own conscience becomes the sanction-maker, for those who repent openly.⁵¹

So far there have been no official statements about the position of the Christian Churches in Romania on collaborationism. Neither the Holy Synod, for the majority Orthodox Church, nor the Bishops' Conference, for the minority Catholic Church, have released any documents regarding this. However, there have been personal interventions on the part of several Orthodox and Catholic members of the hierarchy,⁵² who have pleaded for the declassification of the files and called for a moral judgment of the past. The matter is delicate, especially when it comes to the Orthodox Church, which does not see itself as on the same level with the civil society. In fact, the Eastern Church has been suffering for more than a millennium from an illness that some call "Caesaropapism". The pre-eminence of the civil power over the ecclesiastical authority was not of much importance as long as the Patriarch and Caesar were faithful Christians. But when faced with a civil power, openly atheistic and often violent, anti-Christian and iconoclastic, then the acquiescence of Church leaders to civil power became a sin; martyrdom, instead of obedience, became a duty. But this vocation for martyrdom only existed for the lower clergy.⁵³ The fact is that some politicians asked for a tolerant judgment of the "informer-priests,"⁵⁴ but

⁵⁰ Cf. M. MIROIU, "Delațiunea ca obligație, cruciadă și voluptate" [Delation as Obligation, Crusade and Voluptuousness], in 22, year XV, 864/29 September—5 October, 2006 (edition online).

⁵¹ Cf. R. CESEREANU, "Vinovăție și sancțiuni: penală, lustrală, morală—în țarcul Dosariadei" [Guilt and Sanctions: Penal, Lustral and Moral—in the Enclosure of the Files Saga], in 22, year XV, 864/13—19 October, 2006 (edition online).

⁵² For instance, the Orthodox Metropolitan of Banat, H. E. Nicolae Corneanu, and the Catholic Metropolitan of Bucharest, H. E. Ioan Robu.

⁵³ Cf. N. DJUVARA, "Mic îndreptar despre oculta care a subjugat România" [Little Handbook about the Occult Force that Subjected Romania], in *Cotidianul* [*The Quotidian*], 8 November, 2006 (edition online).

⁵⁴ Cf. C.-T. POPESCU, "Satana în sutană" [Satan in Cassock] in *Gândul* [*The Thought*], 2 September, 2006 (edition online).

overall, the Orthodox Church manifested an indifference towards Communism. For example, it had not, until 1989 compiled a history of the Romania Orthodox Church. The History and Theology of the Orthodox Church during Communism does not represent a priority, neither for the Church hierarchy, nor for theological education.

We can only guess how the Orthodox Church regards the Communist period and its own relations with the state—the Byzantine symphony between the throne and the altar—but the reality is much more complex.⁵⁵ Rather, on the contrary, civil society had high expectations when it came to the behaviour of Church representatives during the Communist period. Indeed, a part of civil society is not shocked by the exposure of some politicians, academics, lawyers and judges, journalists, artists, or even clergymen. This is in spite of the fact that these professionals owe their privileged status to a “trans- or super-human grace.”⁵⁶

Nonetheless, from the standpoint of the Catholic Church, things look different. The Catholic Church has considered itself and still considers itself a dialogue partner of the civil society. Through its social doctrine, the Church stood on one side of society, whereas the former Communist Party and the Secret Police were on the other side. Any collaboration with the Party and the Secret Police was considered betrayals by the Catholic Church. Because of this stance, seven Catholic bishops died in Communist prisons; 230 Catholic priests were imprisoned; and the Greek-Catholic Church, in union with Rome, was abolished in 1948. As for the actual experience of the Church during Communism, there are many signs that the Romanian Catholic Church also ought to share the resolutions of the Polish episcopacy regarding acts of collaboration with the Secret Police.⁵⁷ Thus, the Church today needs the purification of memory by means of conversion and repentance, but not by means of condemnation. Any collaboration is a public sin, but the criteria for judging those who did not rise to the height of their calling should take into consideration the complex circumstances and human anguish. Equally, the balance between executioners, informers, victims and dissenters has to be taken into account. The judgment of the

⁵⁵ R. CARP, “Un capitol necesar de istorie recentă. Biserica Ortodoxă și asumarea trecutului comunist” [A Necessary Chapter of Recent History. The Orthodox Church and the Assuming of the Communist Past], in *Adevărul literar și artistic [The Literary and Artistic Truth]*, 5049/30 September, 2006 (edition online).

⁵⁶ Cf. M. MIHĂIEȘ, “Țambalul securist” [The Secret Police Cymbal], in *Evenimentul zilei [The Event of the Day]*, 9 October, 2006 (edition online).

⁵⁷ Cf. CONFERINȚA EPISCOPALĂ POLONEZĂ [THE POLISH BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE], *Memorandum cu privire la colaborarea unor membri ai clerului cu organele de Securitate din Polonia între anii 1944-1989 [Memorandum on the Collaboration of Some Clergy Members with the Polish Secret Police between 1944-1989]*, on the Catholic site: catholica.ro.

past must not be confined solely to a settlement of accounts with lower level informers, while former party leaders and activists and members of the Secret Police receive state pensions without any contrition or repentance.

The past is not limited to what the Communist Secret Police files present. Forgiveness of public sins must go through several stages: pleading guilty before one's own conscience, before God and before the people who were hurt. One must then ask for forgiveness and finally make some compensation for the evil done. When it comes to a clergyman, he must confess the public sin before his bishop or his superior, and together they should establish a way of compensating for the public scandal. Most importantly, the Christian reading of our Communist past must reject the tendency to identify with the sinless. This denies historical reality.

Finally, the purification of memory should not turn itself into a crusade against informers, or a witch hunt. The root of purification refers to a completely different thing: the moral recovery of society, the bringing together of citizen efforts around significant national projects, promoting the common good, and the confidence of Romanians in one another. But in order to fulfil such objectives, a critical appeal to self and national identity is inevitable. Many questions must be posed. Who are we? What are we supposed to do? What can we hope for? All these are questions that Romanians, as a people and a nation, must answer now, as we move to join the European Union.

HISTORY AND IDENTITY

The relationship between history and identity is a critical one. History always challenges the identity, either of the person or of the community, to make explicit the sense which is implicit in their foundational events. Therefore, on one hand, identity implies discernment, interpretation, and creativity, and on the other, it presupposes a reserve for the revealing moments of one's existence. For instance, in a normal family, the birth of a child, the arrival of a guest, the first or last day of school could be revealing moments. Unfortunately, the rhetoric of things (in the Western world) and the lack of education in the spirit of humanist values (in the Eastern world) might block the sense of discernment and the opening to novelty in everyday revelations.

Regarding post-communist Romania, we might say that the shift from dictatorship to democracy has been marked by an abuse of identity: "We are Romanian!" "we don't sell our country." These are some of the slogans often present in recent official pronouncements. The consequences of this situation are negative. People have left villages behind, and Romania has lost population due to emigration. With this emigration, many cultural values and national symbols have been compromised. For example, homeland and patriotism have been disfigured by the dead language of the Communist system. Many Romanians have mixed up cause and effect and

have rejected the country in which they were born. Indeed, when common elements are sorted out, many deny a way of being and identity through history; many are baffled and find the Romanian language their only common denominator.⁵⁸The policies of recent governments have made attempts at several reforms, strengthening the places and institutions where identity is fostered and built up, such as family, school, and church. But the outcome has often caused further confusion. Moreover, it does not appear that the forthcoming European integration will bring about any real improvement, unless the state is prepared to support the initiatives of civil society.

FAMILY AS STARTING POINT OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

After the 1989 events, all the fundamental institutions of the Romanian society came under turmoil. Among these, the family, as the essential single unit of society was hit hard. Seeking for its appropriate place in a changing world, dominated by novelties and surprises, family has been a helpless witness to the dilution of the meaning of existence; what was meaningful in the past means nothing in the present. Memory, as the link between generations, has gradually weakened. Today the greatest challenge for the Romanian family is handing down values. However, it is difficult to discern what has value and should be preserved from what might be cast off. In a world caught up in the fever of democratisation, which tends to relativize everything, even the privacy of love relationships within the family comes under pressure. In this process, mass-media plays an important role; information multiplies, comes quick and often causes a sense of insecurity. Certainly, the long shadow of family catches up with every single person. However, even this important dimension, remains meaningless if confined to a couple of insignificant day-to-day survival techniques. What is absent is a perspective that could bestow dynamism and depth on family tradition. Nevertheless, focus on the family and on the important family events allows for grasping some of the significance of every day life—even what seems repetitive, obvious and contingent.

Parents represent the essential instance of handing down values, but it is clear that they, too, face hardships when it comes to specific values, precisely because they themselves are going through a crises. Many are separated, divorced and remarried, so they have a new family, joining together different histories and traditions. However, even staying with the same family, parents face difficulties in living together. Family is a social institution, and there are tendencies and mentalities in the social reality that emphasize individualism, narcissism and materialism. If tradition has no role, if it no longer speaks from the standpoint of values, there comes a

⁵⁸ Cf. V. MUREȘAN, “Ce simboluri ne reprezintă?” [Which Symbols Represent Us?], in *Adevărul literar și artistic [The Literary and Artistic Truth]*, 5076/1 November, 2006 (edition online).

crisis between generations. The Romanian family has to cope with a “triumphant amnesia.” This phenomenon is especially specific to the present, when the old faces the new; the past faces the present, pre-modernity faces late modernity.⁵⁹ In the recent past, family projects and values were not analysed much, because the possible choices were already predetermined (customs, traditions, interdictions). However, at present, the family “individualises” itself, persons observe the family code set by the previous generations to a lesser extent and open themselves more and more towards what the law and public opinion allow. In this context, the individual’s actions need more analysis and thinking before being fulfilled, and the family has to become more reflective and aware. Finally, many things are changing: the world seems to be conditioned not so much by physical space and time, as by virtual ones; the one possessing knowledge and wisdom is no longer the grandfather, the experienced elder. Rather, he/she is the expert in a particular field. In this case, the choice of values within the family needs a double hermeneutic: one from the actor himself, the other from the expert who tries to give meaning to the action he analyses. The actor fulfils the action; sometimes he may come to know the expert’s interpretation, then often he changes his interpretation or line of action. In this sense, the initiatives of civil society and of the Catholic Church to set up associations and centres of marriage formation, having the role of the expert in family matters are beneficial and welcome.⁶⁰

From what has been said so far, one may conclude that the identity of the family built on values is no longer inherited in contemporary society or is no longer a static reality; instead, it has become a formative project, a continuous reflection, in the sense that it has to permanently integrate the events taking place in the outer world and seek out those that suit its own self-awareness. How are we to do that? How are we supposed to act? Who are we supposed to be? For the Romanian families these are very hard questions to answer, yet unavoidable.

For example, modern societies find themselves in a rapid urbanisation process, hence the challenge of family dissolution and isolation. That is why the ecclesial community has the responsibility to strengthen family cohesion, especially in times of trials and critical moments. In this sense, the role of parishes is very important, just as that of the different ecclesial organisations, called upon to work together as

⁵⁹ A. GIDDENS, *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), pp. 54-70.

⁶⁰ W. DANCĂ, “Mergeți și voi în via mea” [Go You Also into My Vineyard], in W. DANCĂ (ed.), *Creștinii laici. Identitate și misiune* [*The Lay Christians. Identity and Mission*] (Iași: Editura Sapientia, 2001), pp. 5-9. Such centres for family formation were established in the whole country for Catholic Christians, thus at the initiative of the lay persons within the Catholic Church. Positive reactions, though rather timid, come from the majority Orthodox Church of Romania, as well.

supporting structures for church and family growth in faith. Finally, the duty to transmit spiritual values to the new generation belongs first of all to parents, of course, with the help of institutions, such as parishes, schools and other Catholic associations. In line with this, an important role in family life belongs to grandparents, whom modern society often tends to exclude, or to neglect. Indeed, it is not state, government, or any other institution, but rather, grandparents who, in a unique and comforting way represent the guarantee of "...affection and tenderness that any human being needs to give and to receive. They offer the perspective of time and history to children; they are the memory and richness of their families. They should not be excluded from the environment of the family."⁶¹

SCHOOL AS CRITICAL MOMENT OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

By definition, the school represents an exercise of collective memory. Schools are called to promote a systematic effort of drawing out, organising and valorising those elements of human experience that may be useful to new generations. By offering an educational itinerary based on one's quest as an individual or community in time and space, the school promotes and rehabilitates collective memory.⁶² Such defining aspects for any kind of formative institution have come to the fore with the introduction of alternative textbooks on Romanian history in the curriculum of middle and high schools. Before 1989 there was one single set of history textbooks for each and every school in Romania, irrespective of ethnicity, geography, religion etc. These represented the unique authorised version of the national *récit*. After 1989, in the light of the recommendations of the European Council 1283/1996 on history and the teaching of history in Europe, and recommendation 15/2001 on teaching history in Europe in the 21st century, to which Romania, as member-state of the European forum has subscribed, the Ministry of Education decided that the teaching of national history should take place within a general European framework. However, the alternative textbooks introduced between 1997 and 1999 have represented a shock for history teachers.

Romania was among the European states in which a scandal related to history textbooks arose, because some in Parliament demanded the burning of history textbooks. The causes were multiple, among them being the tension created by dilettantes interfering in discussions, on the grounds, endlessly repeated, that history is a national good. In compliance with several important conditions, the alternative texts may offer the chance of

⁶¹ PP. BENEDICT XVI, *Discurs în timpul întâlnirii mondiale a familiilor* [*Discourse during the World Family Assembly*], Valencia (Spain), 8 July, 2006 (edition online).

⁶² AL. ZUB, "The School of Memory and Collective Memory: Sighet 2006."

approaching history from the standpoint of a more pluralistic perspective.⁶³ On the whole, the topic of alternative history textbooks constitutes a diagram of the relation a society has with its past. In the case of Romanian society after the collapse of Communism, the emergence of group memories, such as the memory of collectivisation, the memory of former political prisoners, the memory of exile, the memory of intellectuals, the memory of the Jewish community or of the German minority, all lead not only to entering the horizon of the Holocaust and of the crimes committed by Communism, but also to the dissolution of the historical-ideological literalism embodied by a single textbook. Besides restoring the moral and political dimension, alternative history textbooks correspond to the phenomenon of internationalisation of historical research. Indeed, historical research and the regime of memory are no longer content with the narrowness of a national framework rigidly conceived. Following the direction indicated by the new textbooks, Romanian national memory will become more and more open, confirming the view of Benedetto Croce, that there is no history other than contemporary history.⁶⁴

History is closely related to the memory of the community; for man distinguishes himself from animal by his ability to remember, to learn from the past experiences, not only his, but also those of other individuals of his kind. Equally, history may contribute to the formation and interiorization of certain values and moral landmarks, allowing the individual to find his way in the complex world in which he lives.⁶⁵ In comparison with other disciplines, history has a more problematic status, because it very easily renders itself, by its own nature, to ideological interpretations. Nowadays pluralism is not readily apparent at the level of historical conception, interpretation and historiographical theory. The nationalism and positivism of a century ago still dimly marks national historical discourse, as well as history textbooks.

⁶³ M. MANEA, "Imaginea manualului ca «Biblie a profesorului» trebuie să dispară" [The Image of the Textbook as the «Teacher's Bible» Has to Disappear], in F. ȚURCANU, A. GOȘU, "Manualele opționale de istorie" [The Alternative History Textbooks], in 22, year XIV, 799/28 June—4 July, 2006) (edition online).

⁶⁴ F. ȚURCANU, "Pentru o memorie națională deschisă" [For an Open National Memory], in F. ȚURCANU, A. GOȘU, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵ E. LUNG, "Pluralism în abordare, nu doar diversitate formală" [Pluralism of Approach, not just Formal Diversity], in F. ȚURCANU, A. GOȘU, *op. cit.*

If history were taught in a more creative way,⁶⁶ it might contribute to people's active involvement in the life of the *polis*, as well as in the professionalization of the civic body. For instance, in ancient Athens access to the theatre was free, because there the consequences of applying or not applying certain fundamental values for the good functioning of the *polis* were presented in a historical perspective (modernity calls it mythological). Similarly, the study of history opens up the way to multiple dimensions of identity. Until 1989 we had one single dimension of identity: the student, just like the teacher, was Romanian (with a strange confusion of ethnicity and citizenship) and Communist.

However today there is the desire to present history in the spirit of civic values, a fact which should trigger the extinction of any contradictions among the multiple identities of a student (ethnicity, gender, religion, political option) and citizenship. Certainly, among other objectives, the school wants to educate citizens, because it is a socialising environment and instrument, meant to create a set of cultural values and landmarks necessary for the functioning of community. The school is the place where part of our collective memory is built up, and history taught at school is one of the main memory-creating instruments. For a society, the absence of historical memory has the same effect that amnesia has for an individual: it makes one dependent on any influence; it leaves one at the mercy of any kind of ideological manipulation.⁶⁷ From this perspective, history becomes indispensable, provided that it is understood "as the experience of otherness in time, comparable to other experiences—those of otherness in space."⁶⁸ It is valuable when it is presented as hypothesis and welcomes historiographical debate, and when that historiographical environment is variegated, generous and intellectually structured. In this way, different social groups have the right to express their memories freely, and history textbooks can be periodically de-ideologised and revised. Moreover, alternative history textbooks can create a framework for the assumption of values leading to citizenship, and contribute to doing away with the temptation to approach the past in an exhaustive manner.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Cf. S. MITU, "Nu contează ce predai, ci cum predai" [It Does not Matter What You Teach, but How You Teach], in F. ȚURCANU, A. GOȘU, *op. cit.*; Al.-F. PLATON, "Profesorul este esențial, nu manualul" [The Teacher is Essential, not the Textbook], in F. ȚURCANU, A. GOȘU, "The Alternative History Textbooks II" [Manualele opționale de istorie II], in 22, year XIV, 800/5—11 July, 2005) (edition online).

⁶⁷ D. ZAHARIA, "Învățământul istoric în suferință" [The Teaching of History in Suffering], in F. ȚURCANU, A. GOȘU, *The Alternative History Textbooks*.

⁶⁸ Z. PETRE, "Abrogarea discursului unic despre istorie" [The Abolition of the Unique Discourse about History], in F. ȚURCANU, A. GOȘU, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹ Cf. L. CAPITA, "Autorii produc stereotipuri, manualele le reflectă" [Authors Generate Stereotypes, Textbooks Reflect Them], in F. ȚURCANU, A.

A clever example of relating oneself to the past is a project at the initiative of Romanian civil society, “the Memorial of the Victims of Communism and Resistance.” It has been going on since 1992, in the former prison of Sighet, together with an International Centre of Studies on Communism, under the auspices of the Civic Academy Foundation and with the support of several organisations from abroad, including the European Council, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. Within this framework, scientific and commemorative sessions are organised, along with symposia, debates, round tables, a “summer school” for students interested in getting to know the recent history and especially the Communist system. The Sighet Memorial publishes an informative journal, *The Sighet Annales*, including collections of studies, documents, personal memories, etc., as well as several volumes assembled by participants in the summer school.

Behind this institutional complex stand Ana Blandiana and Romulus Rusan, two writers who serve with much devotion the project of rehabilitating collective memory. In the northern corner of the country, in a place significant for the anti-Communist resistance of Romania and its subsequent sacrifices, the terrible prison of Sighet was turned into a museum and a centre of studies, the very place where the outstanding figures of our elite were imprisoned and where great personalities of recent history passed away, counting among them Iuliu Maniu and Gheorghe Brătianu.

The lesson deriving from the Sighet Memorial is one of sound valorisation of memory in relation to recent history. Indeed, one may say that there is at Sighet “a density of memory, a form of exemplary character unprecedented in Romanian space; it tells how important is the accurate perception of linear time in history, but also the meaning of the relation between the personal destinies and political events. Sighet is about a reflective return to history, the only return capable of triggering a process of memorializing and restoring those really founding personalities.”⁷⁰

The transformation of a prison to a memorial dedicated to the anti-Communist resistance and its sacrifices represents a symbolic event. What lies at its origin is the desire of civil society to remedy the post-Communist world. The gesture of regaining the past wants to be at the same time an act of justice, as it becomes clear from the slogan adapted after a thought of Ana Blandiana, “When justice cannot be a form of memory, memory alone

GOȘU, *op. cit.* L. Capita draws attention on the drama of the historian who, through a discourse about values narrated as a chronological story, cannot stop the gesture of the Palestinian youth to sacrifice himself in the name of some ideals that we, Europeans, may consider confusing, yet from the perspective of the group wherein he lived, embody the most elevated civic attitude.

⁷⁰ L. PALANCIUC, “Școala de la Sighet, un spațiu al reflecției” [The School of Sighet, a Space for Reflection], in *Observator cultural [The Cultural Observer]* 74, 331/27 July—August, 2006 (edition online).

can be a form of justice.”⁷¹ “Resistance against forgetfulness” is the expression revealing the meaning of the project. This is a reaction, especially significant today, when politicians and strategists seek to impose “forgetfulness” on people.

In this example, we are dealing with a coherent and lasting program wherein memory represents the basic principle, as a restoration element, but equally has an organising, structuring, and creative function. The school of memory performs its activity within the very walls of the former prison, which has been appropriately rearranged, inviting the students attending courses to do *Exercises of Memory*, as well as *Exercises of Hope*. This physical presence in the same place where great political, cultural and religious personalities passed away “has something sympathetic to it: it is practically impossible not to walk the path of history, not to be touched by everything inside the cells of the former prison. Great persons have been here, the elite of Romania came to its end here.”⁷² Referring to the artisans of the project, the French historian, Stéphane Curtois, was right when he stated that, “[W]e all fulfill a mission of history and memory, which is fundamental for Romania.”⁷³

In sum, the school of Sighet is a school of memory, but also a place where memory is written, since it allows the participant to enter a community of thinking where memory is alive. The center goes beyond the stage of simple celebration to find a new legitimacy. Memory and history are bound together in an explicit demonstration: the lists of martyrs become sources for history, but also the transcription of individual memories. The convergence between the researcher interpreting the past and the one remembering is an authentic one. There is no rivalry between the two *démarches*, for they both allow us to look for our relation to time, as well as our personal historicity. Thus, the time of critical history does not oppose

⁷¹ In 1998, The European Council placed the Memorial of Sighet among the main places preserving the memory of our continent, next to the Auschwitz Memorial and the Peace Memorial of Normandy. Consisting of a museum, situated in the former political prison of Sighet, and an International Centre of Studies on Communism, with its headquarters in Bucharest, the aim of the Memorial is to restore and preserve the memory of several peoples, particularly of the Romanian people, whose consciousness has been intoxicated with a false history for half a century.

⁷² M. ȘORA, “Un muzeu al memoriei într-o țară fără memorie” [A Museum of Memory in a Country without Memory] (interviewed by L. Palanciuc), in *Observator cultural [Cultural Observer]* 74, 331/27 July—2 August, 2006 (edition online).

⁷³ St. CURTOIS, “Am fost și eu la Sighet” [I too went to Sighet] (letter), in *Observator cultural [Cultural Observer]* 74, 331/27 July—August, 2006 (edition online). The French historian Stéphane Curtois was several times the rector of the Summer School of the Sighet Memorial and of the Civic Academy.

the time of handing down oral memory. The two moments do not exclude each other, nor are they mistaken for one another.⁷⁴

THE CHURCH AS INTERPRETATION OF COLLECTIVE IDENTITY

In Romania the majority church is the Romanian Orthodox Church. the largest of the minority churches is the Catholic Church of both rites, Roman-Catholic and the Greek-Catholic in union with Rome. Despite the differences of doctrine, pastoral style and liturgical emphasis, these Churches share more unifying elements than one may notice at first sight. The ecumenical movement finds here a solid basis for dialogue that could lead to full restoration of Christian unity. As regarding its relation with the political powers, the majority church is guided by the principle of harmony between the two powers; the earthly and heavenly, the sacred and the secular powers are intertwined. While the Catholic Church view sustains the principle of separation and/or the working together of these powers, it is, in any case, subordinated to the integral well-being of the human person.

However, with the Orthodox, when it comes to spiritual matters, the political has to support the initiatives of the religious sphere; and when it is about the earthly things, the religious has to support the initiatives of the political sphere. In short, the Orthodox conception professes the doctrine of conjoint action of two centers of power—the altar and the throne, the State and the Church. Whereas the Catholic conception favours the supremacy of one center of political power—the State in the earthly matters, while the Church should rule in religious matters. According to its own doctrine about the identity of the church and its role in history, the Catholic Church considers itself a part of the civil society, and the Orthodox Church as part of the state. As a consequence, the Catholic Church considers itself a partner in dialogue both with the state, and with other organisations of civil society, while the Orthodox Church has only the state as its partner.

Taking into account the Communist period of Romanian history and the political steps towards the country's integration into the European Union, which knows different forms of relations between state and church, from split (France) to fusion (England), several theologians and bishops of the Orthodox Church claim that Orthodox ecclesiology is ideal, yet in practice it is not working. While the Catholic ecclesiology can be improved, it is more suitable for the new social European realities. The principle of "a free Church in a free State" goes back to the first Christian centuries, not only to the French Revolution. It was developed by the Catholic Church in modern times with the theological grounding of solidarity and subsidiarity. At the core of this approach is the concept of the person, not as an individual but rather implying relationships, qualities and values. In this

⁷⁴ Cf. L. PALANCIUC, *op. cit.*

conception, the individual implies only quantity and matter. Because it has not dialogued with civil society, the Orthodox Church has not managed to reach the core of these matters. Nevertheless, the challenges of modernity—individualism, materialism, secularisation—demand that all churches pay attention to such issues. This is not about a change in church identity, but rather its function in relation to society. The church, Orthodox or Catholic, stays between the border of the sacred and the profane realms, providing mainly by liturgy, the passage from one side to the other.

Let me cite two examples that emphasize the important role of memory in preserving one's identity. In a sense these examples constitute "liturgy writ large." First example: Despite the criticism of its gesture, the Romanian Orthodox Church declared one of the rulers of Moldavia⁷⁵ a saint in 1992—Stephen the Great (1457-1504). In order to bring back the personality of this ruler to collective memory, the Church led a systematic campaign of promoting his life and deeds, culminating with the commemoration of five hundred years since his death in 2004. All over the country, but especially in Moldavia, symposia, conferences and ceremonies were organised with a view to evoke the legendary figure of the Moldavian leader. In this way, the Romanian Orthodox Church managed to grant Stephen the Great a place of honour in people's consciousness. This has been recently confirmed by a campaign of testing the collective mentality, entitled "Great Romanians," organised by National Romanian Television, and including discussions over seven months of several Romanian personalities. At the end of these debates, ten competitors were left. First place, according to the votes received, went to Stephen the Great. He was thus granted the title of "the most honored Romanian of all times."

Second example: The Roman Catholic Church of Bucharest has been confronted for some time with press headlines, "Save St Joseph Cathedral of Bucharest."⁷⁶ In short, it is about the erection of a very tall building right next to the St Joseph Cathedral, which by its dimensions represents a threat to the integrity of the cathedral walls and implicitly, adds to the rapid degradation of the Catholic cathedral. The church is a truly architectural, historical and religious monument, emblematic for the Catholic Church and the modern history of Romania. It is in this church that kings and princes of modern Romania came to pray and receive the sacraments; it is here that religious ceremonies and events of great

⁷⁵ See the decision of the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church of June 20th, 1992.

⁷⁶ Many local and national newspapers (*Adevărul/The Truth, România liberă/Free Romania, Ziua/The Day, Ziarul de Iași/The Jassy Newspaper* etc.), the diocesan magazines across the country (*Lumina creștinului/The Christian's Light, Actualitatea/Actuality* etc.), Romanian religious websites (www.ercis.ro / www.catholica.ro / www.arcb.ro etc.) offer an extensive coverage of this topic, trying to sensitize the decisional fora in the direction of stopping the construction of the building next to St Joseph Cathedral of Bucharest.

importance for the country's history took place. In the case of the project for saving the cathedral, we are dealing with a confrontation between the strength of the symbols belonging to collective memory and the strength of financial interests. Recently the Romanian Senate decided to stop the construction of the new building, thus emphasizing the importance of social and religious symbols.⁷⁷

It seems that in the near future the number of such challenges will increase. Under the invading steamroller of materialism and secularisation, amnesia may turn itself into a phobia towards the church and the values it fosters. In the past, prior to the Communist regime, no one contested the role of the church in the history of the Romanian people,⁷⁸ the church was considered the mother of all families, schools and fundamental institutions. During the Communist regime, not only the historical merits of the church were contested, but the church itself was hindered from fulfilling its mission. That is why, after 1989, one could see that the church made considerable effort, sometime much debated, to restore the values of the past by means of liturgy—sacred, symbolic gestures re-enacting an event that happened years ago. By means of the liturgy, the church connects the present to the past, keeps history open, purifies and restores the dissipated time. The sacred time of liturgy pervades the profane time, conferring on it ontological consistency and significance. Thus, the church also defines itself by means of the special relation towards history. Obviously, history does not represent for the church the “eternal return of nature,” but a one-way road that all human generations travel, from the beginning to end, until Christ's second coming. History has a meaning that the decisive events of the past contain *in nuce*, and the *Parousia*, Christ's second coming, will fully reveal.

The compulsory character of remembrance for Christians is founded first of all upon the sacred text of the Bible: “Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for thou art my servant. O Israel, forget me not,” says the Lord (cf. Is 44, 21). The Bible does not only impose the obligation to remember, but detests forgetfulness. The source of all sin and

⁷⁷ Cf. V. DELEANU, “Senatorii cer stoparea *Cathedral Plaza*” [Senators Demand the End of the *Cathedral Plaza*], in *Ziua/The Day*, 8 November, 2006 (edition online).

⁷⁸ Cf. N. IORGA, *Istoria românilor din Ardeal și Ungaria* [*The History of Romanians in Transylvania and Hungary*], vols. I-II (Bucharest: Editura Casa Școalelor, 1915). See the 1989 edition, published at Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, under the supervision of Georgeta Penelea; N. IORGA, *Istoria literaturii religioase a românilor până la 1688* [*The History of the Romanians' Religious Literature until 1688*] (Bucharest, 1904); N. IORGA, *Istoria Bisericii Românești și a vieții religioase a românilor* [*The History of the Romanian Church and of the Religious Life of Romanians*], vols. I-II (Bucharest, Editura Ministeriului de Culte, 1928). See the photocopied 1995 edition of the 100+1 Gramar Publishing House of Bucharest.

the most dreadful curse that may befall a man is to be forgotten. In the New Testament Jesus Christ tells us the same thing in the Eucharistic sacrifice: “Do this do this in remembrance of Me!” (cf. Lk 22, 19). That is why one may say that the Christian’s being derives from one’s action—*esse sequitur operari*—and one’s remembrance. A Christian without memory is no longer a Christian.

In itself, memory is selective, therefore not all the moments of the past are remembered. The fundamental concern of the Church is not to forget that whole range of values that inspire and harmonise life and particularly the life of the Christian community. As such, those acts and personalities (saints, martyrs, witnesses) are selected whose remembrance is a guaranty of rendering permanency to its own system of values. Any community has several elements of the past that constitute themselves in a teaching, oral or written form, respected and accepted, which become a tradition. Throughout history, the Church draws from the past those moments considered to be educative and exemplary for the preservation of the community identity. This selection of the past is related to historical circumstances and liturgical forms. The ritual has an existential function, because it allows for a deep connection between man and history, in the sense that rituals are always contextualised and historicised. Equally, the ritual also has a cognitive, hermeneutical function, meaning that the principles of interpreting facts have been given *in nuce* in the past and, and in this way, the present is no longer oppressive. Since Christianity is at the basis of the birth of the Romanian people, Romanian culture is marked by the functions of the ritual in its thought and life. Indeed, oral or written culture shows a constant tendency to lead towards the “cosmic” and “Christian” archetypes.

On January 1, 2007 Romania and Bulgaria will join the European community, a political and economic community under construction, while still searching for their own identity.⁷⁹ The discussions aroused by the content of the preamble to the Treaty for a Constitution of Europe, which omits the reference to the Christian heritage of Europe and to God, gave rise to challenging reactions among the countries that were candidates for integration. Pro-European discourse within the country has emphasized more and more the possible cultural-spiritual contribution of Romanian Orthodoxy as the basis of values upon which the European identity may define itself.⁸⁰ A united Europe is an essentially Christian edifice that

⁷⁹ Cf. R. CARP (coord.), *Un suflet pentru Europa. Dimensiunea religioasă a unui proiect politic [A Soul for Europe. The Religious Dimension of a Political Project]* (Bucharest: Editura Anastasia, 2005); N. DRĂGUȘIN, “Religia, o nouă dimensiune a Europei unite” [Religion, a New Dimension of United Europe] in *România liberă [Free Romania]*—Aldine/11 November, 2006.

⁸⁰ Cf. R. PREDA, “România în proiectul politic european” [Romania in the European Political Project”] (3), in *Adevărul literar și artistic [The Literary*

member states refuse to recognise. This seems due to the influence of the French model of complete separation of State and Church. The acceptance of the Christian heritage of Europe does not mean the exclusion of the new religious communities that aim at joining it, like Islam. On the contrary, it means the authentication of attachment to the principles upon which it rests. According to Max Weber's interpretation, the Christian impact in Europe can be identified in Protestantism as the rise of capitalism, and in Catholicism, with subsidiarity and the construction of federalism. At present, the European Union incorporates both the economic dimension (capitalism) and a political dimension (federalism). What might Romania bring to Europe as its constitutive value?

The debate on the religious dimension of Europe is only beginning, at least as far as the Christian heritage is concerned. In Romania, Eastern Christianity with its cosmic and liturgical dimension has marked the definition of identity and self-consciousness, thus managing to preserve the sense of belonging to a community of destiny. This has been maintained in spite of the not always favourable historical circumstances. Europe has temporary borders and finds itself in the process of identity building; Romania has stable borders, but a contested past, and thus identity is unstable. The lessons of transition from dictatorship to democracy have shown us that when there is no good order in memory, no transparent and critical connection with the past, both its negative and positive side, then self-consciousness darkens, identity becomes rigid, and future projects do not bring together the strengths and interests of the society.

Romania is a Christian country, with an Orthodox majority. In public manifestations during the period of transition, the Orthodox Church has preserved some nationalist undertones. Nationalism represented the illness of the 20th century everywhere in Europe—though, at the same time, it has supported the integration of Romania into the European Union. Now, under the pressure of political events, the nationalistic tone of ecclesiastical discourse has lessened at least a little, allowing one to glimpse the fact that the time has come for a new interpretation of the relation between ethnicity, nation and religion. This must be done, not in exclusive or inclusive terms, as in the past, but in complementary terms. The complementary perspective over this relation creates the basis for accepting a dialogic, open identity.⁸¹ It is without doubt that unless the past is looked directly in the eye and assumed critically, there is the risk of repeating it.

Finally, it may be said that Romanian society is on the right track. Nonetheless, its future depends on its past, especially, the recent past, because the same hands that were once in handcuffs are raised today in a gestures of reconciliation. An old adage states: *Do not dig into the past!* By

and *Artistic Truth*], 5076/1 November, 2006 (edition online).

⁸¹ Cf. P. RICOEUR, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris : Éditions du Seuil, 2000); I. SANNA, *L'identità aperta. Il cristiano e la questione antropologica* (Brescia: Queriniana, 2006).

*insisting on the past you will lose one eye.*⁸² But if you forget the past, you will lose both eyes.

⁸² Cf. AI. SOLJENIȚĂN, *Arhipelagul Gulag [The Gulag Archipelago]* 3 vols. (Bucharest: Editura Univers, 1998).

CHAPTER 21

HISTORY, IDENTITY AND CONFLICT: ROMANIAN CONFSSIONAL IDENTITY AND THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

ALIN TAT

I am interested here especially in the theme of identity, from a cultural and a religious perspective. This paper investigates the identity of the Romanian Byzantine Catholic Church (or Greek-Catholic Church), that implies a double relationship—to the Orthodox and Catholic tradition. This belonging must be understood through the continuum of past, present and future—of this form of Christianity.

I will also reflect on the theme : *Confessional Identity and Alterity in Post-Communist Romania*. The problem of confessional identity and alterity in post communist Romania can be seen as a case study, part of a more general investigation regarding the relation between identity and alterity in Eastern Europe after 1989 and reflected in the current European debates.

I place my present historical and philosophical research under the guise of the Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx who writes that:

“Between the Charybdis of insistence upon totality and the Scylla of the reverence for what is historically particular and unique there lies only one possible, significant perspective: the imperative need for communication, dialogue instead of totality ; and so a ban on any pretention to reduce “the other“ to a constituent part of my “total discourse”. The place, therefore, where truth may possibly be found is in human-being-as-possibility-of-communication.”¹

I chose to deal with the issue of the Romanian Greek-Catholic confessional identity, but also with its cultural component: what does it mean to be a Greek-Catholic today in Romania? I shall start with two aspects which determine this status, namely the Romanian State and the Orthodox Church. The fact that the main church in Romania is the Orthodox gives a decisive turn to the inter-confessional and inter-religious relationships in the country. It is interesting to note the terminology used until recently, Until Communism was established and the Greek-Catholic Church was abolished in 1948, the Romanians in the Transylvania region—where most of the Romanian Greek-Catholics live—were calling themselves united or not united, depending on their church-affiliation.

My paper consists of three parts: first of all, I will present a brief

¹ *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology*, translated by H. Hoskins (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), p. 614.

religious history of the Romanians, especially those living in Transylvania, as well as the inter-confessional relationships in this region. In the second part, I will analyze some of the issues of today and in the final part, the shorter one, I will make some suggestions aiming to reduce the tension within the Greek-Catholics and the Orthodox relationship. Also, I will make some tentative suggestions toward normalizing relations.

HISTORY

I will sketch the history of the 300 years of Greek-Catholic Church, in order to link the past to a contemporary debate².

The Romanian Christianity is of Daco-Latin origin and kind. The historians have not yet reached a unanimous conclusion with regard to the canonical bondage of the Christian communities living on today's Romania land until 1054, the year of the schism. After that, the Slavonic-Byzantine influence becomes predominant, which led to the Romanians embracing the Orthodox Church.

In Transylvania, however, things are different, since three ethnic groups have lived here already from the Middle Ages: the Romanian, the Hungarian and the German one, each with its own religious particularities. So, until 1948, most Romanians were Orthodox and Greek-Catholics, the Hungarians were Calvinists and Unitarians, and the Germans were Catholics and Lutherans.

The Greek-Catholic Church rose up at the end of the seventeenth century in Transylvania. This awakening occurred against the background of the Catholic counter-reformation and of a precarious social position of the Romanian people, where the aristocracy was Hungarian, the bourgeoisie mostly German and the majority of the peasants Romanian. Religiously speaking, in the seventeenth century the Romanian Orthodox Church took a definite Calvinist turn, risking the prospect of losing its identity.

The fact of the unification with the Roman Church is a very much debated historical and religious event in Romanian historiography, and the polarized views follow this confessional affiliation. The correct clarification and evaluation of this moment, in its historical context, is not yet completed. It needs to be done however, in order to elaborate a history of the Romanian Church, commonly accepted by both Orthodox and the Greek-Catholics. Its achievement will provide a useful and necessary tool with regard to the much desired reconciliation and acceptance of the past but without traumatic effects on the present. The most well-balanced view seems to be that the Unification cannot be reduced either to a simple political or economical calculation made by the Romanians from Transylvania in order to get some advantages, nor to the so-called Catholic

² For the historical data cf. Z. Pâclișanu, *Istoria Bisericii Române Unite* (Cluj: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2006).

expansionism or proselytism. When interpreting this event, one must bear in mind the religious aspect of the ideal of rebuilding Christian unity, as well as the particular relationship of the Romanians with their ethnic and cultural Latin and Roman roots and character.

The 1700 *Union Manifesto*, was signed by Bishop Atanasie Anghel and the other 54 “protopopes” in the name of 1563 priests and approximately 200,000 believers.

The Greek-Catholic Church proved to be extremely prolific, both culturally and politically, because it advocated, in a most convincing manner, the cause of the Romanian majority through its schools; Romanian as the teaching language (among almost 400); through reports addressed to the imperial Vienna court and to the Transylvania Diet; through the Transylvanian School movement and through the “Memorandum”—the Manifesto. The relationships with the Orthodox Church in Transylvania were close in the nineteenth and the twentieth century, culminating in the commonly achieved Union with Romania, on December 1, 1918, at Alba-Iulia.

However, between the wars these relationships would gradually become full of tension due largely to the change in the comparative number of believers. At the 1930 census, 12 percent of the population declared themselves Greek-Catholic, while the Orthodox were more than 70 percent.

The arrival of the communist regime led to the abolishment of the Greek-Catholic Church in 1948. The Soviet origin of the communist domination in Romania, as well as the convergence of interest between the state and the Romanian Orthodox Church with regard to the abolishment of the Greek-Catholic Church explains the radical attitude of some of the Greek-Catholic believers towards Orthodoxy, which is seen as an ideological tool of spreading the anti-Western and anti-Catholic ideas.

At that time, the Greek-Catholic Church had about 1.5 million adherents, five cathedrals, three theological academies, 2600 churches and as many active priests, nine monastic orders with 28 monasteries and over 400 monks, 34 high-schools, 20 weekly and monthly magazines, five publishing houses. In Transylvania, according to the 1930 census, 31 percent of the population was Catholic, and 27 percent Orthodox, while in Maramureş (North of Transylvania) the Greek-Catholics were 65 percent of the population³.

THE SITUATION TODAY—2006

In this second part of my paper I will refer to some actual issues, which emphasize the democratic level attained in Romania between 1990 and 2006, but also some of the gaps remaining in Romanian society.

Reestablishing the legality of the Greek-Catholic Church after

³ Cf. L. Boia, *Romania : Borderland of Europe* (London : Reaktion Books, 2001), p. 215.

1989 is only the beginning of a process of rebuilding the institutional structures and the ecclesial life within a democratic process aimed at by the post-communist transition. In order to reveal the actual situation, I will also make use of the *International Religious Freedom Report 2006*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor.

With regard to the cult venues, the report talks about some cases of denial of religious freedom, using the example of the Greek-Catholic Church, which has not yet been compensated for the bulk of its possessions owned before 1948.

The report starts with the remark that:

The Constitution provides for religious freedom; while the Government generally respects this right in practice, there are some restrictions and several minority religious groups continued to claim credibly that low-level government officials and the Romanian Orthodox clergy impeded their efforts at proselytizing, as well as interfered with other religious activities. There was no overall change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report. Relations among different religious groups were generally amicable; however, there were incidents in which the Romanian Orthodox Church showed some hostility toward non-Orthodox churches and criticized the proselytizing of Protestant, neo-Protestant, and other religious groups. The Orthodox Church in general continued to prevent the return of Greek Catholic churches that it received from the state after the dismantling of the Greek Catholic Church by the communists in 1948.⁴

⁴ *International Religious Freedom Report 2006*, released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2006/71402.htm>. Below is the entire section of the report referring to the Greek-Catholic Church:

“The Greek Catholic Church was the second largest denomination (approximately 1.5 million adherents out of a population of approximately 15 million) in 1948 when communist authorities outlawed it and dictated its forced merger with the Romanian Orthodox Church. At the time of its banning, the Greek Catholic Church owned more than 2,600 churches and monasteries, which were confiscated by the state and then given to the Orthodox Church, along with other facilities. Other properties of the Greek Catholic Church, such as buildings and agricultural land, became state property.

Since 1989, the Greek Catholic Church, which has very few places of worship, has been given back fewer than 200 churches from the Orthodox Church. Many followers were still compelled to hold services in public places—more than 220 cases, according to Greek Catholic reports. In Sisesti, Mehedinti County, services had to be held in the open. In 1992, the

Government adopted a decree that listed eighty properties that were not places of worship owned by the Greek Catholic Church to be returned. After the restitution of sixty to sixty-five properties, mostly only on paper, no further progress was made. The most important buildings, including three schools in Cluj, were not restituted. Separately, the Greek Catholic Church accused the Bucharest mayor's office of having blocked the restitution of one of the eighty properties.

Some Orthodox priests, whose families were originally Greek Catholics, converted back to Greek Catholicism after 1989 and also brought their parishes and churches to the Greek Catholic Church. In the early 1990s, the Orthodox Archbishop of Timisoara, Nicolae Corneanu, returned to the Greek Catholics approximately fifty churches in his diocese that belonged to the Greek Catholic Church, including the cathedral in Lugoj. However, because of his actions, the archbishop experienced criticism from the Orthodox Holy Synod and his fellow Orthodox clergymen, several of whom opposed any type of dialogue between the two denominations. Relations between the Greek Catholic Church and the Orthodox Archbishopric of Timisoara continued to be amicable and cooperative. The Orthodox Bishopric of Caransebes continued to hold similar positive dialogues with the Greek Catholic Church.

For the most part, however, Orthodox leaders opposed and delayed returning churches to the Greek Catholics. The Greek Catholic Church of the eparchy of Lugoj complained that the Orthodox Bishopric of Arad, Ienopole, and Halmagiu did not follow through with a commitment to enter a dialogue with the Greek Catholic Church. The Orthodox Bishop of Arad, Ienopole, and Halmagiu also did not agree to a proposal by the Greek Catholic Church to hold alternating church services in churches that were historically Greek Catholic. At the end of the period covered by this report, the Orthodox Bishopric had returned no church to the Greek Catholics. Between July 1, 2005, and April 2006, the Greek Catholic Church recovered only five churches nationwide, the same number as in the previous year.

A 1990 government decree set up a joint Orthodox and Greek Catholic committee at the national level to resolve the situation of former Greek Catholic churches. The committee met for the first time in 1998, had three meetings in 1999, and then met annually after 2000; however, the Orthodox Church resisted efforts to resolve the problem in this forum. In many cases, the courts refused to consider Greek Catholic lawsuits seeking restitution, citing the 1990 decree establishing the joint committee to resolve the issue. In June 2005, Parliament passed into law a 2004 decree permitting the Greek Catholic Church to resort to court action whenever the bilateral dialogue regarding the restitution of churches with the Orthodox Church fails. Parliament initially rejected the decree but passed it after the president refused to sign the rejection law.

On November 20, 2005, after the intervention of the prime minister and the minister of culture and religious affairs, the Orthodox Church returned a cathedral in central Oradea to the Greek Catholic Church; however, despite the Orthodox Patriarch's promise to also restitute a major cathedral in Gherla, Cluj County, and a church in Bucharest, the Greek Catholic Church had not received the churches by the end of the period covered by this report.

From the initial property list of 2,600 seized churches, the Greek Catholic Church had reduced the number of its claims to fewer than 300. According to reports from the Greek Catholic Church, only sixteen churches were restituted as the result of the joint committee's meetings. Restitution of existing churches was financially important to both denominations because local residents were likely to attend the church whether it was Greek Catholic or Orthodox. Consequently, the number of members and corresponding share of the state budget allocation for religions were at stake.

The joint committee has practically ceased its activity since 2004, after the Orthodox Church expressed dissatisfaction with the Greek Catholic Church's answer to a letter that urged dialogue rather than court actions. The two churches did not resume dialogue through this committee during the period covered by the report.

Despite the stated desire for dialogue, the Orthodox Church demolished Greek Catholic churches under various pretexts. Greek Catholic churches—some declared historical monuments—were demolished in Vadu Izei, Maramures County; Baisoara, Cluj County; Smig, Sibiu County; Tritenii de Jos, Cluj County; Craiova, Dolj County; Valea Larga, Mures County; Bont, Cluj County; Calarasi, Cluj County; Solona, Salaj County; and Urca, Cluj County. Another church faced unauthorized demolition in Ungheni, Mures County. In Ungheni, the Orthodox Church continued construction of a new church which was being built around the Greek Catholic church.

On May 9, 2006, in Taga, Cluj County, members of the Orthodox Church demolished overnight a rundown Greek Catholic church, despite an injunction issued by the Government forbidding its demolition or the construction of a new church. An ownership lawsuit was ongoing between the Greek Catholic and the Orthodox churches over the property at the time the demolition took place. The Orthodox priest in Taga was fined approximately \$350 (ROL 10 million) for the illegal demolition. Orthodox Church members in Taga were building a new church on the same premises during the reporting period. Following the Greek Catholic complaints, the construction work for the new Orthodox church stopped in June 2006. The Greek Catholic Church also complained to the President's Office about the church's destruction. In Belotint, Arad County, a dilapidated Greek Catholic church also faced imminent demolition after the Orthodox Church repeatedly refused to return it to the Greek Catholics.

In Nicula, Cluj County, the Orthodox Church continued construction close to the famous Greek Catholic Monastery of Nicula, despite a court order to halt any construction. The lawsuit over the ownership of the church has moved slowly since it was filed in 2001. On August 15, 2005, the Greek Catholic Bishop of Cluj-Gherla sent a letter to the prime minister asking for intervention to help preserve the Nicula Monastery. The Greek Catholic Bishop had reportedly not received a reply from the prime minister by the end of the period of this report. A similar case was reportedly developing in Orastie, Hunedoara County, where the Orthodox Church began construction of a building close to the former Greek Catholic church, presumably with the intention of subsequently demolishing the latter. Over the years, the Orthodox Church

This threefold relationship involving the state, Greek-Catholic Church and the Romanian Orthodox Church has many ambiguities. The retrocession of the existent churches is important for both communities, because the believers, especially from the countryside, want to go to church, be it Greek-Catholic or Orthodox.

The main issue of the debate concerns the significance that the Greek-Catholic Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Romanian state give to the transfer of goods and property to the believers passing from one cult to another, with regard to 1948 and now.

The state interferes in solving the patrimonial issue in an illegitimate manner, favoring one of the views implied, namely the one held by the majority church. Thus, one version of the Cult Law project, states that when more than half of the believers choose to change cults, all the goods of the deserted cult go along with the believers to the new cult. There are two major objections to the state's proposal: first of all, the state cannot legislate about the situation of the goods belonging to a cult, as long as the cults have their own laws regarding this, and as long as the state claims to recognize and respect these cultic laws. The second objection regards the civil law: when a judicial entity ceases to exist, its goods have a certain

repeatedly rejected the Greek Catholic requests for alternating services in over 230 localities.

The Special Commission for Restitution, under Law 501/2002, returned to date 318 of the 6,723 properties claimed for restitution by the Greek Catholic Church. Thirty-three of these were returned between July 1, 2005, and June 30, 2006.

In April 2005, Greek Catholic believers in the country and throughout the world redistributed a 2002 memorandum to the state authorities complaining about discrimination against their Church and calling for the restitution of the Greek Catholic churches and other assets confiscated under communist rule. The only reaction by the authorities came from the state secretary for religious denominations, who replied in a letter that the issue of the Greek Catholic churches was complex and sensitive, and that the establishment of the commission for dialogue was a wise solution.

Local and state authorities also ignored numerous letters and appeals complaining about discrimination against the Greek Catholic Church, sent by Greek Catholic bishops and priests over the years. The authorities also did not respond to street protests by Greek Catholics.

Many lawsuits filed by the Greek Catholic Church remained delayed by the courts, often impeded by constant appeals by the Orthodox Church. In November 2005, for example, after a lawsuit that lasted fifteen years, the Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the Greek Catholic Church in its attempt to regain a major church in Bucharest. The Orthodox Church appealed the ruling, but the High Court of Cassation and Justice rejected the appeal on June 15, 2006. The Greek Catholic Church also brought the case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), which had not issued a decision by the end of the period covered by this report.”

destination, stated in the status of that judicial entity. When the state legislates about the destination of these goods, it breaks a fundamental legal principle.

This legal maneuvering seems absurd, especially, within the context of Church law, but it is also inconsistent with another article of the government's own Cultic Law, which states that the destination of a patrimony of a cult which ceases to exist or is abolished is the one stated in its own statutes of activity. In extreme situations, the two articles of the law project can be contradictory.

It is interesting to see that the Romanian Orthodox Church agrees with this way of transferring the goods in the case of believers switching cults, although this seems to be inconsistent with its own Canon Law. The Greek-Catholic Church, of course, objects to this way of transferring goods.

A distinctive figure within this process of reestablishing a patrimonial justice is the Orthodox Archbishop of the Banat region, Nicolae Corneanu, who, immediately after 1990, chose to retrocede, by his own will and without the need of the mixed commission, almost 50 churches on his jurisdiction, as a gesture of restoration, even at the risk of being marginalized within the Romanian Orthodox Church. His action led to an improved relationship between the two communities in Banat.

On the other hand, to further complicate the judicial procedure of retrocession, an important current of opinion has arisen within the Romanian Orthodox Church, holding that the churches belong to the believers and not to the Church as an institution. According to the Canon Law of the Greek-Catholic Church, the transfer of believers doesn't necessarily imply the transfer of goods. However, an apparent exception to this rule occurs when a former Greek-Catholic community, with building, returns to the Greek-Catholic Church. But in this case, the return of goods and property is not due to some church rule or law regarding the return of the believers, but as reparation for the 1948 illegal acts by which the Greek-Catholic goods were taken by the state and given to the Romanian Orthodox Church.

Thus the position of the state towards the patrimonial dispute doesn't seem to be neutral, because this would imply applying both proposed views, which is not possible. However, the preference of the legislative for the Romanian Orthodox Church version must not come as a surprise, considering that the majority church tends to symbolically monopolize the religious public space. One proof of this is the Romanian Orthodox Church's desire to be recognized as a national church. We must take note of the fact that the 1923 monarchist Constitution called both Churches "Romanian Churches," because of the historical function played by the two communities in the formation, development and declaration of a national identity. Adopting the proposal of designating the Romanian Orthodox Church as the "national Church" doesn't serve the interest of any of the minority Churches, and within the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Greek-Catholic Church the one-sided naming of a "national Church"

would only lead to increased discrimination. One could also see the discussion surrounding the concept of national church as a pretext for separating the majority, even further, from an ever less significant minority. Thus, the minority churches would be rendered even less relevant for Romania.

More specifically, I think that both churches should perform public gestures of recognizing the other by consciously appropriating past mistakes. The rebuilding of a communion should start with the Romanian Orthodox Church admitting its tacit complicity in the abolishment of the Greek-Catholic Church and with the denunciation of the so-called 1948 reunifying/recovery movement. The Greek-Catholic Church, too, should be asked to give up the ideal of “Uniate” as a model of Catholic-Orthodox unity, by a voluntary self-constraining for the sake of the universal Church.

The objective matter of the tensions between the Romanian Orthodox Church and the Greek-Catholic Church must be looked for in the discrepancy between the 12 percent attained by the Greek-Catholic believers at the 1930 census and the one percent or even less at the 1992 and 2002 censuses. A twelve percent decrease of the number of believers cannot be seen as a self-evident evolution as long as during communism there was a large number of martyrs and confessors because of their affiliation with the Greek-Catholic Church. To many Greek-Catholics, the decrease in dialogue within the mixed commission, shows a weak desire on the part of the Romanian Orthodox Church and seems a denial of the legitimacy of the Greek-Catholic Church martyrdom under communism. Again, the Archbishop Nicolae Corneanu counts as an exception, with his frequent calls to retrocession and reparation from the state. As a matter of fact, the same Bishop stressed the misjudgment of those who consider, with a hidden agenda, that the goods—namely the churches—belong to the believers and not to the institution of the Church, according to traditional Canon Law.

BEYOND CONFLICT—RECONCILIATION

In this third part, I will present some suggestions of principle, but also practical, with the purpose of escaping the dead end of these conflicting inter-confessional relationships. Reducing the tension cannot consist just of a negative process, of the mollification of an always latent conflict, but also has an offensive side, namely creating a new state of mind, as a condition of surpassing the crisis. The reconciliation is founded on mutual forgiveness. The formal and declarative affirmation of the good relationships between the two twin-churches is not sufficient—nor efficient, in the long run—when real collaboration is absent. This forgiveness seems even more difficult to accept and perform socially for a generation who went through The Second World War and its consequences, through communism and the malformation of consciousness. A new theology, but also a new perspective on Romanian society as a whole, will have to

provide an alternative to past failure.

Here, I found most helpful some ideas of the 1993 Balamand document, which also suggests some practical rules for the better relationship between the churches⁵:

The first step to take is to put an end to everything that can foment division, contempt and hatred between the Churches ... (21)

It will also be necessary—and this on the part of both Churches—that the bishops and all those with pastoral responsibilities in them to scrupulously respect the religious liberty of the faithful. These, in turn, must be able to express freely their opinion by being consulted and by organizing themselves to this end ... (24)

One should also offer a correct and comprehensive knowledge of history aiming at a historiography of the two Churches which agree and may even be understood as common. In this way, the dissipation of prejudices will be helped, and the use of history in a polemical manner will be avoided. This presentation will lead to an awareness that faults leading to separation belong to both sides, leaving deep wounds on each side... (30)

It is necessary that the Churches come together in order to express gratitude and respect towards all, known and unknown—bishops, priests or faithful, Orthodox, Catholic whether Oriental or Latin—who suffered, confessed their faith, witnessed their fidelity to the Church. (33)

At the end of my research, I am reminded of the triadic typology proposed by Paul Ricœur on the relation between identity discourse and the opening towards cultural alterity⁶. I think that this distinction could also be helpful with respect to the future dialogue between the two Churches in contemporary Romania. According to the French philosopher, three steps need to be taken and tested successively: 1. the model of *translating* from one confession to another—“crossing over towards”. 2. the model of *memory changes* and *narration crossing* (e.g. a common vision of the history of the churches), and 3. the most radical model—one of *forgiveness*.

⁵ Cf. Catholiques et orthodoxes : les enjeux de l’uniatisme. Dans le sillage de Balamand (Paris : Cerf, 2004), pp. 8-10. See paragraphs 21, 24, 30, 33.

⁶ Cf. P. Ricœur, *Sur la traduction* (Paris : Bayard, 2004), pp. 5-7.

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CHAPTER 22

**CIVIL SOCIETY AND
SOCIAL CAPITAL IN POLAND**

EUGENIUSZ GÓRSKI

INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s theorizing on the concept of civil society has been quite frequent in social sciences and in political and media discourse of Western and semi-Western countries aspiring to a full integration with the capitalist Center. Strong civil society has been considered a remedy for democratic longings, social apathy and economic backwardness.

Recently, since the 1990s, another related concept has become hot. It is the idea of social capital formulated by Pierre Bourdieu and James S. Coleman, developed and made popular by Robert D. Putnam, and Francis Fukuyama.¹ In Poland, theoretical and practical discussion of social and cultural capital have appeared in connection with translations of these American and French authors. These considerations show the importance of social capital as a valuable social resource for the functioning of modern democratic and civil societies in a changing market economy. Social capital as a problem is being grasped as a social and economic category full of cognitive and descriptive value, a social good and a peculiar socio-psychological and behavioral fact.² Social capital is usually strengthened when dominant elites voluntarily give up a part of their privileges for the common social good. The term is used here to describe mechanisms of conversion of social and cultural capital into material capital and in analyzing the dynamics of social and structural changes in Polish society, especially in local communities.³ Creating, managing, and raising social capital is understood as the ability to associate individuals in an affluent

¹ The idea inspired by 18th century authors (Adam Smith, David Hume and Edmund Burke) appeared fleetingly already in 1920 in a text by Lyda Hanifan and in 1977 in a text by Glenn Loury. See Zbigniew Jan Stańczyk, "Dwa rodzaje kapitału społecznego", *Gospodarka Narodowa*, 1-2 (2000), p. 17.

² Jerzy Przybysz, Jan Sauś, *Kapitał społeczny. Szkice socjologiczno-ekonomiczne* (Poznań: Wyd. Politechniki Poznańskiej, 2004), p. 5.

³ The first Polish publications on social capital are summarized by Adam Bartoszek, *Kapitał społeczno-kulturowy młodej inteligencji wobec wymogów rynku* (Katowice: Wyd. UŚ, 2004), p. 27-32.

society and to develop their potential. The social capital concept appears also as a criterion for social development and modernization.⁴

Social capital is often considered as a fragment of a general cultural competence, of economic culture and, therefore, is strongly correlated with some religious and ethical systems, especially with Protestantism and Confucianism. In these traditions, cultural, immaterial values in organizing the economy really do matter.⁵

CHURCH, STATE, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

A specific case is that of Catholicism. As is well known, Max Weber associated the development of capitalism with Protestant ethics rather than Catholicism. However, much has been changed since the publication of his famous book. According to some authors, religion, especially Catholicism, can play an important role in raising social capital in post-communist Poland. It can guarantee social cohesion, cultural unification and a durable ethical system. The church might be a substitute for other, more modern institutions existing in the Western world, and might prevent some negative consequences of modernization.⁶ Even Robert Putnam, far from glorifying the civic spirit of the Catholic Church in Italy, highly appreciated some associations closely related to the Church. In Poland some bishops, including the former primate, Stefan Wyszyński, were suspicious of the spirit of capitalism, which they understood as emphasizing and evaluating only the productive force of humans. But after 1989 the Polish bishops accepted, with “moderate goodwill” and limited consent, the Polish transformation. It is rather generally accepted now that the Catholic Church with its moral strength and effective incentives for human cooperation may be favoring pro-capitalist economic modernization and may be a major potential source of social capital.⁷

SOCIAL CAPITAL

In Poland especially, Putnam’s theory of social capital has met with considerable interest. Even the question whether it is possible to

⁴ Tomasz Zarycki, “Kapitał społeczny a trzy polskie drogi do nowoczesności”, *Kultura i Społeczeństwo*, 2(2004). The author shows the main ideological orientations, political discourses and ideal visions of Poland. It is interesting to see that in all cases the social capital concept “can be used to support the arguments both for and against each of the orientations”.

⁵ Halina Zboroń, “Kapitał społeczny w refleksji etycznej”, in: *Kapitał społeczny—aspekty teoretyczne i praktyczne*. Edited by Henryk Januszek (Poznań: Wyd. AE, 2004), p. 59-74.

⁶ See the above article by Tomasz Zarycki, p. 59.

⁷ Mariusz Kwiatkowski, “Kościół katolicki, ‘duch kapitalizmu’, kapitał społeczny,” *Przegląd Powszechny*, 1(2002), p. 87-89.

emulate his Italian research has been posed. An analogy and factors distinguishing Poland from Italy have been established. Nonetheless, Putnam's *Making Democracy Work. Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* is regarded as a valuable inspiration.⁸ Andrzej Rychard, in an epilogue to the Polish edition of Putnam's book, thought of the lessons Poland could take from his analysis. According to Rychard, Putnam's book has filled a blank in the Polish discussions on democracy and has shown a new perspective in looking at democracy. From this perspective, a network of social ties and institutions matters more than political actors, and especially important is the neglected space between individual and state. Rychard pointed to the historic role of Solidarity. However, its conception of civil society was born in a time of protest which accentuated unity rather than diversity. Rychard points out that in the 1990's civil society could be formed in more normal circumstances. In the early 1980's it was an ideology of civil society without civil society proper, while by the mid 1990's it was the beginning of real civil society and social capital without ideology.⁹

Others have seen serious methodological shortcomings in Putnam's conception: it is tautological, it gives new meanings to capital and ignores market failures coming from various interest groups. It is a nostalgic attempt of a return to a natural state of man, in which staying in nature ensures stable and mutually beneficial interactions. Putnam perceives this in terms of reciprocity. He trusts the invisible hand of the market. But that has not been demonstrated. In modern economies and societies the principle of reciprocity is a necessary but not sufficient condition of an economic order, argues a Polish critic of Putnam.¹⁰

Polish authors regard social capital as a metaphor or a stylistic figure. It is a mere conception of one or another theory. They treat it as a category of an attractive, well-grounded theory in the making. There is a necessity to differentiate between various kinds of social capital. The concept is being spread as a result of a fashion coming from the United States (and partly from France), from the "Center" of the economic, cultural and scientific world.¹¹ The old concept of economic capital had been negatively charged with Karl Marx's (and his leftist followers') critique and was left behind, while the concept of social capital (with its strong

⁸ Adrian Cybula, "Making Democracy Work... and Polish (Silesian) Case. An Essay on the Applicability of Putnam's Research in Polish and Italian Conditions", in: *Eseje socjologiczne*. Edited by Władysław Jacher (Katowice: Wyd. UŚ, 2001).

⁹ Robert Putnam, *Demokracja w działaniu* (Kraków: Znak, 1995), p. 319.

¹⁰ Bożena Klimczak, "Kapitał społeczny a dobrobyt indywidualny i społeczny", in: *Kapitał społeczny we wspólnotach* (Poznań: Wyd. AE, 2005), p. 19-21.

¹¹ Andrzej Przymeński, "Kapitał społeczny, pojęcie czy teoria?", in: *Kapitał społeczny*. Edited by Lucyna Frąckiewicz, Andrzej Rączaszek (Katowice: Wyd. AE, 2004), p. 66.

rhetorical force) has spread quickly all over the world. It is readily adaptable to various theories and political programs (the necessity of social capital is accepted by liberals, conservatives, republicans and socialists) and be regarded as a remedy for all troubles.¹² It was present, among others, in the famous manifesto by Tony Blair and Gerhard Schröder, in the American Democratic Party and in the ideas propagated by Bourdieu and his followers.

One of the first and unusual definitions of social capital that was presented in Poland, differed much from that of Putnam. It was rather similar to Bourdieu's views and conceived of social capital as a broad informal network or acquaintances in which an individual may enter, find and preserve his or her place.¹³ Some critics, however, call into question the usefulness of social capital as a theoretical tool for broader, macro-social analysis, because it serves to explain different and even opposed phenomena. It is regarded as unclear and more vague than other theoretical approaches, for example the basic values of the European Union or the Social Teaching of the Catholic Church (with its primacy of common good, subsidiarity and solidarity principles). In the Polish Government document, issued in September 2005, it was stressed that the subsidiarity principle will be a fundamental value accompanying the Operational Program of Civil Society and all its activities.

One of the critics wonders if the ambiguous concept of social capital covers only a network of social ties supporting the existing order or if it also can cover those ties that arouse resistance against the extant order and express a will to change it radically. Without answering this question it is impossible to classify factors favoring social capital development.¹⁴

On the one hand social capital is regarded as a means for realization of a goal such as social development, but on the other hand it is regarded as a goal in itself. Trust, loyalty, solidarity and the ability to cooperate introduce positive values into human life. In addition, empirical data from various countries show that economic growth is not always

¹² Anna Kiersztyn argues that the ideas which usually enter into social capital conceptions had been known by many philosophers praising the value of social ties, duties and values of trust in good societies. Social capital conceptions may fulfil an ideological function and may want to preserve nice illusions that maximalizing individual profit is in accord with cultivation of public virtues. See her text, "Kapitał społeczny—ideologiczne konteksty pojęcia", in: *Kapitał społeczny we wspólnotach* (Poznań: Wyd. AE, 2005), p. 49-50.

¹³ Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, *Demokratyczna rekonstrukcja*, (Warszawa: PWN, 1996), p. 151.

¹⁴ Andrzej Przyemeński, "Rozwój kapitału społecznego i jego czynniki", in: *Kapitał społeczny—aspekty teoretyczne i praktyczne*. Edited by Henryk Januszek (Poznań: Wyd. AE, 2004), p. 51-53.

accompanied by higher or growing social capital. However, sometimes growth is possible only in the context of calming excessive social tensions.

Polish and Central European authors have paid much attention to the role of civil society and associational life in the transition and consolidation of democratic order. However Polish democracy, along with its civil society and discontents requires new tools for grasping the monstrous reality of post-communist, fledgling capitalism. The importance of social capital understood as a common tendency or ability to cooperate effectively, is being stressed very often today. Many Poles, disillusioned with the new reality see it as still post-communism, pre-capitalism or incomplete capitalism lacking in social capital and in other goods. The new reality can only be described with the help of the civil society concept, which in the new political context of neo-liberal reforms had to change or renounce its originally communitarian, patriotic and even nationalistic meaning.

Nonetheless, the metaphorical concept of social capital is unclear and rather intangible as compared with physical (material or productive) capital and human (individual and educational) capital.¹⁵ The present popularity of the social capital concept is now probably more intensive than the human capital concept introduced in the 1960s by Theodore William Schultz and Gary Stanley Becker. The term came from Economics to the other social sciences (Sociology, Psychology, Political Science, Ethics, and theories of management and culture) and may be considered as a sign of economic imperialism. In the realm of Economics, social capital coordinates individual and group activities, contributes to the economic development of local communities, regions and nations. However, in Sociology it refers to interpersonal norms of trust and reciprocity in a historical process of human relations. It reflects durable institutions, cultural norms or codes and social networks. Social capital favors human solidarity and a high quality of life. Some authors consider civic associations as the most important element of social capital or even as its main source (apart from religion, formal institutions and family ties),¹⁶ others derive the energy of civic engagement from social capital.

According to many Polish authors, the broad concept of social capital is the essence of civil society, especially of civil society effective in its development. It contains everything that decides sound social relations,

¹⁵ See R.W. Jackman, "Social Capital", in: *International Encyclopedia of Social and Behavioral Sciences*, vol. 21, Elsevier 2001, p.1416-1419; Mariusz Kwiatkowski, Maria Theiss, "Kapitał społeczny. Od metafory do badań", *Rocznik Lubuski* 2004, vol 30, part II, p. 13-35.

¹⁶ However, E.C. Banfield, E. Tarkowska and J. Tarkowski have shown that the dominant ethos of 'amoral familism', no concern for collective issues, present especially in postwar southern Italy and in Poland of 1980s, led to social disintegration, pathology and very low level of social capital.

the common good and cooperation.¹⁷ Piotr Sztompka, the president of International Sociological Association states that, “the key to rebuilding a robust civil society is the restoration of trust in public institutions, public roles, and political elites, as well as in the viability of a new political and economic order.”¹⁸ However, the link or correlation between the density of civil society organizations and the degree of interpersonal trust (associated with social capital) is rather complicated. In the majority of Western and/or rich countries a high civil society index is accompanied by high interpersonal trust and socioeconomic wellbeing. However, for Japan and Spain, low civil society density and high interpersonal trust are characteristic. By contrast in Brazil, strong civil society and associational life lie behind unconsolidated democracy and low social capital.¹⁹ Poland, as we shall see below, has contributed considerably to the rebirth of the civil society idea and to the East European transition to democracy. Nonetheless, it is still lacking in both a robust civil society²⁰ and social capital. Poor countries, like Poland and Brazil, usually show lower levels of interpersonal trust than more affluent democracies. The World Bank and other institutions believe that strengthening of social capital and investing in it may improve the situation in underdeveloped countries.

The present-day widespread discussion of social capital in Poland and elsewhere is not only an intellectual fashion, but is connected with further development of democracy and the market economy around the world. The concept is considered a useful tool for researchers and in practical social engineering. It is a mysterious glue that makes a good society out of separate individuals. Some Polish authors believe that the category of social capital allows for a better understanding of public life in the new post-communist democracies than the civil society perspective which was very fashionable until recently.

Doing research into the causes of progress or stagnation in small Polish towns and local communities, Trutkowski and Mandes, two young authors, have gone beyond civil society and social participation theories and made use of other theoretical tools like the social capital concept. They find

¹⁷ *Diagnoza społeczna. Warunki i jakość życia Polaków 2005*, Edited by Janusz Czapiński, Tomasz Panek (Warszawa: VIZJA PRESS&IT, 2006), p. 257.

¹⁸ Quoted after Galia Chimiak, *How Individualists Make Solidarity Work* (Warszawa: Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, 2006), p. 52. Sztompka has made an attempt to develop his own version of trust, of social and civilizational capital. He saw barriers for progress in the realm of tradition and in generational inertia of some cultural traits.

¹⁹ See Omar G. Encarnación, *The Myth of Civil Society: Social Capital and Democratic Consolidation in Spain and Brazil* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003).

²⁰ The authors of the above quoted and current *Diagnoza społeczna* say: “We are open, mobile society, but still not civil society” (p. 19).

it more sensitive to cultural and historical contexts.²¹ It is understood as a value in itself, a virtue necessary for capitalist development.

The social capital concept usually has positive or neutral (Coleman) connotations, but some American and Polish authors speak also about dark, antisocial, negative connotations (F. Fukuyama, M.E. Warren, Alejandro Portes, Margaret Levi): perverse and unproductive capital present in criminal or terrorist groups and even in some corrupt political elites. The dark social capital in Poland is made possible and facilitated by high level corruption: symptoms of a “crony and political” capitalism; by erasing the distinction between the private and public sphere; and also by formal, institutional and financial barriers hindering the civic and political activity of Polish citizens.²²

TRUST AND THE STATE

The present-day Polish political culture is full of distrust, especially towards the state institutions. Poles belong to the least trusting societies of Europe. According to the European Values Survey from 1999, Denmark, Sweden and Holland are the countries where the trust is highest. In those societies over 60 percent of citizens put trust in their fellow countrymen, whereas in Poland only 18.4 percent. Moreover, in Poland there has been, at least since the 1970s, a vacuum between the family and the nation. This gap is still there. Under the post-communist move toward capitalism it has not yet been filled with a much desired civil society. Janusz Czapiński, for example, centers his criteria for a strong civil society precisely in high social capital but does not see present-day Poland as fulfilling any of these criteria.²³ From the point of view of general interpersonal trust, Poland occupied last place in the European Social Survey of 2002 and later years. In Poland the opinion according to which one can trust the majority of people is shared by only 10.55 percent of the people. Whereas in very affluent Norway it is over 70 percent. Also a tendency to enter voluntary associations has decreased rapidly. In this, Poland is in last place in Europe. Also intolerance towards homosexuals is displayed more frequently in Poland than in other countries. The high level of interpersonal trust, active participation in voluntary organizations and tolerant attitudes towards homosexuals are strongly correlated with material

²¹ Cezary Trutkowski, Sławomir Mandes, *Kapitał społeczny w małych miastach* (Warszawa: SCHOLAR, 2005), p. 49.

²² Daniel Wincenty, “Brudny kapitał społeczny—społeczne uwarunkowania i zagrożenia dla demokracji”, in: *Obywatel w lokalnej społeczności. Studia i szkice socjologiczne*. Edited by Marek Szczepański and Anna Ślisz, Tychy—Opole 2004.

²³ Janusz Czapiński, “Polska—państwo bez społeczeństwa”, *Nauka* 1(2006), p. 8; see also an interview with Czapiński in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 May, 2006.

prosperity and with general satisfaction with life. One can conclude that material wealth paves the way towards social capital and that it is very difficult to build social capital under economic hardship and profound political disappointment. The post-Communist economy, with its democratic leaders, has been found wanting. Mass migration of young Poles from formally democratic Poland, even more intensive than under foreign occupation, is a sign of great dissatisfaction and distrust. Perhaps only the rapidly increasing level of education can give a slight hope for a possibly higher degree of social capital in the future.

The weakness of Polish civil society consists in low engagement of citizens both in public affairs and in non-governmental organizations. Equally low is civic honesty.²⁴ Social apathy has led to the fact that the percentage of Poles participating in legal and illegal demonstrations (or even contacts with politicians) is the lowest in Europe. At the beginning of the 1980s the most frequent demonstrations and strikes in Europe were in Poland. Now high unemployment and the widespread awareness that after 25 years of protests, problems (inequality, social exclusion, injustice, corruption) are more acute than ever, prevents people from protesting. Tadeusz Kowalik, a left-leaning professor, one of the first Solidarity advisers, declared recently that in Poland, after a dozen or so years of radical change, that in recent years, there has been established one of the most unjust political systems known in the history of Europe.²⁵ Another professor, Andrzej Zawislak, a former minister, also from Solidarity, declared that even in the darkest forecasts he could not imagine a political system of such a low quality after the Solidarity dreams for Poland.²⁶

Likewise, professor Zdzisław Krasnodębski, an intellectual guru of the ruling Law and Justice Party, along with Rafał Matyja, points to the deep distrust existing in public and social life of Poland. There is deep distrust in Polish politics; a distrust of the post-communists and of neo-liberals which comes from the former democratic opposition. There is a mistrust of liberals towards Catholic traditionalists and of liberals towards the ruling conservative party. All of this leads to accusations of preparing for a dictatorship.²⁷

Poles do not put trust in themselves; do not participate in political life; and usually do not show real interest in public affairs. The turnout at elections is very low. In 2005 at parliamentary elections about 40 percent came out for local elections; in 2002 about 44 percent; and for the European Parliament vote in 2004 only about 20 percent. The highest turnout in

²⁴ See *Indeks społeczeństwa obywatelskiego* (Warszawa: Stowarzyszenie Klon/Jawor, 2006), p. 13.

²⁵ Tadeusz Kowalik, "Mój rok osiemdziesiąty dziewiąty", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23-24 March, 2002.

²⁶ "Rozmowa z prof. A. Zawislakiem", *Obywatel* 5 (2004).

²⁷ Zdzisław Krasnodębski, "Granice polityki w Polsce", *Europa*, 24 May, 2006.

recent years, about 50 percent, was at the presidential election in 2005. The low turnout at the polls comes from a widespread popular disappointment with politicians of all tendencies who have not kept their promises when they came into power. At present only 40 percent of Poles accept democratic rule.

A lot of distrust towards its citizens is shown also by the authorities of the Polish state. Distrust is present even within the ruling coalition. The state restricts individual choices, multiplies regulations, prohibitions and bans, does not support NGO's. A generally frightening atmosphere of distrust and suspicion is also fostered by the official policy of persecution and distrust towards possible "agents" (people who might have had any contacts, even unaware, with the former communists, and especially with the secret police.) Besides, crucial decisions are usually taken beyond any real dialogue by isolated political leaders who distrust the common sense of their fellow countrymen.²⁸

The research Institute for National Memory is full of young, inexperienced historians and has been transformed into a political police agency and a kind of inquisition. Only young people, below 35 years of age, seem to be free from political suspicion. Afraid of the prevailing cult of former communist dissidents, these historians now eagerly search out and exaggerate ambiguities in their behavior under communism. This has only recently begun to change a little. Nonetheless, a former finance minister and deputy prime minister under the Law and Justice Party government, a professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, was unjustly accused of collaboration with the former communist secret police. In response to the allegations, he declared, "The epoch of solidarity and liberty has ended; the epoch of 'squalidity' has begun."

A distrust of legendary leaders of Solidarity (Lech Wałęsa, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Jacek Kuroń, and Adam Michnik) and of some famous Catholic priests is widespread. Also the most important neighbors of Poland (Germany and Russia) are treated with mistrust. Even some members of the Foreign Ministry in the Third Republic have been accused recently by a high state official of having been Soviet agents. Other politicians have been accused of being children of pre-war Communist Party members or grandchildren of Wehrmacht soldiers! There is a mutual mistrust of all presidents of independent Poland. In a sad irony, at the end of August 2006, Lech Wałęsa and Lech Kaczyński separately celebrated the anniversary of Solidarity.

Other sociologists are less pessimistic in their estimation of the condition of civil society and trust in Poland. They are still impressed by the spontaneous self-organization of the original Solidarity, although they

²⁸ See an interview with Lena Kolarska-Bobińska (*Ozon*, 2006, no. 24, p. 13), Director of the Institute for Public Affairs.

acknowledge that civil society is still weak, and in the making.²⁹ Indeed, there have been problems in the transition from a rebellious civil society in opposition to the civil society that emerged after 1989 linked both to local and central authorities.³⁰ Even those who are rather pessimistic in their estimation of the present condition of civil society and social capital in Poland believe in a kind of neo-socialistic equalization, in a European Solidarity that eliminates regional differences. They are convinced that in the long-run Poland will reach the material wellbeing and social and organizational structures of other countries in the European Union.

After the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections, Poland was governed by twin brothers, the Kaczyńskis, who have managed to form a right wing coalition of semi-authoritarian, populist and conservative forces. These victorious forces have taken advantage of the widespread discontent, the acute crisis of leftist parties, and popular frustration caused by the corrupt democracy. This corruption was sown during the transition from authoritarian socialism to a “peripheral” capitalism during the preceding 16 years. Criticism has been focused on liberal and post-communist elites, blaming them for egoism, and especially for unrealized utopian dreams of the initial communitarian and egalitarian Solidarity movement. The unrealized aim of that movement was to combine freedom with social equality.

The leading conservative—”republican” party, Law and Justice, is trying to strengthen state power, to give it a higher goal and to bring under its domain all spheres of life. It manifests, therefore, a deep distrust for the ideas of self-management, civic communities, independent initiatives, and civil society in general. Jarosław Kaczyński, the leader of the ruling party and now the prime minister of the right-wing government has declared that the idea of civil society, promoted by the former communist dissidents, is a Western liberal invention, alien to Polish political culture. Although in subsequent declarations his reservations towards the idea of civil society have been slightly diminished, emphasis is still being put on a strong solidary state, an exclusive concept of the Polish nation and suspicion and mistrust towards the majority of citizens. The ruling coalition is promoting patriotic education, not civic education.

Jarosław Kaczyński’s project of a moral revolution and of the Fourth Republic, overcoming the first 16-17 years of the unsuccessful Third Republic after the 1989 breakthrough, is criticized by neo-liberal and post-communist intellectuals; it brings a danger of centralization, of weakening civil society and unrealistic expectations;³¹ it favors the feeling of

²⁹ *Civil Society in the Making*, Editors Dariusz Gawin and Piotr Gliński (Warszawa: IFiS Publishers, 2006).

³⁰ See an interview with Piotr Gliński and Tadeusz Szawiel, *Sprawy Nauki*, 2006, vol. XII.

³¹ The rather ill-famed twin brothers once again have promised the Polish people what had been previously promised by Lech Wałęsa’s so-called

instability and even of disaster.³² It deepens a neurotic complex of victims and revives the old Polish romantic, messianic myths and other prejudices. The whole conception of twin brothers (Kaczyńskis), as leaders, is being considered as archaic and provincial; it generates chaos on the political scene and anti-modern traditionalism; it curtails the competence of independent institutions, and promotes general incompetence and contempt for intellectual leaders.³³ Polish liberals are afraid of the excessive, anachronistic cult of the state directed against civil society that limits state power.³⁴ It seems that the new Polish political tendency to connect politics with moral infallibility, with the ideas of a sovereign state and of a sovereign democracy, while looking for an absolute enemy (something similar is present today also in Russia), is inspired by Carl Schmitt's ill-famed political thought and by the conservative revolution theory of the Weimar Republic.³⁵ Add to this the tradition of Polish and European authoritarianism (Franco, Salazar, Dollfus, Pétain, Piłsudski, Dmowski), and you have a volatile mix. Robert Krasowski, the Editor-in-chief of the semi-official Polish daily *Dziennik* has recently (9 September 2006) announced in an editorial the demise of Western liberalism and its gradual replacement by neo-conservatism: "The neo-conservative *Realpolitik* is being executed today, and its classics—Strauss and Schmitt—are being studied today by national advisers. Not only Bush's, but also Blair's, Putin's, Sarkozy's, Olmert's and Kaczyński's. What's more, no alternative is seen for a different face from the West."

According to Zdzisław Krasnodębski and other ideologues of the Fourth Republic, the Third Republic has been a sick state that badly needed healing and reconstruction. His book *Demokracja peryferii* (Peripheral Democracy), published in 2003,³⁶ has met with great interest. Some balance

Electoral Action of Solidarity (AWS) and by the post-communist Democratic Left Alliance (SLD). An independent intellectual, Karol Modzelewski (see his article in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 29-30 May, 2006), associated with the initial Solidarity trade union, has recently written on the cultural cleavage of Poland and posed a difficult question: what could happen in the future when the deceived people will ask once again who has stolen their victory?

³² Piotr Sztompka, "O potrzebie wspólnoty obywatelskiej", *Europa*, 24 May, 2006.

³³ Andrzej Rychard, "Rewolucja kulturalna?", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 15 May, 2006.

³⁴ See Aleksander Smolar, "Kaczyńscy atakują społeczeństwo obywatelskie", *Europa*, 4 May, 2006.

³⁵ Jadwiga Staniszkis, "O społeczeństwie bez państwa i polityki. Republika Weimarska, PRL i IV RP", *Europa*, 9 September, 2006.

³⁶ Zdzisław Krasnodębski, *Demokracja peryferii* (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 2003 and 2005). The title is inaccurate, it should rather be *Democracy under Peripheral Capitalism: the Case of Poland*, but Krasnodębski is not acquainted with Latin American dependency theory and the case of peripheral capitalism, and therefore cannot fully understand the similarity of the Polish

was needed in the Third Republic, but not the transformation that imitated, in a mindless way, the Western liberal solution. This in fact forgot the original Polish tradition of moral collectivist republicanism and romanticism. Moreover, it denied even the participatory and republican Solidarity movement. According to Krasnodębski, in Poland after communism, a façade democracy without values and a new oligarchic system was introduced. This prohibited the building of a genuine market economy and a fully democratic system. The former socialist utopia has been replaced by a new liberal utopia.³⁷

He has criticized the popular modernization theory present in the new Polish capitalism in a similar way to the dependency school. Much to his surprise, no significant leftist critique (almost all post-communists have become liberals) of the new social and political order has appeared in a country of huge fortunes and public misery. He also notes that new hegemonic relations are rising in a united Europe, in which Poland with its weakened state and shaky economy may become a vassal subject or a peripheral state of the European Empire.

Unlike liberals and post-communists, Krasnodębski suggests that there had been a viable alternative to the dependent development model chosen in 1989 by liberal elites or imposed on Poland (although supported for a time also by the Polish society fascinated with Western dependency when the Soviet socialism collapsed),³⁸ and that even now the communitarian, anti-individualistic project of the Fourth Republic may change substantially the disastrous situation of Poland.

The conservative revolt against the pathological democracy of the periphery or better against the peripheral capitalism in Poland was a revolt against all kinds of foreign interference and was promoted intellectually by Krasnodębski and applied in practice by the twin leaders. This might be a

case. The perplexing challenge is how to modernize a Central European periphery (eg. Poland, Lithuania). This is also discussed in the recent article "Modernizacja peryferii", *Europa*, 2 September 2006. Krasnodębski, a Polish professor from Bremen University, arrives at a deeper understanding of the Polish situation. See also: Dorothee Bohle, *Europas neue Peripherie: Polens Transformation und transnationale Integration* (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 2002).

³⁷ Zdzisław Krasnodębski, *Drzemka rozsądnych* (Kraków: Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej, 2006), p. 263. It is interesting to see that also some famous leftwingers, for example Slavoj Žižek, say that after the alleged defeat of all utopias there has come a rule of the last great utopia, of a liberal, capitalist democracy on a global scale.

³⁸ Smolar adds that after 1989 Poles did not want more experiments. They fully believed in the market institutions that had been tried out in the West, and wanted to bring their country from the East to the West. They wanted to become the West as quickly as possible. See Aleksander Smolar, "Radykałowie u władzy (2)", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9-10 September, 2006.

noble but very naive attempt to avoid the evils of capitalism present in all underdeveloped and dependent countries. However, such revolts usually end in failure, like the leftist insurrections against false democracy in the so called Third World. The ideologues of Polish Solidarity and of the Law and Justice party have never read texts by Raúl Prebisch and by the dependency school, so they are not aware of the universal, permanent defects of peripheral capitalism, present in the existing world system. Some of them, however, have noticed a similarity between the specific cases of Poland and of Latin American countries; unfortunately this superficial observation was accompanied by a nationalist feeling of superiority over Latin America. A few years ago, this view appalled the Mexican ambassador to Poland and others, as well.

The watchwords of the Fourth Republic “moral revolution” and a “new distribution of trust”³⁹ suggest that the utopian ideals of Solidarity were betrayed after 1989. They called for a new state, a moral cleansing of the national reality, political purges and extraordinary tribunals. They wanted to break-up corrupt business cliques, to definitively split from Communism, to toughen laws against former Communist collaborators, and to eliminate scapegoating in public life. The calls for a radical break with Communism proved very difficult in Poland, where the majority of post-communists have turned out to be much more pro-capitalist than the Solidarity people. Those mythic watchwords have rather turned out to be a skillful and efficient maneuver warning the political class of a possible danger, of a forthcoming leftist revolt against corrupt capitalism. Eventually, the watchwords turned out to be an efficient maneuver helping to absorb both populists and nationalists, left and right wing groups into a conservative, allegedly anti-systemic coalition, promising the disappointed people a morally decent capitalism with social sensitivity and a human face.⁴⁰ However, the expectation that only morally decent people will rule, will overcome the corrupt system in a poor country, and will introduce justice into peripheral capitalism, is an extravagantly quixotic and naïve idea.

Official spokesmen and intellectuals associated with the rightist ruling party stress the necessity of preserving national sovereignty and a strong national state in the European Union. They have opposed the dominant, until now, tendency to prefer the civil society newspeak to national identity discourse. They say that Poland, after a 16 years transformation, is still a post-communist country with a weak state, corrupt, regulated economy and a weak civil society. The extreme left claims that

³⁹ Rafał Matyja, “Za kulisami rewolucji moralnej. Polityczne cele Jarosława Kaczyńskiego”, *Europa*, 28 June, 2006.

⁴⁰ Michał Kamiński, “PiS nie naśladowuje metod Gierka, próbuje tylko nadać kapitalizmowi ludzką twarz”, *Dziennik*, 20 April, 2006. The watchword of capitalism with a human face had been earlier, and in vain, proposed by the former post-communist president, Aleksander Kwaśniewski.

the process of modernization in Poland is limited to few large cities. That development consists in inner colonization. Only a tiny middle class draws profit from this modernization, while the overwhelming majority of people is marginalized and treated as the “rubbish” of the civilizational change. This reality is perceived by a considerable part of society as an unjust social and political order.⁴¹ This reality is defined in Poland as a monster of post-communism (Jarosław Kaczyński), as an incomplete capitalism (Jadwiga Staniszkis) or savage capitalism. Few authors treat it as “normal” capitalism or perhaps better peripheral capitalism, which exists in many parts of the world,⁴² especially in Latin America. These countries, however, with the exception of Cuba, (and briefly others) have never espoused Communism.

Dariusz Gawin interprets the post-communist situation in Poland also as a second *trahison des clercs*. The Solidarity leaders, he claims, have betrayed the workers. They have become middle class and have abandoned the people. Behind this project stood an ideology of Polish liberalism (pop liberalism) or “lumpen liberalism” (Jarosław Kaczyński). These views easily and derisively stigmatized those who could not cope with the new reality, and were dismissed as a redundant mob. In such a situation the slogans of the Fourth Republic gain credibility and have been wholeheartedly accepted by the poor, the less educated and rural Catholics living in the provinces. They hear a promise of a more just, inclusive and transparent modernization.

Moreover, spokesmen for the Law and Justice Party opt for a noble republicanism in which the people prevail over false liberal elites and become major political players. One of them has posed a question of how the areas of trust could be extended and areas of distrust reduced in Polish politics⁴³. The sources of distrust, in his words, do not lie in superficial, subjective reasons, but in fundamental differences between the conservative Law and Justice Party and liberal Civic Platform, which allegedly feels contempt for democratic decisions of the people. The first party is interested in a deep reform, renovation of the Polish state, and a creation of the Fourth Republic, whereas the second party would presumably like to preserve the existing social and economic structures. The main obstacle to fundamental change is seen by the conservative Andrzej Nowak in the independent spheres of mass media, banks and courts. But the care for civil

⁴¹ Dariusz Gawin, “PiS nie jest wrogi nowoczesności”, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 7 August, 2006.

⁴² A Polish journalist, Marcin Wojciechowski, questioning Russian capitalism, has asked professor Richard Pipes (*Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 May, 2006) whether the Russian oligarchic and bureaucratic regime will evolve towards a pure Western-style capitalism. The answer was that Russian capitalism is similar to that of many countries of Asia and South America.

⁴³ Andrzej Nowak, “O sporach, przyjaźni i odnowie polityki”, *Europa*, 31 May, 2006.

society, for the third sector organizations and social capital is seen precisely in the above mentioned institutions, especially in independent press,⁴⁴ often criticized by the present government.

The Law and Justice rule is interpreted as playing with authoritarianism, gradual retreat and dissolution of democracy.⁴⁵ The tendency is dangerous, since the number of people willing to participate in political decisions is decreasing. The citizens do not believe in the value of democracy. They retreat to privacy, do not trust courts, political parties and other institutions and are convinced that all decisions usually are undertaken without their input. Polish citizens conceive of democracy not in terms of political liberty and free market, but in terms of controlling the market, and in terms of social and economic equality. It seems that in Poland and elsewhere after a wave of democratization a new period of a democratic implosion breaks out. Perhaps the only guarantee that democracy in Poland will not collapse lies in the impact of foreign influence and public opinion and in the participation in European Union and NATO structures. Poland in Europe is now perceived with distrust as a country that ceased to be a leader in post-communist transformation. It is rather an isolated *enfant terrible* trying to find a cure for its illness.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Liberal elites, who are rather excessively fascinated with the “great success” of the Polish transformation, foresee defeat for the conservative, rather mythical revolution: “The most important fault that will probably be found with the ‘anti-systemic coalition’, when it loses its power, is the missed chances. Attached to it is a growing provincialism of Poland, an atmosphere of permanent cold war, growing isolation in foreign policy, and pushing a part of Poland down towards its worst level—obsessions, pathological distrust, paranoia, fear of foreigners, and a grandiloquence on dignity.”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ See, for example, Jakub Wygnański, Bogumił Luft, “Szukanie kapitału społecznego”, *Rzeczpospolita*, 24 July, 2006. The authors of the inspiring article say that today in Poland there is no conflict between the state and civil society; as both parts are very weak, they strongly need each other. In conclusion, the above well known authors (NGO’s activist and a journalist) firmly insist that a more serious attention to the development of social capital in Poland should be devoted in strategic documents for 2007-2013 years. In the draft project of the so-called Operational Program Civil Society for 2007-2013, issued by the Ministry of Labor and Welfare in September 2005, only marginally is it mentioned a necessity to strengthen social capital and to develop human resources and social economy.

⁴⁵ Paweł Śpiewak, “Zwijanie demokracji”, *Europa*, 2 September 2006.

⁴⁶ Aleksander Smolar, “Radykałowie u władzy (2)”, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9-10 September, 2006.

Liberals, and those on the left, are trying to interpret the complicated Polish reality of 2006 as a situation in which the old opposition between the communist state and civil society is coming back, and is being reproduced in new circumstances. They argue that “once again it is necessary to build an *alternative polis* based on knowledge, freedom, debate, pluralism and friendship,” that Poland should be proud of our civic tradition based on cultural values, and not on the authoritarian tradition of a repressive state.⁴⁷ Old battles continue on the new terrain of Civil Society and Social Capital.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Magdalena Środa, “Społeczeństwo silniejsze od Kaczyńskich”, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 May, 2006.

CHAPTER 23

SOLIDARITY: THE CREATIVE POWER OF THE SYMBOL IN THE POLISH REVOLUTION

MICHAL REKA

Can the course of history remain unswayed by the force of
conscience? (Karol Wojtyła, “Myslać Ojczyzna”).

INTRODUCTION

On Sunday, August 28, 2005, I was invited to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the southern “Podbeskidzki” Region of *Solidarnosc* in Bielsko-Biala, Poland. For me it was a great privilege to represent solidarity’s strike committee from the Catholic University of Lublin. This gave me the task of organizing the evening events at New Aula, commemorating the crucial three weeks preceding the December 13th Marital Law restrictions of 1981.

The first part of the celebration was held at the Cathedral. Public Mass had gathered a large crowd in folk-dress. The experience of freedom was widely represented in songs, flags, speeches and Eucharistic liturgical rituals. Afterwards over 300 former active Solidarity leaders reported on their lives since 1981. They represented all kinds of offices and every stratum of civil society. Next to me, a member of the European Parliament quickly described his role there: “...without us (East European members) they might have lost touch with reality.” On my right, a former delegate from this region to the National Committee said: “It is unbelievable how fast the 25 years have gone by and I feel that in some areas of society things have only begun to change”.

Three days later, August 31, 2005 the city of Gdansk became a “one-day capital of Europe” gathering most of the presidents, prime ministers and other delegates from Europe and a representative of the U.S. President as well. Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski, at a conference entitled “From Solidarnosc to Freedom” asked: “What was *Solidarnosc*?—it was not only a movement but a spirit, a powerful moral force, a coalition based on human, religious, and democratic values... *Solidarnosc* was a coalition without class or national hatred ... in order to build a better future based on social reconciliation ... and between neighbor states.”¹ James Baker read

¹ Rzeczpospolita, No 207, 7193 (September 1, 2005), pp. 1-3, daily newspaper (Rz).

George W. Bush's letter, which described *Solidarnosc* as a model for the transformation of power.²

On the same day even President Kwasniewski (former member of the Communist Party) openly said: "Twenty-five years ago, 10 million workers gave birth to this social movement. Not only did they write the idea of solidarity on banners, but they put the idea into reality. The common people had regained hope and confidence in their own decisions and reclaimed their dignity. *Solidarnosc* appeared as a way to freedom. Today the idea of solidarity is one of the most important answers to the global challenges of the twenty-first century."³

Such statements reveal to us a new, growing reality of coexistence in the fast-changing world around us. Poland ignited the revolution, the nonviolent movement that sparked the terminal crisis of European communism and ended both Stalin's empire and eventually the Soviet Union. This, indeed, was begun in Poland. And it would be impossible to imagine the 1989 Revolution happening when it did, and how it did, without a specific set of national, universal and religious symbols that had played a significant role throughout the communist period. Now the symbols have restored national identity and helped pave the way to the future.

INSIDE THE EMPIRE OF LIES

In 1945, the unfinished business of World War II left Poland under military rule by the Soviet Red Army. The Yalta agreement confirmed its dominion for almost 50 years. Of course, any regime must preserve its identity and adhere to its fundamental organizational principles if its survival is to have any meaning. Therefore the PZPR (Polish United Worker's Party) as the ruling faction in charge of constituting the Polish People's Republic could not confirm its legitimacy by invoking electoral democracy or political pluralism without doing itself in and ending its control over collective life.

Ideology played the central role in defining "new" core values and shaping a "modern" worldview and a secular culture (i.e. the counterculture).⁴ That required a different kind of mechanism and models of symbolization within institutions and social structures, which were widely embraced and deeply internalized.⁵ Such a central concept—according to Garth and Mills—may refer to God or gods, the votes of the

² Gazeta Wyborcza, No 203. 4906 (September 1, 2005), pp. 1-4, daily newspaper (GW).

³ Rz, p.1.

⁴ Piotr Wierzbicki, *Struktura kalamstwa* (Warszawa: Glos, 1986).

⁵ Jan Kubik, *The Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power: The Rise of Solidarity and the Fall of State Socialism in Poland* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1994), p.5-7.

majority, the will of the people, the aristocracy of talents or wealth, the divine right of kings, or the allegedly extraordinary endowment of the person of the ruler himself.⁶

In order to be dominant and culturally hegemonic, the rulers invoke the ultimate values and symbols of a given group in constructing their public image; they are serving to restore national identities striving to establish legitimacy. To the extent that they use ordinary and mundane cultural forms, they are trying to produce or maintain their authority.⁷

This was the reality of living within the “institutionalized lies” as Vaclav Havel concisely described it. Hence the newspaper most widely circulated in all satellite-country languages inside the “Evil Empire” (Ronald Reagan) was called *Pravda* (“the Truth”) to conceal its manipulation of thought and of values themselves. The role of the huge bureaucratic pyramid was to preserve the lie. The basis of communist power (actual and potential), such as means of production, means of communication, and means of coercion, was tightly controlled by a single political elite pursuing total control over ever-increasing domains of social life.

Under that system, absolute power was usually produced by the incapacitation of potential social dynamism.⁸ The principal incapacitation strategy produced near-perfect saturation of the public domain, with the official, hegemonic public discourse (“THEY”) confronting all independent thinking, thereby visualizing, imagining, symbolizing, naming and classifying the entire private domain (separate “I”).

Such an illegitimate regime would survive as long as its illegitimacy was expressed and confirmed only in the private discourses of alienated citizens. Finally, this dichotomy deeply divided the society. Living in this inauthentic “reality” made everyday life seem surreal. Within the alien culture of Communism, corruption and hopelessness were an expression of the system itself, its rationale, its institutions and the structure of mendacity that created the culture of lies. All kinds of crises at every level had their roots there. The system was totally closed; it could not reform itself from within, for that was impossible; there could not be a “communism with a human face”. *Glasnost* only partially revealed that reality, therefore *Perestroika* based on such values was another type of

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Talcott Parsons, “Authority, Legitimization, and Political Action,” in *Authority*, ed. Carl J. Friedrich (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958), p.302.

“... The means of acceptance of the ruler’s definitions of reality, by the ruled, which can be presented in public ceremonies and rituals staged by rulers.”

Also: Hans Garth and C.Wright Mills, *Character and Social Structure* (New York: Hourcourt, Brace, 1953), p. 277.

⁸ J. Kubik, *The Power*, p. 264.

utopia. The desire to answer the basic question: “who am I “and “how we can live together” simply started the revolution.

TEN YEARS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD (JUNE 3, 1979—JUNE 4, 1989)

A number of questions emerge. What caused the workers to reject the dictatorship of the proletariat and found the independent, self-governing trade union *Solidarnosc*? How did it manage to survive for several years underground and finally emerge in 1989 as a formidable force, initiating the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe?

Why did the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk become a twentieth-century Bastille?

And most surprisingly, how did this revolution change the very meaning of that word?

How did it make revolution the most desirable means of transforming power for the process of globalization?

How did nations divided by the iron curtain end up singing and dancing together atop the Berlin Wall?

What power changed the world? Was it the power of force—“*Plus vis quam ratio*”—or the power of truth—“*Plus ratio quam vis!*”? The latter clearly upheld life and human dignity.

What is at the root of the liberation of Eastern Europe, so widely represented by spontaneous expression, rituals and symbols?

Today we can see clearly how solidarity was founded upon the primacy of the person—a principle developed over time by Polish philosophers. As George McLean aptly summarizes it, “It has often been noted that a major strength of Solidarity was not only that the people stood behind the movement but that it had the developed and deeply grounded theoretical insight required for leadership. There were, of course, many other factors, but this was indispensable in order for it to be able to lead not only Poland but all of Central and Eastern Europe beyond government by decree, to government by the people. Increasingly since that time it has been clear that the deeper challenge in Central and Eastern Europe has been in living practically its newly won freedom.”⁹

IDENTIFICATION WITH TRADITIONAL AND NATIONAL SYMBOLS

It is not necessary to review the entire history of Polish culture to understand the recent revolutionary changes and to answer the question,

⁹ *The Philosophy of Person: Solidarity and Cultural Creativity. Polish Philosophical Studies, I, Series IV A, Vol.1* (Washington, D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 1994), p. IX.

what was the fight for? Why did solidarity become a cultural icon representing coexistence based on respect for personal dignity and the unique value of human life itself?

First we need to take into consideration the major events preceeding the dramatic decade of change, initiated by Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński. In his sermon on June 4 1953, in Warsaw during the Corpus Christi procession, when he rejected violence against the freedom of conscience, he stated: "...We teach that one must give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's. And if Cesar sits down on the altar, we must say simply: 'This is not allowed'—*Non possumus!*"

That put him in a prison from September 25, 1953, until the "Polish October" of 1956. On his years in prison the "Primate of the Millennium" was conceiving the "Great Novena" a nine-year catechetical and spiritual program for the Millennium of Christianity in Poland (1966) where all symbolic events of national history converged. The icon of the Black Madonna, Queen of Poland, was in pilgrimage throughout the country, from town to town. At each parish a special day or night-long vigil gathered a large crowd. It infused the national consciousness with Polish history and cultural identity. All the country's heritage of significant events, battles, uplifting victories and miserable defeats was recalled (St. Stanislaus, the victory at Grunwald, Czestochowa and Vienna, the November and January uprisings, Kosciuszko, the Miracle on the Vistula by Joseph Pilsudski, Auschwitz, Westerplatte and Monte Cassino, etc.).

During those years, a new generation of youth, born after World War II, met in informal summer's camp meetings which combined scout activities and Vatican II renewal principles. In the 1970s and 1980s, this generation grew to 300,000. The Polish version of liberation theology as a ministry of liberty through truth along with Franciszek Blachnicki "Living in the Light" pedagogical movement laid the foundation for the revolution.

Similar values were cultivated by students and faculty in the Academic and Pastoral Care organization. This organization grounded leaders of the Catholic Intelligentsia Club (KIK) and a few other organizations tolerated to a lesser degree by the regime: Znak, Wiez, Pax. These currents of thought, based on Polish tradition, prevented a split in the anticommunist opposition and laid the groundwork for an unprecedented coalition of workers and intellectuals.

Karol Wojtyła's election as Pope on October 16, 1978, was a profound surprise- a great experience of hope, and fulfillment of national dreams. As British historian Norman Davies said: "The essence of Poland's modern experience is humiliation"¹⁰. The brutal effects of the six-year Nazi occupation, extermination of Poles as "*untermenschen*" (less than human) race, the suffering of a "*lebenunwerts Leben*" (life not worth living) were endured and then followed by the Communist ideological experiment of the

¹⁰ Norman Davies, "Polska 1978-1988: God's Playground," in *Ethos* 1 (1988), nr 4 s.94-120. Lublin.

dictatorship of the proletariat. Stalin once said that in the case of Poland, this was like “fitting a cow with a saddle”.

In the midst of extreme existential experiences and intellectual doubts, from an office unique in the world, on October 22 1978, John Paul II proclaimed: “Be not afraid!... open wide the doors for Christ ... open the boundaries of states, economic and political systems. Open vast fields of culture, civilization and development to His saving power.”¹¹

THE LANGUAGE OF SYMBOLS IN THE FINAL REVOLUTION

It is vitally important to remember the direct call for dignity and the recognition of value of life. Before Lech Walesa’s symbolic “jump over the steel fence” at the Lenin Shipyard—from the totalitarian regime into the midst of protesting workers—an extreme change had occurred on the level of principles and values, reflecting a dramatic struggle to be free. This call to reconsider the antihuman cultural model that affected all aspects of society reached its apex at this time.

Each culture is based on principles that require a fully clarified concept of all aspects of existence, especially those of mankind and the human being itself. So, what is the revolutionary question?—“What is man? Who is the human being?” Both the identity and the existence of the human being are under attack: WHO he is and the fact that he IS.

Among many forms of experience which unveil the structure of the personal being of the human, we see the universal value of his/her dignity as a rational, free and embodied “I,” and the acknowledgment that his life is of fundamental value. By his reflection, man recognizes himself as distinct from other beings. Among all other beings in this world, only the human can recognize himself “from inside”. Reflecting on his own acts of understanding, he is recognizing himself as relating to truth. By nature, he is a seeker of truth through reason. He wants to understand. He needs to discover the truth about himself—in order to make the most important decision: to embrace the truth about himself. The self-discovery of the truth about himself and the free act of choosing it are an act of his birth as a human: “Yes, this is a truth about myself, this is me!” He asserts his independence by choosing the truth about himself. As a subject—a self-governing, in-dependent person—he faces his own dignity.¹² Subjecting himself to truth, he is bearing witness to the recognized truth. By acts of free will he makes his own free choices. He can act out of his personal convictions rooted in truth. In truth is the source of transcending the world in which he lives. That is his anthropology—signed and sealed by an act of anthro-praxis. No one else can do this for him.

¹¹ Inauguration Ceremonies, Rome (October 22, 1978).

¹² Marian Jaworski, “The Human Person from a Transcendental Perspective,” in: *The Philosophy of Person*, pp.3-13.

Because of “who he is” and because “he is”, his life participates in the very meaning of personal dignity. For Thomas Aquinas the value of life qualifies as a fundamental, ontological goodness in the formula: “*vivere enim viventibus est esse*”.¹³ The fact that man wants to exist—which, for human beings means to live, though not forever will he be alive—is a sign of the asymmetric, not identical entities of a man’s accidental nature.¹⁴ Because our entity does not come from our *esse*, we can ask why we not exist rather than exist. One can attempt to solve the absurd: “I am giving existence to myself, which I do not possess”. Instead, the mysteries of my existence, the indispensable, essential Being, Life, which exists by its own definition, waits for me to be discovered. The Transcendent One, open to man, does this by nature, He cannot stop giving of Himself. Therefore Augustine, with many others, is shouting: “*Intimior intimo meo!*”—“[You were] more intimate than I am to myself” [Ed.], thus, I am not, without You in me!¹⁵

And right away this can be applied, without exception, to all other persons who participate equally in the gift of life. Paul stated it succinctly in Athens: “For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, ‘For we are also His offspring’” (Acts 17, 28). Is the imperative of the first philosophy not deeply rooted in all human beings? Therefore, why is reason, which enables one to understand oneself, silent about the real source of one’s being? This briefly is an anthropology as a metaphysic of man; a metaphysic of the human being as a person as such and as a person existing by the gift of life.

A remarkable poster significantly expresses the demand for genuine identity in truth. It proclaimed: “Solidarity: Let Poland be Poland, and 2+2 must always be 4”. Today, solidarity in such a context is understood as a living statue of liberty. The statement on this poster also inspired a well-known song composed and sung by Jan Pietrzak.

On June 2, 1979 about one million Poles, together with John Paul II came to celebrate the Vigil of Pentecost. A massive crowd gathered at Victory Square in Warsaw and listened attentively to the great lesson of how to live in truth and about the God-given dignity of the human person, as revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There the Pope proclaimed that “...the mightiest of God’s work was the human person redeemed by Christ; a new creation). ...Therefore, Christ cannot be kept out of the history of man in any part of the globe ... The exclusion of Christ from the history of man is an act against humanity...”

More than 10 million Poles personally attended the nine days of pilgrimage. “Suddenly the artificial world around us simply collapsed” said Maciej Ziemia. Political scientist Bogdan Szajkowski described it as “a

¹³ St Tomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, I,q.18,a.2,ad 3.

¹⁴ M.A. Krapiec, “Tajemnica czy absurd?” in: *Odzyskac swiat realny* (Lublin: 1993), p. 762 nn.

¹⁵ Sw. Augustyn, *Wyznania*, III, 6, Krakow 1997, p.74 nn.

psychological earthquake and an opportunity for a mass political catharsis". "Great lesson in dignity", added dissident Adam Michnik. Jozef Tischner pointed out that *Solidarnosc* was a huge forest planted by awakened consciences.

Indeed, on such a big scale, the new sense of self-worth, the new experience of personal dignity and determination to be free, brought unforeseen consequences for both believers and non-believers.¹⁶ The "Veni Creator" invoked by John Paul II: "Let Your Spirit descend and transform the face of the land—this Land" gave birth to solidarity in Victory Square on that evening.

The way from solidarity to *Solidarnosc* took only 14 months. The well-known logo created by talented Gdansk's designer Jerzy Janiszewski became a symbol of the movement too. He described his own experience when he joined the strike at the Lenin Shipyard: "I saw how solidarity appeared among people ... how the social movement was being born out of that and how institutions joined in". What he saw and experienced became the logo. He used the white and the red of the Polish flag and drew, in upper-case italic letters, representing a group of people who cannot stand by themselves, each needing the support of his neighbors.¹⁷ The letter N carries a little Polish flag, giving the word a dynamic meaning.

It took only another year for *Solidarnosc* to mark its own character and identity in two significant resolutions. The First National Congress, in September 1981, sent a message to workers in Eastern Europe based on the slogan "workers (proletarians) of all countries—unite!" That was the first time in the Eastern bloc when an independent, self-governing trade union, a real social movement, directly communicated the idea of cooperation to other social groups abroad. Very quickly the Warsaw Pact conducted large-scale army maneuvers. The Second National Congress of *Solidarnosc* enacted a law to protect the life of the unborn. The logic was obvious: "There is no 'Yes' to freedom—without 'Yes' to the truth about the human being; there is no 'Yes' to the truth about the human, without 'Yes' to his/her right to life" There is no other way to establish a new social order in an independent, self-governed state than to accept the principle of the dignity of the human person as a primary life value. The constitutional guarantee should assert the right to life of all citizens as a common good.¹⁸ What absurdity it would be to pass a law, which excludes the protection of the extreme defenseless and innocent unborn child—and at the same time protects the right to life of their executors. The 21 demands of the striking

¹⁶ George Weigel, "The Church, The Collapse of Communism, and the Challenge of New Democracies", in: *New Catholic Encyclopedia, Jubilee Volume. The Wojtyla Years. Galle Group*, ed Peter M. Garetta (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America. 2001).pp 8-10.

¹⁷ J.Kubik, *The Power...*, p.195.

¹⁸ A.Szostek, „Prawda a zasada pluralizmu w dialogu spolecznym i organizacji panstwa,” *Ethos* 5 (1992) nr 2-3 (18-19), p.17-28.

workers were listed in UNESCO's world heritage scroll and on the three-cross Monument (October 1980).¹⁹ This commemorated the death of workers killed by the regime in 1970, the unfulfilled hopes of the uprisings in 1956 and 1976, and gave voice and courage to the sentiment: "We want to live!"

BETWEEN DEATH AND LIFE: CHALLENGE TO A PERSONAL DECISION

At the conference "From Solidarity to Freedom" a British historian, professor of European Studies at the University of Oxford, Timothy Garton Ash, gave a clear description of the new quality of these significant changes. The Polish revolution, he said, "gave a new revolutionary model, which replaced the well known one from two centuries ago. From 1789 forwards a bloody model always reminded us of a 'revolution'. Therefore we always had to tag the qualifying adjective word: 'peaceful', 'evolutionary', 'negotiation' etc. Traditional revolutionaries—Jacobins, Bolsheviks, Islamic fundamentalists—affirm that the end justifies the means. Solidarity revolutionaries—like Vaclav Havel, and other leaders with a broad vision of Central Europe's freedom revolt—have understood, on the contrary, that the kind of means or method we choose lays the foundation for the end we attain. There is no way to get truth by lies, or love by murder. Similarly, Adam Michnik said: "Those who start by storming the Bastille, end by building their own Bastille."²⁰

Does this mean that such "humanitarian" revolution can only be 'velvet' and no longer seek blood price in order to get to the principal question: "Who is man?" How can people who disavow violence fight against direct and quite often hidden powers which are able to kill them or destroy them?

Despite the fact that the fight is 'nonviolent,' it is a very personal dilemma: to live or to die. Nonetheless, life depends on truth. In the 1980's the dissident Michnik was particularly critical of Western peace activists on this point. He thought that they had forgotten the truth that "there were things worth suffering and dying for". It was not an accident that shots were aimed at the Pope in Rome on May 13, 1981. Many people asked: This one who should not live—yet he is alive! What message can he bring us about life with his new perspective?

Analyzing the culture of Europe, we can come to the stark conclusion; is it simply a culture of death or a hidden totalitarianism? Are these the choices?

¹⁹ The base of the monument contains inscription: "They gave their lives so that you can live in dignity. Respect their memory "and dedication from JPII: "Let Your Spirit descend and transform the face of the land, this Land "(From: June 2/3, 1979—Victory Square, Warsaw).

²⁰ Timothy Garton Ash, in: "GW" p.2.

At 6:00 a.m., December 13, 1981, Polish radio and TV broadcast General Jaruzelski's speech announcing the imposition of a "state of war" and the creation of the Military Council for National Salvation (WRON). Immediately thousands of leaders were imprisoned. Many were 'lost'. In the political arena the serious possibility of using nuclear weapons dominated East—West negotiations. Perhaps unexpected, the Chernobyl explosion initiated discussion and brought attention to the changes in the communist system to *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*. However those changes didn't happen overnight. Through the dark fog of hesitation and doubt, many asked: is there another way to gain dignity and freedom? "Yes" for the truth was the only key to independence. For Lech Walesa, Andrej Sakharov, Vaclav Havel, and many other "prisoners of conscience" who were 'free in prison', only total dependence on the truth, not from the outside, but only dependence on their inner self-determination and self identification with the truth was the one thing they could not deny.

For me, the myth of Samson (Judges 13 -16) and his heroic decision to be in solidarity with his nation in the most oppressive circumstances—was a sign of a power stronger than all triumphant enemies facing him.²¹

During the dark years of war, when Father Jerzy Popieluszko from Zoliboz, Warsaw, encouraged the thousands who had listened to his uplifting sermons on making bold choices to live in truth, the brutal forces of power (SB—security apparatus) reacted according to their logic by denying freedom, dignity and life. They killed him on October 19, 1984. Suddenly his presence became much stronger then before and brought about innumerable personal moral decisions. His funeral on November 3, celebrated by hundreds of thousands of people, created an unforgettable sign of unity and hope. "Solidarity lives—because you have given your life for her" said Lech Walesa that night. The report on his trial, broadcasted by radio, gave rise to 'glasnost' in Poland.

Why is it, that blood (i.e. life) can speak louder than words? Because death is not only a natural event (as the separation of the soul from the body)—but as Karl Rahner clarified²²—far more importantly, "Death is also a personal act". Freedom—the human capacity to determine and realize oneself for good or evil—is exercised categorically in particular choices of value ... because time is an element of the history of freedom—the function of death makes this freedom-in-time definitive and final by putting an end

²¹ Michal Reka, "Imagination of Death and the Theology of Solidarity," in: *Imoral Imagination and Character Development, Volume II, Imagination in Religion and Social Life*, Vol III ed. G. McLean, J.K.White, Series VII. Vol. 6 (Washington D.C.: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2003), pp. 41-51.

²² Peter C. Phan, "Eschatology," in: *The Cambridge Companion to Karl Rahner*, ed. by Declan Marmion and Mary E. Hines (Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.179-181.

to time-in-freedom. At the end of (our) time what passes away is the process of becoming and not what we have become, both good and evil, which will acquire definitive validity in front of Transcendence.”²³

In other words—by death the whole human being testifies about his or her self-identification with a freely chosen Truth, as being worthy to live for. The final manifestation of dignity and truth is already present and the value of life is as well. Death, therefore, is a personal act that is something a person can accept or reject freely and actively, something a person “does” in freedom. Either one rejects it by running away from one’s being, “being unto death” (Heidegger’s ‘*zum Tode sein*’) through amusements and distractions and thus falls into “inauthentic existence”. Or one can assume death and dying with courage as the comprehensive horizon of one’s historical and finite being and accept it as one’s own “project”. By saying “yes” to death a person can turn necessary fate externally imposed on oneself into a free act: ‘whenever there is liberty, there is love for death and courage for death’. From practical daily life implementing this “yes” can also take the form of everyday asceticism and renunciation by which one anticipates one’s own death.²⁴ Such a person, free from our biggest fear, on the basis of self-possession, can be self determinate. Romano Guardini adds: “... to be a person means that I cannot be used by any other, but that I am an end in myself...I cannot be possessed by another, but in regard to my own self I am alone with myself...I cannot be represented by any other, but must fill my own place”.²⁵

In February 1989 during difficult negotiations at the “round table” between the government and the opposition, a large banner had been unfurled on the building of Communist Party Central Committee saying: “There is no freedom without responsibility”. In the opening speech at the “round table” event, Jerzy Turowicz, publisher of *Tygodnik Powszechny* (Weekly Universal—tolerated by the regime in small circulation) had replied: “It’s time to reverse it; there is no responsibility without freedom”.

In the time of preparation for the first free elections in Poland, a very significant poster was printed in the thousands, which considered the above point of view, clearly representing what had been changed in the Final Revolution; a scene from the Wild West; high noon; Garry Cooper facing his challenge—his hand holding, instead of a revolver, a voting card, READY to make a decision.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 182 see also: P.C.Phan, *Eternity in Time: A Study of Karl Rahner’s Eschatology* (Selingsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1988), pp. 26-31.

²⁴ See K. Rahner, *On the Theology of Death*, trans. C.H.Henkey and W.J.O’Hara (London: Burns and Oates, 1962).

²⁵ In: M. Jaworski, p.7.

CAN SOLIDARITY BE GLOBAL?

June 4, 1989: the first free election. Candidates from *Solidarnosc* won all 161 seats they were allowed to compete for in the Sejm (Parliament) and 99 of 100 seats in the Senate. When the day was over, national TV broadcast an announcement by the actress Joanna Szczepkowska: "Today communism has died." The very same day, on Tian An Men Square in Beijing, a protest by young Chinese ended in violence and bloodshed.

TOWARDS SOLIDARITY: THE FAMILY OF EUROPEAN NATIONS

With the "autumn of nations" in 1989, the domino effect changed the map of Europe. The efforts of the Central and Eastern states to "become European" were not a picnic, but they moved institutional unification 15 years ahead in the context of preparing for accession, which appeared to have only about 50 percent support in public opinion polls. By May 1, 2004, ten new members had joined the EU. The new government began reforms at all levels of public infrastructure. Madeleine Albright, in her interview with Jędrzej Bielecki entitled "Democracy Is a Hard Issue", described President Clinton's invitation to Poland to join NATO (1999): "... Solidarity has delivered the Polish nation from Communism and liberated her from the Soviet Empire. NATO was one side of the coin. Poland was set to open the door to the Western world, which is her place. Without *Solidarność*, Poland could not be free, and could not join that structure. But NATO remains an anchor to support the heritage and the deeds of those who sacrificed themselves for solidarity."²⁶

Celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of this significant breakthrough in the modern history of Europe, Joseph Manuel Boroso, leader of the European Committee, emphasized that *Solidarnosc* was a victory for freedom. August 31, 1980 will forever remind us of that victorious new chapter in European history. "Solidarity was a victory for freedom! You were bold enough to say NO to violence and to lies, with the boldness to demand respect for human dignity. There is no Europe without freedom; there is no Europe without solidarity!"²⁷ On the same day, all those attending the celebration took part in another significant ceremony; they signed the agreement to build the European Center of Solidarity, which will be located in Gdansk. Afterwards, Bronisław Gieremek (Professor of History and Minister of Foreign Affairs) rose to propose an appeal to the United Nations to declare August 31 as a "Day of Solidarity and Freedom" for the world.

²⁶ Rz, p.1-4.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Vaclav Havel united his voice with those not present: "As we mark the anniversary of August, 1980, we need to remember those countries, including Belarus, where dissidents are still persecuted and people are not free. *Solidarnosc* means not only freedom but also responsibility. We must think about those people and send them signs of unity". Prof. Zbigniew Brzezinski concluded his speech with these words: "Is *Solidarność* a big breakthrough or is it also a transformation? A breakthrough is a heroic deed, a transformation that causes change. Poland needs change: a renewal of political life, an uplifting of public debate; a cleansing of corruption, a rebuilding of the institutions of justice; a move to modernity and self-governance. Solidarity is still necessary in Poland..."²⁸

And among these voices, there was the echo of Pope John Paul II. In his letter, Benedict XVI, speaking through Archbishop Stanislaw Dziwisz, addressed all participants at the ceremony: "Today we all acknowledge the great importance of the *Solidarnosc* movement to Poland and to Europe. I know how much my predecessor, John Paul II, had desired to participate in this miracle of historical justice. I know how much he supported Solidarity and promoted her by diplomacy, because it was a matter of justice. The proof we received when the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet satellite nations broke free. I am glad that you are free and I wish you economic prosperity".²⁹

GLOBALIZATION WITH 'A HUMAN FACE,' OR HOW FAR IS ST. BONAVENTURE HALL FROM THE LIFE CYCLE INSTITUTE?

There is an ever-growing area of hot topics which can be discussed in various ways. For instance, in earlier studies I have tried to raise the question: Solidarity or isolation/elimination? There is a vast array of problems to be solved in the area of globalization. As Lech Walesa has pointed out, "We have a new era, but with the old thinking". Another voice at Gdansk, German president Horst Koehler, said: "Poles not only liberated themselves, but also initiated a process with epochal meaning. The communist regime attempted to stop the sequence of changes, which were deeply rooted in the August 1980 events. The Polish people had to endure a great suffering. I am glad to know you appreciate our help during this hard time. Let me say this: after such an experience we can surely trust each other."³⁰

Our question becomes, what message do the historical events of *Solidarność* bring to various cultures? An anthropology of the person shows us that human beings are created to live in community with others, because all share the same precious gift of life. No individual subject can exclude himself or herself from others. It is against nature. Personal interactions are

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

based on the development of instincts. Preservation of the species is elevated by love in marriage and raising children in a family. The self-preservation instinct prompts the use of creative abilities to work with others and share the common good. As Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger clarified, “The experience of solidarity lies at the very heart of human existence. It defines the capacity of each person to relate to others. It moves the conscience with its ability to tell good from evil and the responsibility of every human in the face of evil. The private and social turmoil experienced by an oppressed nation is a sort of anthropology. Work constituted the central element of the official ideology, but the workers who fought for dignity made themselves be heard as real people, not productive manpower. In this way, real man became the central element of the political struggle”.³¹ Therefore *Solidarność* challenges also the dynamism and the interactions of the forms of political order as well. What priorities must be preserved when various small communities join the social order and participate in the common good? Can our societies absorb a new evolutionary model to transform the “welfare state” into a “welfare community” with appropriate peaceful use of power (the so-called soft or light model)? Can the covenant of the free market and solidarity affect the processes of globalization? The ongoing revolution is final—and as yet unfinished. Only the power of conscience of one who has freely accepted the truth about himself or herself, is the irresistible force in history. By this power, with no guns, the Berlin wall collapsed and the gate in the Iron Curtain opened. With great thanksgiving for what has happened in the last quarter-century, we can now consequently ask about the possibility of a global culture of solidarity.

Are you ready? Let’s take a walk.

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³¹ www.solidarnosc25.pl—in: Conference /Report.

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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 Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues*. This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*. A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Columbia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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